

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 6 April 2016.

PRESENT

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

Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC

Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC
Mr. R. Sharp CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC
Mr. L. Spence CC

61. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2016 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

62. Question Time.

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

63. Questions asked by Members.

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

64. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

65. 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 8 as members of district and borough council representatives (as indicated) who would be affected by the proposals (Minute 68 refers):

Mrs. R. Camamile CC (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council)
Mr. S. J. Hampson CC (Charnwood Borough Council)
Dr. S. Hill CC (Harborough District Council)
Mr. D. Jennings CC (Blaby District Council)
Mr. S. J. Galton CC (Harborough District Council)
Mrs. C. M. Radford CC (Charnwood Borough Council)
Mr. R. Sharp CC (Charnwood Borough Council)

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC (Charnwood Borough Council)

66. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

67. Presentation of Petitions.

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

68. Review of the County Council's Strategic Plan: Embedding a New Approach to Transformation and Commissioning.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources and Chief Executive that would be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 19 April. The report concerned a proposed review of the County Council's Strategic Plan 2014-18 and reported on the development of a single outcomes framework which would set the policy context for outcomes-based commissioning and transformation activity. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 8" is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that the revised Strategic Plan would provide a clear vision for the Council and, via a new Commissioning Framework, would focus the Council's activity on a clear set of priority outcomes for residents, communities and businesses in the County.

This was the first time the Council had developed a council-wide plan of Commissioning Intentions which showed how activity would be geared towards reducing demand on Council services and focussing scarce resources on those areas which would have the biggest impact. The aim was also to make the best use of all the resources available, including maximising the synergies between Council departments.

The Transformation Programme had delivered £23 million of savings. There had been a need to refresh the Programme to make it more agile to adapt to the Council's changing priorities. The refreshed Programme was required to deliver £35 million of the Council's full savings target of £75 million over the life of the current MTFS.

Members' attention was drawn to two Annual Reports on the subjects of the Transformation Programme and the Commissioning and Procurement Strategy, both of which had been circulated to members in March via the Members' News in Brief Service.

It was confirmed that the Strategic Plan would be the subject of a further report to the Commission in November prior to approval at the full County Council meeting in December.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Strategic Plan was a high level document which would set out the key outcomes that the Council was aiming to achieve. These outcomes would inform future Commissioning Plans and provide greater detail and clarity around how frontline services would be delivered and success would be measured;

- Concern was expressed in regard to the language used in the report. Specific reference was made to the use of the term “providing just enough support to carers” which could be perceived negatively. It was clarified that this wording had been taken from the Adult Social Care Strategy, which had previously received approval through the Cabinet and Scrutiny process. This reflected the Council’s significantly challenging financial position, whilst at the same time continuing to support people to live independent lives. Similar concerns were expressed around the use of the phrase “delaying the development of need” which had been the subject of similar concerns at the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- In response to concerns around how the performance of services would be monitored in the light of budget and staffing reductions, it was confirmed that, at project level, this would be tracked via the Transformation Unit, who carried out a robust and evidenced benefits analysis of each project. At a strategic level, the refreshed Plan would include measures of success for each outcome. The Council’s new Business Intelligence service meant it was now better placed to inform future decision making with robust data analysis and evidence. It was suggested that members could be briefed in more detail about the new Service;
- Some members expressed concern around how any reductions in waste being sent to landfill (page 18, paragraph 31) would be achieved given the changes in payment for recycling credits. It was hoped that the reference to “preventative road maintenance” would equate to a more proactive approach, rather than a more costly reactive road maintenance programme;
- Members made specific reference to recommendation (e) in the report and the fact that there appeared to be little account taken of the legitimate role to be played by Scrutiny and the Transformation Board in overseeing any changes to the delivery of the Transformation Programme.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That consideration should be given to amending recommendation (e) of the Cabinet report to reflect the legitimate role played by Scrutiny and the Transformation Board in regard to having oversight of any changes in delivery of the Transformation Programme;
- (b) That the comments of the Commission be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 19 April.

69. Quarter 3 2015/16 Performance Report.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning an overview of current performance against the “Enabling Economic Growth” and “Safer Communities” themes of the County Council Strategic Plan 2014-18, along with a summary of overall progress against corporate priorities. A copy of the report marked “Agenda Item 9” is filed with these minutes.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

Investment in Place – Building the Infrastructure for Growth

- It was acknowledged that paragraph (b) on page 42 erroneously referred to the Lubbesthorpe development contributing to improvements to the public realm in Hinckley;
- It was regrettable that the Lubbesthorpe development had suffered delays. Though requirements could be written into agreements to ensure that work was carried out on time, there was little the Council could do to enforce this, though there was the costly option to pursue legal action. The Chief Executive offered to provide members with a note of the latest position with respect to this development;
- It had been made clear by the Government that the Council would only get a full suite of devolved powers if they had an elected mayor. It was unknown at this stage whether an elected mayor would be a requirement of any Devolution Deal;
- As the Strategic Growth Plan (SGP) developed, the Executives of the County Council and each local planning authority would be consulted on the key stages as outlined on page 44. This would include consultation with the Scrutiny Commission. Local Plans would be aligned to the SGP;
- The Council's Infrastructure Plan (as referred to on page 43) would be developed by the summer and would cover all capital infrastructure provided in support of economic growth. The Council would consult with stakeholders and via Scrutiny on the content of this document prior to Cabinet approval;
- Further details on the national context of Leicestershire's 25% take-up of superfast broadband (as referred to on page 43) would be circulated to members following the meeting;

Investment in People – Employment and Skills support

- Comparative pupil examination performance had not improved to the extent as had been hoped for however it had to be noted that, in the era of academies, the Council had a greatly reduced role in school performance. Changes, including a general tightening of examination assessments, had also impacted on achieving the previously set target levels. Though some aspects had improved such as recent progress in maths. Legislation prescribed that the Local Authority had a role to make "arrangements" for school improvement but was not required to "deliver" the improvements in isolation. The Leicestershire Education Excellence Partnership, which maintained an ongoing dialogue with academies to ensure good performance was reviewing the current picture and was due to report to the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June. A briefing on school funding would also be held in the coming months which all members were encouraged to attend;

Safer Communities

- Detailed crime statistics were available for the County. It was noted that overall crime levels were broadly similar to last year, though vehicle crime levels remained a concern. It was suggested that these could be considered alongside the

Commission's annual discussion with the Chairman of the Police and Crime Panel which was due to take place at the Commission's 6 July meeting.

General

- Though the Council had traditionally maintained good services, a question was raised whether budget reductions were beginning to impact on public satisfaction owing to the generally poorer response times for queries via telephone and email and the increase in time taken to rectify complaints. The Chief Executive reported that many complaints received during this quarter had been in relation to Adult Social Care issues, which were known to be generally more complex in nature than others received and therefore required more time to rectify. It was felt that any trends in terms of performance should become more identifiable in Quarter 4;
- Increasing hospital admissions (as referred to on page 58) reflected an overall reduction in performance. This was felt to be a particularly challenging area in Leicestershire, though the Urgent Care Board and Better Care Fund Plan was known to be tackling this. The health sector was rich in data and this could be made available to members as required.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 3 Performance Report 2015/16 be noted.

70. Tourism Support Services Review.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning recent developments in relation to future tourism support arrangements across Leicester and Leicestershire and seeking comments during the Tourism Support Services consultation period. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 10" is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman drew members' attention to a written submission from Scott Knowles, Chief Executive of the East Midlands Chamber of Commerce in regard to the ongoing consultation on the County's tourism support service, a copy of which was filed with these minutes. Comments had also been submitted to elected members from representatives of Hilton Hotels, Wistow Maze and Wistow Rural Centre and Leicestershire Hospitality Association.

Members were assured that all submissions would be taken account of as part of the ongoing consultation and respondents were encouraged to use the Council's online consultation survey as a means of making representations
[\[http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-consultations/tourism-support-services-for-leicester-and-leicestershire\]](http://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-consultations/tourism-support-services-for-leicester-and-leicestershire)

The Cabinet, at its meeting in March, had supported a preferred option for the future delivery of tourism support services. This proposal was currently being publicly consulted on and it was noted that a further report would be submitted to the Cabinet in June following the consultation process with more detail around how it was proposed the arrangements would operate in future.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- There had been good progress in respect of the County's tourism support service, though the publicity surrounding Richard III and the success of Leicester City Football Club presented a unique opportunity to significantly further the County's tourism offer;
- Responses to the consultation thus far had largely expressed support for tourism governance and strategy to be led by the Combined Authority. Some responses to the consultation had expressed a desire for the arrangements to remain as currently provided (ie. via a destination management organisation);
- The current contract with Leicester Shire Promotions (LPL) was worth £175k per annum up to the end of March 2016 (there remained an option to extend the contract by a further two years and the contract has been extended until the end of September 2016, pending the conclusion of the review). LPL had been working with the Council around the transition arrangements going forward. Beyond 2018, the Council had no prescribed budget for tourism services. It was anticipated that the funding for this function would come from other sources for example via subscriptions from the private sector or funding from the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership;
- Concern was expressed at the Blue Sail consultant's report and a lack of consultation with key businesses in the area over its content. In response it was confirmed that in producing the report, Blue Sail had not been asked to conduct a comprehensive consultation process involving all stakeholders but were instructed to consult a representative sample in forming their report;
- It was felt that LPL had generally performed well for Leicestershire, but the Blue Sail report had identified new opportunities for aligning tourism support to other local authority functions and wider place marketing activities. It was hoped the new arrangements would develop these opportunities and build on some of the good work carried out thus far. It was possible that staff from LPL could be TUPE transferred into any new arrangements depending on the agreed scope of the adopted model. It was hoped that a continuing dialogue could be maintained with partners, including the district councils, over the arrangements;
- A view was expressed that the report before the Commission had not adequately taken account of risk and some of the issues around what the tourism function should look like in 3-5 years' time. In response, it was suggested a more detailed report seeking Cabinet approval to a proposal for future tourism support services would include consultation with the Commission via its meeting on 15 June.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

71. Signposting and Community Support Services Proposals for Crisis and Emergency Support.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning proposals for the continuation of the Signposting and Community Support Service. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 11" is filed with these minutes.

The Chief Executive reported that the pilot scheme had been successful in improving efficiency and creating a more partnership-focused approach.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members welcomed this work. The importance of producing a piece of work to evidence the benefits of the scheme (both in terms of cost benefit and personal wellbeing) were stressed as a means to help secure funding in the future.;
- There appeared to be synergy between this work and the recommendations of a recently published report by the Bishop's Poverty Commission entitled "How do you get by?". Members expressed an interest in learning more about the Council's involvement in this work and how this might align with the signposting and Community Support Service;
- Members emphasised the need to publicise the Service and to co-ordinate activity amongst the many groups and services that contributed to this area. Members' attention was drawn to a partnership network arrangement which the Council was engaged in which assisted in this regard. It was requested that further updates on this work be reported to Overview and Scrutiny.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals for the continuation of crisis and emergency support as part of the Signposting and Community Service be commended.

72. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that, owing to a full agenda, the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 15 June at 10.30am with a break for lunch at around 12.00pm. The meeting would then re-convene at 2.00pm.

2.00 - 5.05 pm
06 April 2016

CHAIRMAN