

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 15 June 2016.

PRESENT

Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. S. J. Galton 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

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 2017 in accordance with Article 6.05 of the Constitution.

(Mr. S. J. Galton - 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 2017.

3. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 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.

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.

Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC declared a personal interest in respect of Item 13 as a school governor (Minute 85 refers).

8. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

9. Presentation of Petitions.

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

10. Leicestershire Youth Justice Three Year Strategic Plan 2016-2019.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Children and Family Services concerning the Leicestershire Youth Justice three year Strategic Plan 2016-19 which was to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June. The Commission was considering the report as the Council's designated "Crime and Disorder" Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 10" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from questions, the following points were noted:

- Despite reduced funding, the IMPACT team was continuing to function well with high satisfaction rates for their work. Reductions had been applied by reducing the hours of staff members and it was noted that this had not impacted the quality of the work of the team;
- First time entrants in the criminal justice system had continued to fall though it was known that there remained a high risk that this would plateau or even increase in the future as a result of year-on-year reductions;
- The rise in custodial sentences referenced on page 32 was due to the fact that the performance was calculated as a proportion of the overall number of young people receiving an outcome in court. As numbers of young people into the system had reduced, the proportion of young people in custody had risen slightly despite numbers remaining fairly static over the past few years. It was acknowledged that this could be better reflected in the Plan by including the actual numbers of young people in custody;
- The staff groupings referenced on page 35 showed that the workforce in the Youth Offending Service was diverse. As a result of the high number of males in the criminal justice system, the Service did occasionally recruit to "male only" posts as a means of boosting representation of this group;
- Reference was made to a recent meeting held in Countesthorpe called by the new Police and Crime Commissioner, Lord Bach and chaired by Mr. Jennings CC, which had been attended by over 180 local residents. Though the meeting had been held as a result of some anti-social behaviour problems in the area it was noted that the excellent work of the Youth Offending Service and the IMPACT team was evident;
- Reference was made to page 19 of the report which stated that there was a "slight increase in re-offending rates". It was acknowledged that percentages would be added to make clearer exactly what this increase was.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Leicestershire Youth Justice Three Year Strategic Plan 2016-2019 be commended to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 17 June;
- (b) That the work of the IMPACT team be commended.

11. Early Help and Prevention Review.

The Commission considered a joint report of the Director of Corporate Resources and the Chief Executive concerning a review of Early Help and Prevention which was to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 11" is filed with these minutes.

The Director of Public Health introduced the report by stating that the Review aimed to provide better integration of services across the Council and partners which would hopefully provide increased efficiency and an improved service for users. It was noted that, at this time, the Review was likely to secure a saving of £3 million against a target of £5 million. It was felt that the opportunities within the review to deliver prevention more efficiently may enable the savings to be achieved with minimal impact on service provision.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The issue of children's centre provision, as referenced in paragraph 41 of the report, would need to be assessed in more detail and within the context of the changes recently made to the Council's school nurse/health visitor offer;
- Members were reassured that any significant changes to service provision arising from the Review would be the subject of a Cabinet decision and Scrutiny consultation via the appropriate committee. It was felt that this reporting would need to take full account of the affect that changes to service provision would have on the end user;
- It was intended to adopt a more targeted approach to commissioning to ensure outcomes which ultimately benefited the service user. A more evidence based approach would be taken to gain a clearer picture of benefit and risk;
- It was hoped that the Local Area Co-ordinator model, which embedded greater collaboration between services users and providers such as GPs and the voluntary sector, could be expanded. The detail behind how this would be carried out would emerge as part of further reporting.

RESOLVED:

- (c) That the comments of the Commission be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 17 June;
- (d) That any significant changes to service provision arising from the Review would be the subject of further reporting to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny body.

12. Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16.

The Commission considered the Draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16 which the Council was required to publish. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 12" is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the item officers explained that, subject to the Commission's approval, the matter would be considered by the full County Council at its meeting on 29 June prior to being published on the County Council's website.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16 be approved for submission to the full County Council at its meeting on 29 June.

13. East Midlands Shared Services - Delivery and Performance.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update with respect to the delivery and performance of East Midlands Shared Services (EMSS). A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 13" is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that the Council had already achieved £1.6 million savings through the establishment of EMSS and that a further saving of £418k was due to be achieved by 2017/18. It was noted that additional savings would be pursued through the Service. A process of standardisation was being implemented across the EMSS to ensure a consistent service was being offered to customers. Further technological innovations were being pursued as a means of identifying efficient ways of working.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Finance Service Centre was experiencing lower customer satisfaction levels than the Employee Service Centre. This was largely due to the incomplete data being provided from suppliers which meant none compliant invoices were unable to be paid. The issue was being pursued with contracting/purchasing managers and suppliers with a view to improving the arrangements. It was noted that some 38,000 suppliers were dealt with by EMSS, but despite this, an ambitious target of 80% satisfaction by the end of 2016/17 had been set;
- Debt recovery was felt to be a strong area of performance though it was noted that collection for the Adults and Communities Department was handled separately to EMSS. Debt recovery arrangements would be further improved by encouraging timely responses to queries as this was known to cause delays in the process;
- The Employee Service Centre had retained a large number of school/academy payroll customers. It was suggested that the voluntary sector and district councils were a market that would enable EMSS to broaden its customer base further.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the update on the delivery and performance of the East Midlands Shared Service be noted;

- (b) That a further update on delivery and performance be submitted to the Commission in June 2017.

14. Update on Leicestershire Traded Services.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update on the development of the County Council's traded services. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 14" is filed with these minutes.

The Director reported that a significant amount of work had been carried out following the Scrutiny Review of Traded Services, which concluded in November 2014 and had supported the need for consolidation of the Council's existing traded offer and the need to operate in a different way going forward. A business plan was being developed to provide a way forward for the traded services portfolio. A brand for "Leicestershire Traded Services" (LTS) had now been developed which aimed to provide linkages to the Council's corporate branding which was felt to provide assurance to customers around reliability and quality.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was clear that going forward it may be necessary to share commercially sensitive data on traded service performance and strategy with elected members. It was noted that there were ways in which this could be done whilst avoiding considering information in private session. This would be discussed with the Scrutiny Commissioners following the meeting;
- An online portal was being developed for customers as a means of enabling better cross-selling of products and encouraging growth amongst new customers. Options were being considered for a dedicated sales team, though it was felt this approach was slightly at odds with the established customer expectation for product knowledge;
- There was a need for LTS to remain agile and react to market demand. The Council's competitors included private sector businesses which were not always required to have the same regard to policy and were therefore able to be more ruthless in attracting new business;
- It was hoped that the new account management function would enable better sharing of intelligence as a means of targeting new business.

Members were supportive of the work that had taken place following the Scrutiny Review and the need to be pro-active and innovative in attracting new business and broadening the customer base beyond the East Midlands.

RESOLVED:

That the update on Leicestershire Traded Services be noted.

15. Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2015-16.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report, covering the period 1 April

2015 to 31 March 2016. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 15" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- There had been an 11% increase in corporate complaints this year though there had been a 21% reduction in the number of complaints that were upheld over the previous year;
- It would be necessary for staff to be more robust with customers when it was not possible to provide help as this sometimes led to false hope and complaint;
- More investment needed to be placed in recording and explaining why the Council had made a decision to reduce the number of enquiries and complaints;
- Collaboration arrangements were in place with departments to ensure that actions arising from complaints were followed up;
- Complaints arising from highways safety issues, such as lining, were in some cases as a result of delayed action. Though delays were in some cases as a result of resource pressures, there also needed to be regard for the costs in dealing with follow up enquiries from the public.

RESOLVED:

That the Corporate Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2015-16 be noted.

(The meeting adjourned at 1.00pm. It reconvened at 2.00pm)

16. Tourism Support Services Review.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the outcome of a consultation exercise concerning the Tourism Support Service within Leicester and Leicestershire and to recommend future tourism governance and delivery arrangements across Leicester and Leicestershire which was to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 16" is filed with these minutes.

In introducing the report, the Chief Executive highlighted that the review had been undertaken for a number of reasons, including as a result of the Council's MTFs, which contained no resource for tourism support services beyond 2018, and the development of a Combined Authority proposal which would include new governance arrangements around economic development. In addition, the Council's contract with Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd (LPL) ceased at the end of March 2016, although it had recently been extended to March 2017 to enable any necessary transition arrangements to a new way of providing support services.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The proposals contained in the report had been revised from the report considered at the Commission's previous meeting. In particular the option now being proposed to the Cabinet included the establishment of a local authority owned company which would deliver tourism support services going forward. The proposals had been

revised in light of comments submitted via the consultation process. This would enable tourism support to be operated more independently and to be better aligned to aims around economic growth;

- The budgeting for the new company would need to be considered further though it was hoped that it would ultimately be run with a reduced reliance on public funds. More detail on these arrangements would be presented in a Business Case which was due to be considered by the Cabinet in the Autumn;
- In response to concerns that it appeared that limited consideration appeared to have been given to proposing a model based on improving the existing arrangement with LPL, it was noted that this had been discounted for the reasons set out in the report, that there had been positive discussions with LPL about the proposed new arrangements and that the proposed Tourism Advisory Board would enable a more partnership-based approach incorporating the excellent local knowledge that existed amongst district tourism partnerships;
- There was an ongoing dialogue with LPL around the transition arrangements. It was suggested that some of the expertise in LPL may be subsumed in the new local authority owned company though further detailed proposals would emerge in the coming months;
- A view was made that the County's tourism offer was not sufficiently well marketed to the public, with an over focus on City attractions. It was noted that the further report in October would take account of exactly what the County Council hoped to achieve for tourism through the proposed new arrangements.

RESOLVED:

That the comments of the Commission be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 17 June.

17. Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan - Strategic Growth Statement.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the Strategic Growth Statement for Leicester and Leicestershire which was to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 17" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Council was engaged in an ongoing dialogue with City and district partners to create a long term Strategic Growth Plan to 2050. This was the first stage of this process which set out the high level vision and principles. More detailed information around the distribution of growth and development would be contained in stages 2 and 3 of the process which would be considered later this year and through to late 2017;
- The Commission would also consider the Memorandum of Understanding following completion of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment which would help to inform housing numbers in the County. This was expected to be completed in the Autumn;

- The Strategic Growth Plan would require the agreement of the executives of the County and districts and the City Mayor. If the Combined Authority bid proved to be successful, its planning committee would also have a role in deciding where development would be distributed;
- It would be challenging to continue to support growth and ensure the adequate support of transport infrastructure, which was known to already to be beyond capacity. The County Council was represented on the Members Advisory Group by the Cabinet Lead Member for Transport and this would help ensure that transport infrastructure received appropriate consideration as part of this work. It was further noted that the Director of Environment and Transport had been heavily involved in the formulation of the Statement thus far;
- Reference was made to the Statement's lack of coverage for green wedges which were felt to be of historical significance to the County. Officers indicated that green infrastructure would be covered in the Strategic Growth Plan and that further thought would be given to this issue as part of the Plan's formulation.

RESOLVED:

- (e) That that the comments of the Commission be forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 17 June;
- (f) That further consideration should be given to the importance of green wedges as part of this work.

18. Equality Strategy 2016-20 and Equality Action Plan 2016-17.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning changes made to the draft Equality Strategy 2016-20 and the draft Equality Action Plan 2016-17 arising from a consultation exercise which ran from 25th April 2016 to 27th May 2016. The matter is also to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17 June. A copy of the report marked "Agenda Item 18" is filed with these minutes.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members praised the Strategy and Action Plan as being an excellent approach to further embedding equalities at the Council and continuing the good work already carried out which had resulted in the Council's solid reputation in this area;
- The Strategy contained a very ambitious target to "foster good relationships with and within communities". In response to concerns that this would be difficult to achieve given the Council's role as one of a large group of agencies, it was noted that the target (and Strategy as a whole) would be monitored annually to ensure it was relevant and remained achievable.

RESOLVED:

That the Equality Strategy 2016-20 and Equality Action Plan 2016-17 be commended to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 17 June.

19. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 13 July at 10.30am.

10.30 am - 3.05 pm
15 June 2016

CHAIRMAN