

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 30 September 2015.

PRESENT

Mr. S. J. Galton CC (in the Chair)

Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Mr. J. G. Coxon CC
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. S. J. Hampson CC

Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC
Mr. R. Sharp CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. L. Spence CC

In Attendance:

Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, Leader of the County Council (For Minute 32)

Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Safer Communities and Chairman of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel (For Minute 33)

Martin Peters, Chief Executive of Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd. (For Minute 35)

Chas Bishop, Chief Executive of the National Space Centre and Chairman of the Leicester Shire Promotions Board (For Minute 35)

24. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 June were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

25. Question Time.

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

26. Questions asked by Members.

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

27. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

28. 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.

The following members each declared a personal interest in respect of Item 11 as members of district and borough council representatives (as indicated) who would be affected by the proposals (Minute 32 refers):

Mrs. R. Camamile CC (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council)
 Mr. J. G. Coxon CC (North West Leicestershire District Council)
 Mr. S. J. Hampson CC (Charnwood Borough Council)
 Dr. S. Hill CC (Harborough District Council)
 Mr. S. J. Galton CC (Harborough District Council)
 Mr. R. Sharp CC (Charnwood Borough Council)
 Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC (Charnwood Borough Council)

29. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

30. Presentation of Petitions.

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

31. Change to the Order of Business.

The Chairman sought and obtained the consent of the Commission to vary the order of business from that set out in the agenda.

32. Combined Authority.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive seeking the views of the Commission on proposals to form a Combined Authority (CA) as part of a consultation process. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 11", is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Leader of the County Council, Mr. N. J. Rushton CC, who was present to introduce the report and respond to any questions from members.

The Leader reported that local areas were being encouraged by Central Government to take on extra responsibility for economic growth. In part due to the good working relations that existed between the County and City Councils, positive steps had been taken to bring the proposals before the Commission today.

The Chief Executive reported that the timeline for the proposals would be as follows:

- The consultation process would run to 20 October 2015;
- Revisions to the proposals would be considered arising from this process;
- The proposals would be submitted to the Economic Growth Board and then taken through the County Council's decision making process (as well as those of the City Council and district councils), through November and December 2015;
- A second Government led consultation process would likely be held in Spring 2016 prior to the proposals being taken through the parliamentary order process.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- Leaders of all district and borough councils would appoint themselves to the CA, on which all would each have one vote. There was a power of veto or an “opt out” which it was hoped would not become obstructive. The Chairman of the LLEP would sit on the CA in a non-voting capacity;
- It was hoped that, as part of the proposals, it would not be necessary to elect a County Mayor as this would inevitably cause difficulties for the City Mayor and therefore the involvement of the City Council;
- It was too early to know at this stage how the Combined Authority scrutiny function would work in practice, though it was known that in order to gain approval from Government, scrutiny arrangements had to be in place. Any function would have to reflect political and geographical balance in a similar way to the Police and Crime Panel;
- The CA and local planning authorities would have concurrent powers that would place an emphasis on co-operation from both sides;
- A County Mayor would have to be elected were health partners to be involved. If this were to be the case it would also be necessary to involve Rutland County Council in the CA because of the arrangements already in place for health.

RESOLVED:

That the Commission supports the proposals for a Combined Authority.

33. Police and Crime Panel - Update.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Mr. J. T. Orson JP CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Safer Communities and Chairman of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and Crime Panel. Mr. Orson delivered a presentation which set out how the Panel’s work had progressed over the past year and some of main issues it had considered. A copy of the slides forming the presentation is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the presentation, Mr. Orson highlighted that the Panel was functioning well and that it was providing an effective challenge to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Sir Clive Loader whose term of office was due to end in May 2016.

Arising from the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The Force was known to be performing well when compared with other “similar” forces. Some details around its performance within a national context would hopefully be made available to members of the Commission following the meeting;
- In regard to Child Sexual Exploitation, the PCC had initiated a review of historic cases in September 2014 and had updated the Panel on the progress of the review at the Panel’s meeting in March 2015. The Panel had also been made aware that funding of £1.3 million had been dedicated to tackling this high priority area;
- The Force was on track to achieve its savings target for this year of £10 million. Informal feedback had suggested that the implementation of the Force Change

Programme was resulting in a more visible force on a local level. The Panel received a standing item on the progress of the Force Change programme at its meetings, though it was expected that a full review of the Programme would be conducted in around two years' time;

- Response times were expected to be an issue in the east of the County. This had been reported to the Panel, though Mr. Orson offered to raise this matter again on behalf of the Commission at the Panel's next meeting on 16 December;
- Though there was no cost to call the 999 emergency number, it was felt that it would be difficult to encourage the public to call the 101 crime line given it cost 15p per call. The Chairman offered to raise this issue with the OPCC and report back to the Commission.

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Police and crime Panel be thanked for his informative presentation and that he be invited back to a meeting in six months' time to provide a further update on the Panel's work.

34. Medium Term Financial Strategy Monitoring (Period 4), Use of Additional Resources and Medium Term Financial Prospects.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update on the 2015/16 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme monitoring position. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 20", is filled with these minutes.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

Revenue Budget

- An emphasis had and would continue to be placed on spending wisely on invest to save projects;
- It was known that there was a limited choice of providers of specialist care in the Children and Families area. The Council was investigating opportunities to help to drive down prices by playing a more active part in the sector. Foster care recruitment remained a priority, not least because it would avoid high cost placements for those with special needs. The Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been well briefed on this area as part of its business;
- Staffing capacity had prevented further developments for Beaumanor Hall at this stage, though it was expected that proposals for the site would emerge in 2016;
- The implementation of the Living Wage was likely to affect a number of contracts held with those companies delivering Adult Social Care services;
- The Autumn Government Settlement was expected in late November. Briefings for elected members would follow the announcement;

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

35. Presentation: Review of Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd. Performance.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive setting out the background to the Council's contract with Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd. (LPL) to provide its tourism services. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 8", is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the item, the Chief Executive reported that tourism was a key part of the LLEP's growth plans. The Council's contract with LPL would run to March 2016 and at this point there was an opportunity to extend the contract. An independent review had been commissioned which would inform future arrangements for delivering tourism support across Leicester and Leicestershire. The findings of the review were expected to be reported to the Cabinet in February.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Martin Peters, Chief Executive of LPL and Chas Bishop, Chief Executive of the National Space Centre and Chairman of the LPL Board. Both were present to deliver a presentation to the Commission on the performance of LPL over the past year.

Arising from the presentation, the following points were noted:

- The tourism industry was in a good state and was employing people in increasing numbers. This was reflected in Leicestershire's current position which was generally very positive and resulted in a requirement for additional accommodation in the City and County. Accommodation was now expanding in the City and County to meet this demand following the recession;
- It was important that LPL was made aware of events and activities in the County in order that it could provide support and help to further grow the sector in Leicestershire;
- Without the Council's funding, LPL would be able to continue to operate, but it was expected that some of the support the company provided to those running events would cease. LPL would seek funding from other organisations, though it was felt that it required a small baseline of funding in order to exist on the scale that it currently did.

RESOLVED:

That Martin Peters be thanked for his presentation.

36. Date of next meeting and schedule of meetings in 2016.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 4 November 2015 at 2.00pm.

The following schedule of meetings to be held in 2016 at 2.00pm was noted:

27 January
 24 February
 6 April
 15 June
 6 July

7 September
16 November

2.00 - 4.10 pm
30 September 2015

CHAIRMAN