

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 12 March 2003.

PRESENT

(none) (in the Chair)

Mrs. V. P. Bill CC	Mr. P. D. Boulton TD, CC
Mr. D. R. Bown CC	Mr. N. J. Brown CC
Mr. B. Chapman AE, CC	Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC	Mr. Mike Jones CC
Mr. D. J. Knaggs CC	Mr. P. C. Osborne CC
Dr. D. Pollard CC	Mr. J. B. Rhodes CC
Mr. N. J. Rushton CC	Mrs. M. L. Sherwin CC

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. M.T. Jones CC, the Deputy Chairman took the Chair

71. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 13 February 2003 were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

72. Question Time.

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

73. Questions asked by members under Standing Order 7(3) and 7(5).

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

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

There were no urgent items for consideration.

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

There were no declarations of interests.

76. Declarations of the Party Whip in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

There were no declarations made under Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 16.

77. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

The Chief Executive reported that there were no petitions to be presented.

78. Developing a Local Compact between Leicestershire County Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive seeking comments on the draft Local Compact between the County Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector. A copy of the report marked 'A' is filed with these minutes.

In response to questions and comments the Committee was advised that:-

- the voluntary sector groups listed as being involved in developing the Compact were those who had responded to the initial consultation exercise which was undertaken by the voluntary sector. A further round of consultation was proposed and it was hoped that there would be further responses/comments;
- the delay in developing the Compact was in part due to capacity problems in the voluntary sector. In this regard it was noted that voluntary sector would need to develop a relationship with not only the County Council but others such the Health Sector, Learning and Skills Council and District Councils;
- the potential benefits of developing the Compact would be greater clarity about how the County Council and the voluntary sector engaged to develop policy and deliver services;
- the need to engage with small voluntary, community and sports groups was recognised and in this regard it was hoped to work with the district based Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) to link with these and other 'hard to reach' community groups;
- the County Council had considerable experience of working with voluntary organisations who provided services to the City, County and Rutland. Many of these relationships were governed by Service Agreements which had sought to harmonise, where appropriate, the services the three Councils required;
- there was considerable experience of negotiating service agreements. Whilst it was not possible to have a single model service agreement covering all activities the Council would be involved with, all service agreements had certain 'core conditions' with the provision for the agreement to reflect the particular circumstances of the service being commissioned;
- the specific mention of 'black and minority ethnic groups' as a particular target group was in response to the difficulties these groups appeared to have in accessing services. It was noted that careful consideration

would need to be given in future documentation as to the terminology used to describe these groups;

- it was recognised that there should be more robust methods of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of service agreements and in particular to ensure that the services being provided/commissioned remained appropriate. The latter might enable the County Council to reinvest resources in newer or priority services;
- there was a need to ensure that the arrangements for developing and monitoring the Compact were linked, where appropriate, with other partnership activity such as that of the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership so as to avoid creating another level of bureaucracy.

RESOLVED:-

- a) That the comments now made be noted and drawn to the attention of the Cabinet;
- b) That the Cabinet be advised that the Commission supports the proposals to develop and agree a Compact with the Voluntary Sector;
- c) That officers be requested to report to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Reference Group on the progress on the review of Partnership Arrangements and in particular on 'mapping the partnerships' in which the County Council has an involvement/interest.

At this point in the meeting Mr. N.J. Brown assumed the Chair.

79. Draft Youth Justice Plan 2002/03 - 2004/05 Update.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning of the 2003/04 update of the Youth Justice Plan for Leicestershire and Rutland. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Committee was advised that:-

- there had been a 15% reduction in the re-offending rate;
- the Youth Offending Target within the Public Service Agreement related to improving the basic skills of those young people who were receiving community supervision. To that end, three basic skills tutors within the Youth and Community Education section had been identified to assist. The Learning and Skills Council., FE colleges and the Connexions Board would also be involved in delivering this target;
- the Youth Offending Team had appointed two specialist drug workers to provide assessments and work with young people on drug issues. The Service also had access to the Probation Service provided drug treatment and testing orders in a small number of cases though it was

noted that the demands on the Probation Service for drug testing had been increasing and that the service was now stretched;

- finding suitable accommodation for young offenders was proving extremely difficult. If it were necessary to make use of accommodation in Leicester City, the Team maintained contact with any young people placed in such accommodation. The Team was working with the Probation Service to develop a supported accommodation scheme funded through the 'Supporting People' Initiative . Discussions had also taken place with District Council Housing Departments and other Housing Agencies to address this issue. A joint post had been created with the Social Services Department to address accommodation issues relating to young people receiving support from the Youth Offending Team and the Social Services Leaving Care Team;
- the Youth Offending Team worked closely with the police particularly in relation to those young persons on the 'intensive supervision and surveillance programme'. This work included sharing information about the young people in question.

A number of concerns were expressed by members including:-

- i) the lack of a performance measure prescribed by the Youth Justice Board relating to work with young people in relation to drug use given that drug use appeared to be a significant factor in explaining why young people engaged in criminal activity;
- ii) the absence of any representation of black or ethnic minority groups on the Management Board;
- iii) the absence of any representatives on the Board from the Housing sector given the difficulties identified in finding suitable accommodation.

RESOLVED

- a) That the concerns now expressed be drawn to the attention of the Cabinet;
- b) That subject to (a) above, the Cabinet be advised that the Commission supports the draft Youth Justice Plan update for 2003/04.

80. East Midlands Planning Charter.

The Commission considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Community Services concerning the relaunch of the East Midlands Planning Charter and seeking views on the County council's continued membership. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the County Council's continued membership of the East Midlands Planning Charter be supported.

81. Date of Next Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the next meeting be held at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday 30th April 2003.

10.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m.
12th March 2003

CHAIRMAN

