



Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday 17 April 2002.

PRESENT

Mr. N. J. Brown CC (in the Chair)

Mr. D. C. Bill CC
Mr. P. D. Boulton TD, CC
Mr. B. Chapman AE, CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. Mike Jones CC
Mr. M. B. Page CC
Mr. N. J. Rushton CC

Mrs. V. P. Bill CC
Mrs. C. E. Brock CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. P. A. Hyde CC
Mr. P. C. Osborne CC
Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC
Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC

89. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th February, 2002 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

90. Questions asked by electors under Standing Order 35.

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

91. 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).

92. Any other items which the Chairman has decided to take as urgent elsewhere on the agenda.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

93. Declarations of interests in respect of items on this agenda.

All members serving on governing bodies of schools and other institutions declared non-prejudicial personal interests in relation to those matters within the Best Value Performance Plan relating to those institutions.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill declared a non-prejudicial personal interest in relation to matters in Chapters 4 and 9 of the Best Value Performance Plan.

94. Presentations of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that there were no petitions to be presented under Standing Order 36.

95. Best Value Performance Plan 2002/03.

The Committee considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and County Treasurer concerning the draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/03. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The comments of the Education and Heritage, the Planning and Environment and the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committees on the Plan were circulated, and copies marked B1, B2, B3 respectively, are filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the comments of the Education and Heritage, Planning and Environment and Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committees be noted and forwarded to the Cabinet.
- b) That with regard to the two service areas falling within the remit of the Commission the Cabinet be advised as follows:-

Promoting Economic Well-Being (Chapter 9)

- (i) That whilst recognising and endorsing the need to work in partnership with others to promote economic well-being a review of partnership arrangements should be undertaken with a view to some rationalisation;
- (ii) That whilst recognising the difficulties of developing performance measures in this area of activity any such measures should seek to focus on outputs rather than on levels of activity or process;
- (iii) That given the limited resources available to the County Council for promoting economic well-being the focus of the Council activity should be on working with agencies such as emda to 'lever-in' funding;
- (iv) That it is the view of the Commission that the information in Chapter 9 did not provide a clear or focussed picture of the key priorities of the Council in this area of work and how these might be implemented or further developed and therefore the Commission would wish, at an appropriate point, to invite representatives of the Cabinet to attend the Commission to discuss the issues further;

Making Communities Safer (Chapter 11)

- (v) That given that the Leicestershire Partnership for Safer Communities is the key body for co-ordinating crime and disorder matters across the County its role and work should be given greater emphasis in the Plan;
- (vi) That Plan should reflect the decision of local partnerships to

agree to transfer a proportion of the 'Communities against Drugs' fund to the Police to enable investment in strategies to target the major suppliers of controlled drugs;

- (vii) That whilst welcoming the figures showing a reduction in crimes such as burglary and theft it should be noted that there is still significant under reporting of crime;
 - (viii) That the Commission, as part of its work programme, would wish to monitor and review the activities, impact and effectiveness of Crime and Disorder Partnerships in the County.
- (c) That the need to reconsider the Review Programme to reflect the advice being received from Government and the Audit Commission be noted and that the Cabinet be requested to consult the Scrutiny Reference Group on the content of the Review Programme and the arrangements for involving elected members in the process.
- (d) That subject to the comments now made, the Best Value Performance Plan for 2002/03 be endorsed.

96. Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan - Proposed Modifications.

The Commission considered a report of the Acting Director of Planning and Transportation concerning proposed modifications to the Structure Plan and seeking comments thereon. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

A report setting out the views of the Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the proposed modifications were table at the meeting and a copy marked 'C1' is filed with these minutes.

It was moved by Mr. Bill and seconded:

- “(a) That the views of the Planning and Environment Scrutiny Committee on the proposed modifications to the Structure Plan be noted and forwarded to the Cabinet.
- (b) That the proposed modifications to the Structure Plan be endorsed.
- (c) That the issue of a Green Wedge at Burbage should be the subject of a further report to an early meeting of the Planning and Environment Committee and/or Commission.
- (d) That the rail projects and infrastructure improvements (Panel Recommended 7.72) should be included in the main text of the Structure Plan rather than the Explanatory Memorandum”.

An amendment was moved by Mr. Rhodes and seconded:

“That part (c) and (d) of the motion be deleted and the following inserted in its place:

'(c) That the Cabinet be asked to note and have regard to the request from Burbage Parish Council for a Green Wedge'".

The amendment was put and carried 8 members voting for the amendment and 7 against.

The substantive motion was put and carried.

97. Indices of Deprivation - Co-ordination of Research and Management Information.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the response of the Cabinet to the views expressed by the Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee on the use of data such as Indices of Deprivation and the need for better co-ordination of research and management information. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

98. Review of Partnerships Arrangements.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning progress made by the officer group established to review existing partnerships and governance arrangements. A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

In the discussion on this matter the following comments were made:

- (i) the review process was structured in such a way so as to ensure all potential partnerships were identified. It was not intended to carry out an in depth analysis of each partnership, but rather to identify the key partnerships and those partnerships identified as presenting the highest risk.
- (ii) it was recognised that a number of the bodies identified in the report would not normally be defined as partnerships but rather as consultation forums or professional associations. The list highlighted the major problem facing a review of this kind which was to reach a widely acceptable definition of 'a partnership'.
- (iii) the following issues should be addressed in respect of all partnerships:
 - Why the particular partnership exists and whether the partnership brings added benefit to service delivery?
 - Does the partnership have shared aims, outcomes and targets and do these fit in with those of the Council and the community it serves?
 - What arrangements are in place for ensuring accountability and reporting on the work of Partnerships (including arrangements for

involving elected members?

- What arrangements are in place for reviewing the continuing need for the Partnership and whether the Partnership continues to be relevant and is still the most appropriate means of delivering the service?
- What are the costs to the County Council in establishing, participating and supporting in partnerships resulting from national/regional initiatives, including the costs to both service and central departments?
- How are the risks associated with partnership working including those of a financial and legal nature tackled?

RESOLVED:

- a) That the interim report on the work of the officer group reviewing partnership arrangements be noted.
- (b) That the Scrutiny Reference Group be asked to discuss further the scope of the review having regard to the points now raised and to identify an appropriate way forward to enable the Commission to undertake a further examination of the issue.

2.30 p.m. – 5.10 p.m.
15th April, 2002.

CHAIRMAN