

**OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP  
12TH MARCH 2018**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Taylor)  
The Vice-chair (Councillor Bebbington)  
Councillors Bradshaw, Capleton, Gerrard, Jones

Chief Executive  
Head of Finance and Property Services  
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Sutherland

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

83. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 12th February 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

84. **DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS**

Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest in the following items as her role as a county councillor:

6B – Proposed Response to Leicestershire County Council's Early Help Review Consultation

6C – Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

85. **DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP**

No declarations were made.

86. **QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16**

No questions had been submitted.

87. **DEVELOPMENT OF A CROWDFUNDING SCHEME**

A report of the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing was considered seeking approval for the establishment of a Crowdfunding scheme to support the local voluntary and community sector and business in Charnwood (item 06A on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) It was confirmed that Spacehive was the only company to offer high level support to organisations through their bespoke system, their independent verification process and their legal agreements.
- (ii) The crowdfunding scheme could generate more income for projects through access to further grants and funding if the community group could provide the initial funding.
- (iii) £40,000 was the required initial investment for the first two years after which a decision would be made on how the scheme would progress. The intention was that the crowdfunding process would be embedded into the community group's fundraising and they would be able to continue the process themselves.
- (iv) If crowdfunding continued to be managed by Spacehive then the Council could look at refining the costs based on what was required.
- (v) The purpose of the crowdfunding scheme was to act as the catalyst for community groups to launch their own fundraising campaigns. The Council's role was to facilitate the process and work to make the community group less reliant on the Council.
- (vi) The Group was advised that it would take time for the crowdfunding process to be successful and could take approximately 2 years for it to be seen as the norm.
- (vii) Any community groups could submit their projects for consideration.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group does not support the recommendations as set out in the report of the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing.

#### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing on the matter, the Group concluded that it would not be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report. The Group had concerns over the return on investment and did not think there was enough information provided to be able to support the recommendations.

#### 88. PROPOSED RESPONSE TO LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S EARLY HELP REVIEW CONSULTATION

A report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services was considered which proposed the Council's response to Leicestershire County Council's (LCC) consultation to their proposed changes to their Early Help services (item 06B on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The Group felt that the response addressed the key issues raised and their areas of concern regarding the location of the centres had been taken into consideration.
- (ii) There was a concern over the loss of existing services and specific areas were cited as being big users of certain services.
- (iii) The children's centres were identified as being used mostly by community and voluntary groups and the other activities were being carried out at residents' homes which are where the focus would move to.
- (iv) The Council was pleased that it had argued for a review of all the county's Early Years services rather than the children's centre review so that the holistic "whole family" approach could be developed.
- (vi) There was confirmation that there would be no costs attributed to the Council as a result of the proposed changes to the services.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services.

#### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Strategic Director for Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

#### 89. LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

A report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was considered setting out the Cabinet's response to the draft Strategic Growth Plan (item 06C on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The Group was advised that there was not expected to be significant change following the end of consultation on the strategic growth plan. All the districts and members had been involved in the process and were working together to look at managing the growth in Leicestershire.
- (ii) The Council was praised for the holistic and consultative approach taken regarding the creation of the plan. Members of the Group did voice concerns from their residents regarding some of the proposed changes and were pleased to be able to feedback answers through training received.

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration.

### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Planning and Regeneration on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

## 90. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Landlord Services was considered looking at the housing capital programme for 2018/19 (item 06D on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Landlord Services attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The contractors would be required to attend monthly meetings to monitor their progress against key indicators.
- (ii) The amount of money being spent in the next financial year was lower than previous years due to the quality of housing stock being improved. There was currently no “non-decent” general needs’ housing stock.
- (iii) The Group was advised on the process for gaining access to properties when gas safety checks are required.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Landlord Services.

### Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Landlord Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

## 91. BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19

A report of the Chief Executive was considered proposing the Council’s Business Plan for 2018/19 (item 06E on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Chief Executive attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The website was highlighted as an area for improvement from the key indicators list. The Group was advised that the Council was looking at improvements and there was a programme in place to improve services. There was also a query over the introduction of voice recognition software which was not programmed for the year. The Group was advised that the Council was focussing on improvements that would benefit customer access to services.

- (ii) The indicators included were those that the Council was able to influence or control. It was appreciated that the list was not exhaustive but those identified were regarded as key indicators.
- (iii) The Group was pleased to see encourage healthy lifestyles for all our residents included as one of the outcomes and the Fusion team were commended for their good work.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Chief Executive.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Chief Executive on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

92. OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY – CABINET RESPONSE

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Group on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Vice chair advised the Group that Cabinet did not accept their recommendations regarding the Local Mutual for Insurance item presented at the last meeting. More clarity was provided to Cabinet regarding the item and they had decided to approve the recommendations. The Group was pleased that their scrutiny of the item had prompted further work to be completed and that the scrutiny function was working well.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet's responses to the Group's recommendations be noted.

Reason

The Group was satisfied that it added value where appropriate and welcomed the Cabinet's consideration of the Group's views and recommendations as part of its decision making process.

93. WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Group to consider its work programme and forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny and to provide an opportunity for members of the Group to raise suggestions on issues for scrutiny (in addition to pre-decision scrutiny) which fell within the Group's remit, for scheduling by Scrutiny Management Board (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Group considered the report (and further information on the forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet provided by the Chief Executive at this meeting) and agreed to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny prior to the next Cabinet meeting, but that the following pre-decision scrutiny items should be added to its work programme at this stage:

- Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan – April 2018
- Digital Project Initiatives – April 2018

**RESOLVED** that the Group's current work programme be noted and updated following this meeting, in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and at this meeting and any items of pre-decision scrutiny that require changing due to their reprogramming by the Cabinet.

Reason

To ensure effective and timely scrutiny, either to provide Cabinet with advice prior to it taking a decision or to ensure that the Council and external public service providers and partners were operating effectively for the benefit of the Borough.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 30th April 2018 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of the minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Group.