

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 8 May 2002.

PRESENT

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

Mr. D. C. Bill CC	Mrs. V. P. Bill CC
Mr. P. D. Boulton TD, CC	Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. S. J. Galton CC	Mr. P. A. Hyde CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC	Mr. Mike Jones CC
Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC	Mr. P. C. Osborne CC
Mr. M. B. Page CC	Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC
Mr. N. J. Rushton CC	Mr. S. D. Sheahan CC

99. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April, 2002 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

100. Questions asked by electors under Standing Order 35.

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

101. 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).

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

There were no urgent items for consideration.

103. 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 all matters relating to those institutions.

Mrs. Bill, Mr. Bill and Mr. Jennings declared a non-prejudicial personal interest in relation to the report of the five member review panel on recruitment and retention of teachers.

104. Presentations of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

105. 'Better Access to Better Services' - Policy Statement and Initiative.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the 'Better Access to Better Services' Initiative and accompanying Policy Statement. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- (i) the focus of this Initiative should be on services provided to the public and that this should be the uppermost consideration, the Initiative should not be technology driven;
- (ii) whilst noting that the 20 additional access points being developed with the Leicestershire Rural Partnership would involve Parish and Town Councils, the policy would benefit from an explicit statement/commitment to work with Parish and Town Councils;
- (iii) it would be necessary in undertaking joint ventures with District Councils and other partners to ensure that there was some compatibility between the systems and processes being developed;
- (iv) given the enormity of the undertaking and the fact that to be successful the Initiative would need to change the culture of the organisation the Cabinet should be asked to consider:
  - the appointment of a Chief Officer and Cabinet Lead Member to drive forward the Initiative;
  - the establishment of clear project management arrangements;
  - the use of external consultants/secondments from other bodies to deal with issues requiring specialist approach;
- (v) there should be an understanding that the costs of delivering the Initiative both in terms of buildings and equipment and staffing resources would be significant if the Initiative is to be rolled out successfully across the County.
- (vi) whilst welcoming the proposals to work with local Post Offices, concern was expressed that the present policy of Consignia may not accord with the proposed direction of the County Council approach. It was noted that there was a process for discussion with representatives of Consignia at officer level and that the Scrutiny Reference Group would be considering possible member discussion with Consignia regarding their current strategy on sub post offices;

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet be advised that the Commission broadly supports the Better Access to Better Services Initiative subject to the points set out above.

106. Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office.

The Commission considered a report setting out the findings of the five

member review panel established to examine the difficulties being experienced at the Record Office. A copy of the report marked 'C'; is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the findings of the five member review panel established to consider the problems being experienced at the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Record Office be endorsed;
- (b) That the findings of the Panel be referred to the Cabinet for consideration;
- (c) That the response of the Cabinet be reported to a future meeting of the Commission.

107. Operation of the Review Panel on Recruitment and Retention of Teachers.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the conclusions drawn from the experience of the five member panel established to review policies and strategies for recruiting and retaining teachers. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

The Commission was advised that Education and Heritage Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> May had considered the Panel's final report. The draft minute setting out comments made and the decision of that Committee was circulated at the meeting and a copy is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report of the five member review panel on recruitment and retention of teachers be noted;
- (b) That experience gained from the operation of the Review Panel as set out in paragraphs 9 to 16 of the report, be noted and that the lessons learnt should inform the work of future panels.

10.30 a.m. – 11.50 a.m.  
8 May, 2002.

CHAIRMAN

