

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 30 November 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. S. D. Sheahan CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

In Attendance:

Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC, Cabinet Lead Member for Resources (For Minutes 51 and 52)

44. Minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 November were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

45. Question Time.

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

46. Questions asked by Members.

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

47. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

48. 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 all three substantive items on the agenda (Minutes 51 and 52 refer) as members of district/borough councils (as indicated) affected by the proposals:

Mr. S. J. Galton CC (Harborough District Council)
Dr. S. Hill CC (Harborough District Council)
Mr. D. Jennings CC (Blaby District Council)

Mr. K. W. P. Lynch CC (Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council)
 Mrs. C. M. Radford CC (Charnwood Borough Council)
 Mr. R. Sharp CC (Charnwood Borough Council)
 Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC (North West Leicestershire District Council)
 Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC (Charnwood Borough Council)

49. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

50. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

51. 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Strategy Monitoring (Period 6).

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update on the 2016/17 revenue budget and capital programme monitoring position. A copy of the report, marked "Agenda Item 8", is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting the Cabinet Lead Member for Resources, Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC who was present to respond to members' questions.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

Revenue Budget

- The Council had invested £15 million and more recently agreed a further £10 million in property funds. These had performed well in the past and a 4% annual return was expected. Expertise had been levered in from the Council's pension fund managers in order to select the most attractive funds;
- The overspend in the area of Special Educational Needs (SEN) was a particular area of concern. It was hoped that more robust planning in future years would enable the Council to contain these costs in future years;
- The Council would be required to work well with maintained schools in order to avoid expensive SEN placement costs. It was noted that this had been an issue in previous years and that the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee was pursuing this issue as part of its work programme;
- The underspend in respect of Adults and Communities was welcome in the face of a challenging funding position and followed 3 years of overspends. The Department's strategy remained that of "demand management" and it was felt that the underspend was evidence that this approach was proving effective;
- Restructures and staffing reductions in the Environment and Transport Department had affected some aspects of frontline service performance. Flooding during the summer months had also had an impact. A £5 million fund had been established to enable the department to address quickly any maintenance or other associated issues. A view was expressed that there needed to be regard in

the budget for the fact that roads were a “universal” service used by all;

Capital Programme

- Coalville Transfer station was considered to be no longer viable. Further detail on the reasons behind this would be circulated to members following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the 2016/17 Medium Term Financial Strategy Monitoring (Period 6) report be noted.

52. Review of Earmarked Funds and Balances.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Corporate Resources concerning an update the findings of a detailed review of revenue earmarked funds and balances. A copy of the report, marked “Agenda Item 9”, is filed with these minutes.

Arising from a discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Council had played a role in assisting growth in the local economy through its mortgage scheme and lending to local businesses. The Council was also looking to increase its “commercial approach” through its traded service offer;
- The split of BT Openreach from British Telecom was viewed as a positive step in helping to roll out high speed broadband to the remaining areas of the County without it. Without a financial imperative, Openreach would be free to adopt a more “socialised” approach to schemes;
- The Director of Adults and Communities had a statutory responsibility for workforce development for the Leicestershire Social Care Development Group. A note on the detail behind this responsibility would be circulated to members following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

53. Date of next meeting.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on 25 January 2017 at 10.30am.

2.00 - 3.20 pm
30 November 2016

CHAIRMAN