

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 3 June 2015.

PRESENT

Mrs. R. Camamile CC	Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC	Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC	Mr. R. Sharp CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC	Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Dr. S. Hill CC	Mr. L. Spence CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC	

1. Appointment of Chairman.

That it be noted that Mr. S. J. Galton CC has been appointed Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission for the period ending with the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2016 in accordance with Article 6.05 of the Constitution.

Mr. S. J. Galton CC – in the Chair

2. Election of Vice-Chairman.

That Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC be elected Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Commission for the period ending with the date of the Annual Meeting of the County Council in 2016.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2015 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

4. Question Time.

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 35.

5. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

The Chief Executive reported that no questions had been received under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

6. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

7. Declarations of interest.

The Chairman invited members who wished to do so to declare any interest in respect of items on the agenda for the meeting.

All members of the Commission who were also members of a District Council declared a personal interest in the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015-16 (minute 10 refers).

8. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that no petitions had been received under Standing Order 36.

10. Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015/16.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the draft Corporate Asset Management Plan (CAMP) 2015/16 which set out the strategic direction for the use, management and development of the County Council's corporate property resources over the next financial year. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 10' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) The Commission welcomed the report, which was both comprehensive and accessible. It was pleasing to note that the objectives for the previous year had all been met and that the plans for the 2015/16 financial year were ambitious but, based on previous performance, were also deliverable.
- (ii) One of the key risks to delivery of the CAMP was the fast pace of change and the level of transformational work being carried out across the Council. It was expected that there would be challenges in maintaining the pace of change in order to deliver the Plan.
- (iii) Resources were also identified as a key risk area. The ambitious nature of the Plan meant that some temporary resources might be required in order to deliver it. Further work was needed to define the level of resource required. Officers undertook to advise members of the outcome of discussion in this area.
- (iv) With regard to the development sites being brought forward to deliver the Disposals Programme, it was confirmed that although Land Promotion and Options Agreements were a standard approach in industry, they were not often used by the County Council. Producing the documents involved a lengthy legal process and once both parties were signed up to the agreement they were bound by it. Where possible, the County Council would apply for outline planning permission before selling the land. Promotion and Option Agreements were used on a case by case basis for land with very specialised uses. The County Council sought support from external consultants to deliver the Disposals Programme where appropriate.
- (v) The Committee welcomed the approach to energy efficiency and was pleased to note that the business case and service development for the installation of renewable energy assets for sale of power and heat to the schools estate would target all schools, not just those maintained by the County Council. A number of

options were currently being scoped, including those where the County Council offered strategic and operational advice as well as capital support. Once a preferred option had been identified, the scheme would be promoted to schools. It was felt that this opportunity would be welcomed by schools.

- (vi) The CAMP included reference to the role of property services in developing a revised mining offer at Snibston Discovery Museum. As this decision was currently subject to Judicial Review, it was not possible to confirm the exact nature of the works that were planned for the site. The County Solicitor undertook to write to members of the Commission to confirm the exact wording of the Cabinet Decision on the matter and the next steps to be taken in either actuality.
- (vii) It was acknowledged that there had been confusion regarding the respective roles and responsibilities of the County Council and Academies in terms of assets. The County Council had since clarified and updated processes around procuring, commissioning and delivering building works for Academies and had produced a set of leaflets which clarify the property related responsibilities of each party. The Commission was pleased to note that the leaflets also highlighted that Academies could approach the County Council and commission work on a traded basis. It was agreed that the leaflets would be circulated to members of the Commission.
- (viii) In terms of commissioning new schools, it was noted that there were a variety of approaches to reflect the mixed economy. Officers undertook to produce a briefing note setting out the process to design, procure and project manage the building of a new school, as well as how the project would be funded. The note would use the new school at Braunstone and the proposed new special school in Wigston as examples.
- (ix) It was felt that the CAMP did not include sufficient detail relating to the significant drop in asset value from April 2013 to April 2014. Officers undertook to circulate a detailed breakdown of the reasons for the decrease to all members of the Commission.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Corporate Asset Management Plan 2015/16 be supported and the comments now made be referred to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 16 June;
- (b) That officers be requested to circulate information to the Commission as outlined above.

11. Quarter 4 2014/15 Performance Report.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an update on performance at the end of the fourth quarter of 2014/15 (January – March). A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:-

- (i) It was noted that the indicators relating to road casualties were rated red. It would be useful for the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee to

receive a report providing details of performance in this area, including the percentage of accidents attributable to human error and how statistical evidence has been used to identify the best interventions to prevent accidents. The report should also investigate whether there was a causal link between national and local increases in road traffic accidents.

- (ii) The Commission noted with concern that the indicator relating to the theft of or theft from vehicles was also rated red. It was noted that police intelligence had identified that a significant number of these incidents related to either insecure vehicles or the theft of tools from vans. With regard to the latter, the police had recently made a number of arrests. Officers undertook to produce a report containing a detailed breakdown of performance in this area for further consideration by the Scrutiny Commissioners.
- (iii) Concern was expressed that the oral health of five year olds had been rated red. It was noted that both Public Health and Children and Family Services were undertaking work in this area to improve performance and agreed that a report setting out these mitigating actions would be submitted to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The report would also be shared with members of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- (iv) The red indicators relating to the safety of children and young people had all been the subject of a specific report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee earlier in the week. That report had identified concerns with certain aspects of data reliability which the Committee was investigating further. Whilst these issues were acknowledged, the Commission was advised that more detailed manual analysis of the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation showed that performance, although 20 percent better than originally demonstrated, was still below the target level the County Council had set.
- (v) It was noted that the performance team was undertaking a data cleansing exercise with a view to finalising the end of year position over the summer period. The final position would be set out in the Annual Performance Report and submitted to the Scrutiny Commission in autumn.
- (vi) Officers undertook to provide written details of the opportunities that were being considered to accelerate the deployment of high-speed fibre broadband across Leicestershire.
- (vii) With regard to the number of staff employed by the County Council, it was agreed that future reports should also include the number of full time equivalent posts. This would enable members to have a clearer picture of the impact of the MTFs on staffing levels.
- (viii) It was confirmed that the target for 58 percent of staff employed at Grade 13 or above to be female reflected the Council's workforce rather than the population of Leicestershire. 73 percent of the Council's workforce was female.
- (ix) Officers undertook to provide the Commissioners with an analysis of why the Adults and Communities Department was disproportionately represented with regard to grievance and dignity at work cases.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the performance at the end of the fourth quarter of 2014-15 be noted;
- (b) That officers be asked to respond to the requests for information outlined above;
- (c) That the Environment and Transport Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider performance with regard to road traffic accidents at a future meeting;
- (d) That the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider performance with regard to the oral health of five year olds at a future meeting.

12. Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2014-15.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources which presented the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report, covering the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. A copy of the report marked 'Agenda Item 12' is filed with these minutes.

Arising from discussion the following points were made:-

- (i) The Commission was pleased to note the reduction in the number of complaints referred to the Ombudsman and also welcomed the proposed actions regarding the art of apologising well.
- (ii) Concern was expressed that there had been an increase in the number of complaints being upheld regarding delays in providing services, when compared to the previous year. It was felt that County Hall staff needed to be more honest in managing the expectations of members of the public. The reduction in funding meant that services could not always be provided in a timely fashion and it was important that this message was communicated effectively to the public.
- (iii) It was felt that the concluding comments in the report, that complaints volumes would continue to rise, were negative and implied an expectation that the quality of service would decline. It was acknowledged that these remarks could have been expressed better, for example by explaining that given the trend over the last five years, the policy changes and financial position of the Council. Complaints were not expected to drop. However, the focus would be on reducing the level of complaints that were upheld.
- (iv) It was noted with concern that a number of complaints were still being made about Community Care Finance. The Commission was advised that there were a number of technical difficulties involved in resolving the underlying data quality issues. However, it was felt that the report should be more proactive in outlining the actions to be taken by the Department.
- (v) It was noted that Parish Councils received feedback on highways issues and complaints which the local member was copied into. It was suggested that this process could be improved by the inclusion of more contextual details regarding the complaint.
- (vi) It had not yet been possible to map complaints at a geographical level, due in part to data systems not being aligned and the fact that the postcode of the complainant did not always relate to the geographical location of the incident subject to the

complaint. The Commission encouraged officers to continue to explore the feasibility of mapping complaints at a geographical level, particularly with regard to complaints about the Council's highways.

- (vii) The importance of a quick resolution to complaints was emphasised. The Commission was assured that the Department was always given an opportunity to address the issue before it was incorporated into the Corporate Complaints process.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2014-15 be noted.

13. Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15.

The Commission considered a report of the Scrutiny Commissioners concerning the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15. A copy of the Annual Report, marked 'Agenda Item 13' is filed with these minutes.

Members welcomed the report and agreed that it was a fair and accurate assessment of the work undertaken by the Scrutiny bodies during the past year.

It was agreed that, in future, the Scrutiny Commissioners would share the report with the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees prior to its submission to the Scrutiny Commission.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2014/15 be commended for submission to the County Council meeting on 8 July.

14. Date of next meeting.

It was agreed that an additional meeting of the Commission would be scheduled for the beginning of July to consider the Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn Report. The following meeting of the Commission would be held on 2 September at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 4.35 pm
03 June 2015

CHAIRMAN