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Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 18 June 2003.

PRESENT

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

Mr. B. Chapman AE, CC	Mr. S. J. Galton CC
Mr. B. Garner, CC	Mr. M. J. Hunt CC
Mr. P. A. Hyde CC	Mr. R. Jenkins CC
Mr. D. Jennings CC	Mr. Mike Jones CC
Mr. P. C. Osborne CC	Dr. D. Pollard CC
Prof. M. E. Preston CC	Mr. N. J. Rushton CC
Mr. R. M. Wilson CC	Mr. P. G. Winkless CC

By Invitation

Mr. D.R. Parsons – Leader of the Council, for minute number 20.

12. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th May having been previously circulated were taken as read, confirmed and signed.

13. Question Time.

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

14. 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).

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

There were no urgent items for consideration.

16. Declarations of interest.

The following members declared personal non-prejudicial interests as District Councillors in relation to Item 8 – The Leicestershire Community Strategy:

Mr. B. Chapman AE CC	Mr. D. Jennings CC
Mr. S. Galton CC	Mr. M. Jones CC
Mr. B. Garner	Mr. P.C. Osborne CC
Mr. P.A. Hyde CC	Dr. D. Pollard CC
Mr. M.J. Hunt CC	Mr. N.J. Rushton CC
Mr. R. Jenkins CC	Mr. R.M. Wilson CC

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

Mr. Hyde was declared the Party Whip on behalf of the Labour Group in relation to the commitment in the Medium Term Corporate Strategy concerning the transfer of residential care homes to the private sector. (Item 9 – Paper C Page 10).

18. Presentation of Petitions under Standing Order 36.

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

19. Change in Order of Business.

The Chairman sought and obtained the agreement of the Commission to vary the order of business from that set out on the agenda.

20. Medium Term Corporate Strategy.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning revisions to the Medium Term Corporate Strategy. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

The Chairman welcomed the to the meeting the Leader, Mr Parsons, who had kindly agreed to attend the meeting to answer questions in relation to this item.

Mr. Parsons introduced the report and stated that the review had enabled the Administration to concentrate on a smaller number of Corporate Objectives and smaller number of Priority Issues which were intended to improve the County Council's performance in service delivery and the wider role of community leadership. The Strategy now set out targets against each of the Priority Issues. He went on to state that although the Strategy now clearly focused on the key priorities, the Administration remained committed to improving all of the Council's services.

In response to comments and questions the Commission was advised by the Leader that :-

- (i) the Best Value Performance Plan should be a separate document from the Medium Term Corporate Strategy, but there was a need to maintain a link between the two documents. The Strategy was intended to set out clearly the priorities of the Council. The Performance Plan followed the structure of the strategy. Performance would be regularly monitored and reported to the appropriate scrutiny body.
- (ii) the performance targets in the document were intended to be challenging and measurable. However, it was recognised that in relation to certain measures such as the availability of bus services, targets would have to be refined over time and that it would not be sufficient to rely upon existing policy commitments.
- (iii) the Administration recognised that the National Equality Standard Target it had set itself would be particularly challenging. To acknowledge this one member of the Cabinet had for the first time been given a particular

brief to progress work in this area.

- (iv) the reference to private sector provision in relation to the Common Admission Date for young people was a response to Government guidance to take account of such provision. It was recognised that progress on a Common Admission Date was dependent on the Council finding additional resources, something which was extremely difficult given the underfunding by the Government of Leicestershire Education.
- (v) the reference to the 'unfair government grant system' for education in Leicestershire reflected the views of the Administration and the Leader believed many others. He, therefore, considered that it should not be amended.
- (vi) the figures quoted in relation to the reporting of incidents of domestic violence were those agreed with the Home Office as part of the Public Service Agreement.
- (vii) consultation undertaken had shown that one of the highest local priorities was a reduction in crime and improvements in community safety. To that end a separate corporate objective "Seeking a Safer County" was now included in the Strategy and a Member of the Cabinet had been assigned to progress this. The Leader acknowledged that progress in this area was dependent upon establishing a good working relationship with a range of other partners, particularly the Leicestershire Constabulary and District Councils. The production of a Strategy was a first step and consideration would then be given to producing more, or more closely defined, targets in relation to this objective.
- (viii) the Cabinet would be receiving a report in the near future on proposals for investing the additional resources agreed in the current budget for Crime Reduction Initiatives including improvements to facilities for young people.
- (ix) the Leader had stated within the Strategy that Administration remained committed to improving all Council Services. In the area of Museums and Arts, this would need to be done in partnership with other agencies.

It was moved by Mr. Rushton and seconded by Mr. Osborne:

'That the Cabinet be advised that the Commission generally welcomes and supports the revised Medium Term Corporate Strategy.'

An amendment was moved by Dr. Pollard and seconded:

'That the following be added to the motion:

"That the commitment given by the Leader to consider and, if possible, accommodate the views/comments now expressed be welcomed." '

The mover of the motion with the concurrence of his seconder and approval of the Committee accepted the amendment.

The motion as amended was put and carried.

21. Leicestershire Community Strategy.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the Leicestershire Community Strategy which had been agreed by the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership following a second round of consultation. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

The Commission noted that the majority of comments made by the five member Scrutiny Panel during the consultation process had been accepted and incorporated in the final draft.

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet be advised that the Commission would support a recommendation to the County Council to adopt the Leicestershire Community Strategy.

22. Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning the draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2003/04. A copy of the report marked 'D' is filed with these minutes.

In reply to a question the Chief Executive advised that the issue of member involvement in the Best Value Review Programme would be discussed at the forthcoming Leaders' Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet be advised that the Commission supports the contents of the Best Value Performance Plan for 2003/04.

23. Arrangements for Inward Investment, Tourism and Promotion Services.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning proposed arrangements for the delivery of Inward Investment, Tourism and Promotion Services. A copy of the report marked 'G' is filed with these minutes.

In reply to questions, the Chief Executive advised the Commission that discussions were taking place with Leicester Shire Promotions on the issue of pensions. The staff affected had been given an assurance that the proposed transfer would only take place when a satisfactory resolution of the pension arrangements had been reached.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed arrangements for Inward Investment, Tourism and Promotion Services be noted.
- (b) That the Cabinet be asked to satisfy itself that appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor the new arrangements so as to ensure that the

particular interest of the County areas are safeguarded.

- (c) That a detailed report be submitted to a future meeting of the Commission on the implementation of the new arrangements, the effectiveness of the delivery of inward investment and the marketing of the area.
- (d) That in relation to (c) above, appropriate representatives of the Cabinet, Leicester Shire Promotions and the Leicester Shire Economic Partnership be invited to attend.

24. Annual Report on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny Bodies.

The Commission considered a draft of the Annual Report to the County Council on behalf of Overview and Scrutiny bodies. A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Annual Report be noted and submitted to the next meeting of the County Council.

25. Overview and Scrutiny of the Health Service.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive setting out the current position with regard to the implementation of the provisions in the Health and Social Care Act 2001 enabling Social Services Authorities to scrutinise the actions of NHS bodies. A copy of the report marked 'F' is filed with these minutes.

RESOLVED:

That the Constitution Committee and Cabinet be advised that the Scrutiny Commission:

- (a) favours the establishment of a joint committee in Leicestershire including representatives from the County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland Council as the most appropriate vehicle for scrutiny of the countywide responsibilities of the University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust, the Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust and the Primary Care Trusts (PCT's).
- (b) recognises the need to seek the views of District Councils and PCT's on the arrangements for the scrutiny of area based activities of PCT's.
- (c) expects its Chairman and Spokesmen to be actively involved in discussions with other bodies in relation to developing proposals for scrutiny of health bodies.
- (d) given the complexity of NHS structures and services notes that the scrutiny process will not be effective or meaningful until such time as members have acquired, through training and professional support, an appropriate level of understanding and familiarity with the issues.

26. Dates of Future Meetings.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That meetings of the Commission be held at 2.00 p.m. on the following dates in 2003/04:

27 August 2003
5 November 2003
7 January 2004
3 March 2004
28 April 2004

- (b) That it be noted that a programme of meetings for scrutiny of the budget would need to be agreed nearer the time.

18th June 2003
2.30pm – 4.26pm

CHAIRMAN

