

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Commission held at County Hall, Glenfield on Wednesday, 7 November 2012.

PRESENT

Mr. S. J. Galton CC (in the Chair)

Mr. G. A. Boulter CC
Mrs. R. Camamile CC
Mrs. J. A. Dickinson CC
Dr. R. K. A. Feltham CC
Mr. T. Gillard CC
Mr. G. A. Hart CC

Dr. S. Hill CC
Mr. Max Hunt CC
Mr. A. M. Kershaw CC
Mr. W. Liquorish JP CC
Mrs. R. Page CC
Mr. R. J. Shepherd CC

298. Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2012 were taken as read, confirmed and signed subject to Minute 285 (b) being amended to read as follows:

“Mr. G. A. Hart CC declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in respect of this item having been a Cabinet Support Member at a time when the proposals for a community budget for families with complex needs (now referred to as ‘Supporting Leicestershire Families’) were agreed.”

299. Question Time.

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

300. Questions asked by members.

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

301. Urgent Items.

There were no urgent items for consideration.

302. 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.

No declarations were made.

303. Declarations of the Party Whip.

There were no declarations of the party whip.

304. Presentation of Petitions.

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

305. Safer Communities Commissioning Plan 2012/13 - Performance.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning a performance update against the Safer Communities Commissioning Plan 2012/13. A copy of the report, marked 'B', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were noted:

- It was pleasing that crime had generally fallen, though burglaries from dwellings had risen by a third over the previous year. There was some concern that the Council's programme to reduce street lighting might have contributed to this increase. Research undertaken indicated that there appeared to be no direct correlation between those areas where street lighting had been reduced and an increase in crime levels, though there was a perception amongst the public that this was indeed the case. It would be important that the Council and the Police continued to monitor criminality in these areas and, assuming there was no change in behaviour, this would provide the necessary supporting evidence to show;
- There was concern expressed at the reduced reporting of hate incidents and domestic abuse incidents. Some detailed work would be carried out in collaboration with the Police to try to understand why this was the case. It remained important that the public felt able to report these crimes and that any incidents were responded to robustly in order to increase public confidence;
- A pack of information entitled "The Community Safety Partnership Landscape" had been shared with the three Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) candidates prior to the election on 15 November 2012. The document explained the partnership arrangements which the PCC would need to engage with on taking office and set out how the funding that would transfer to the PCC was currently used. It was hoped that this would go some way towards demonstrating the value of the work undertaken in this area.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the performance against the Safer Communities Commissioning Plan 2012/13 as set out in the report and appended dashboard be noted.
- (b) That a copy of "The Community Safety Partnership Landscape" pack used to publicise the work of Community Safety Partnerships to the

Police and Crime Commissioner be circulated to all members of the Council for information.

306. Draft Protocol Between the Scrutiny Commission and the Police and Crime Panel.

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive concerning a draft Protocol between the Scrutiny Commission (as “Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee”) and the Police and Crime Panel (PCP). A copy of the report, marked ‘C’, is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were noted:

- In carrying out its role as “Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee”, the Commission’s primary point of contact on the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) would be the County Council’s PCP representative. There would be opportunities to hold this person to account at the Commission on any issues that arose;
- The PCP would consist of one member from each of the County, City and Rutland and District Councils. The PCP would be meeting formally for the first time on 23 November and would be required to consider inter alia the appointment of three or four additional City Council members in order to achieve political and geographical balance. It would also be considering the appointment of two independent co-opted members for which applications were currently being sought;
- In acting as “host authority” to the PCP, the County Council would receive a yearly grant of £63,000. It was noted that, where support to the PCP exceeded this amount, it had been agreed to approach the other local authorities for a contribution towards the support costs. This issue would be monitored on an ongoing basis;
- There was concern expressed at the Home Office’s annual timetable for consideration of the Precept, which required the Police and Crime Commissioner to issue the Draft Precept by 15 January, with the PCP expected to submit its comments by 22 January. It was felt that this was insufficient time in which to test the Precept against the Police and Crime Plan;
- The draft Protocol had been shared with the “Shadow” PCP, which was meeting in advance of the full PCP to agree procedural matters such as its terms of reference and the timetable for consideration of the Precept. The Panel had accepted the draft Protocol which would be formally agreed on 23 November. The Protocol would be reviewed in 12 months’ time to ensure that the arrangements were working effectively.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Protocol between the Scrutiny Commission and the Police and Crime Panel be approved and that, subject to approval by the Police and Crime Panel at its meeting on 23 November, the Chairman be authorised to sign the Protocol on behalf of the Scrutiny Commission.

307. Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) Update - Implementation Plan and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Progress.

The Commission considered a report of the Director of Environment and Transport which provided an update on performance against the KPI's of the Local Transport Plan 3. A copy of the report, marked 'D', is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the discussion, the following points were noted:

- Progress against the LTP3 had generally been positive. Examples were given such as the Loughborough Town Centre Major Transport Scheme which, subject to the agreement of contracts, was due to commence in the coming months and the success of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid to improve transport outcomes in Loughborough and Coalville;
- There was some concern expressed that passenger numbers on commercial bus services had fallen, though this was in line with national trends. A number of meetings would be held with the major bus companies and the City Mayor in an attempt to understand and reverse this trend;
- The planning system allowed planning authorities to assess only the impact of each development on transport infrastructure, rather than the cumulative effect of multiple developments, and this was a significant concern given the increasing pressure on housing figures. As traffic congestion was known to be hard to measure, the County Council was in discussions with Loughborough University about the possibility of commissioning a study on this issue, which it was hoped would enable the development of innovative solutions to congestion;
- Arriva was currently looking into the possibility of improving "Smart Ticketing" to reduce stopping time and increase traffic flow. It was noted that to move to the system adopted in central London (which eliminated the need for a receipt when boarding) significant levels of investment would be required;
- The Government had recently announced its proposals for the devolution of funding for local major transport schemes to what it was calling "Local Transport Bodies" (LTBs) which it suggested would be based around Local Enterprise Partnership areas. Funding would in future be allocated on a formula-basis. Under such arrangements, Leicester and Leicestershire would receive in the region of £21 million funding over four years as part of the new measures. Under the previous arrangements, local authorities had been required to seek funding from the Department for Transport for projects costing over £5 million.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council's performance thus far against KPI's 1-7 of the LTP3, as set out in the report, be noted;

- (b) That the current position in respect of the Government's plan to devolve transport funding for major transport schemes to Local Transport Bodies based around Local Enterprise Partnership areas be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Commission setting out details in relation to the proposed governance arrangements and the selection criteria for transport schemes.

308. Flood Risk Management Update.

The Commission considered a report and presentation of the Director of Environment and Transport concerning an update on the Council's work as lead authority for the management of flood risk. A copy of the report marked 'E', together with the slides forming the presentation, is filed with these minutes.

Arising from the presentation and ensuing discussion, the following points were noted:

- Arising from the adverse weather in 2012 there had been some difficulties encountered in ensuring that gullies were cleared in a timely fashion, though an intensive programme of cleansing would continue for the next three months in order to clear the backlog. In response to the challenges faced, work was also being carried out on an ongoing basis to accumulate information about gully capacity to cope with surface water in order to ensure that the Council was best placed to respond effectively in future years;
- The level of resource to tackle flooding had recently been reviewed and would be monitored by the Council in its capacity as lead body on the Flood Risk Management Board. £305,000 had been allocated to the Council to help it fulfill its role as Lead Local Flood Authority to address flooding issues. This was in addition to the £250,000 already set aside in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for flooding. A review was to be undertaken to ensure that resources were being targeted appropriately;
- The Council had begun the process of engaging farmers to advise on the most effective ways to plough fields, as this would help to mitigate gully blockages in the future. The Council's Design Guide had also been amended to take account of new legislation and ensure developers were aware of new standards for sustainable drainage.

RESOLVED:

That the report and presentation setting out the progress of the arrangements for managing flood risk and gully cleansing be noted.

309. Date of next meeting.

It was NOTED that the next meeting of the Commission would be held on Monday 10 December at 2.00pm.

2.00 pm - 3.50 pm
07 November 2012

CHAIRMAN