

OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP – 9TH APRIL 2018

Report of the Cabinet

ITEM 07 OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CABINET RESPONSE

Purpose of Report

To set out the Cabinet's responses to the recommendations of the Group on pre-decision scrutiny items.

Action Requested

To note the Cabinet's responses to the recommendations submitted by the Group on items considered for pre-decision scrutiny.

Policy Context

One of the principles of effective scrutiny, identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, is "provide a constructive critical friend challenge to the Executive".

Pre-decision Scrutiny

Since the September meeting of the Group, the Cabinet has considered the following items on which the Group undertook pre-decision scrutiny:

A. CHARNWOOD CROWDFUNDING SCHEME

B. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19

C. BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19

D. LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

E. LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S EARLY HELP REVIEW CONSULTATION – PROPOSED RESPONSE

Details of the Group's consideration of the items as reported to the Cabinet on 15th March 2018 are set out in the appendix to this report.

The Chair of the Group, Councillor Taylor, attended the Cabinet's meeting on 15th March 2018 to present the Group's reports to the Cabinet.

Cabinet Response

The Cabinet considered the Group's reports and acknowledged the work undertaken and the views of the Group. In particular, the Cabinet responded as follows to the reports:

Charnwood Crowdfunding Scheme

The Cabinet decided to postpone a decision on the matter until the next Cabinet meeting, to allow more information to be provided.

Housing Capital Programme 2018/19

The Cabinet adopted the officer recommendations, which the Group had supported.

Business Plan 2018/19

The Cabinet adopted the officer recommendations, which the Group had supported.

Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan

The Cabinet adopted the officer recommendations, which the Group had supported.

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

The Cabinet adopted the officer recommendations, which the Group had supported.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report:

Financial Implications

None.

Risk Management

No risks have been identified in connection with this report.

Background Papers: None

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CHARNWOOD CROWDFUNDING SCHEME

Recommendation of the Overview Scrutiny Group

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.

Meeting Discussion

Following questions from the Group, the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services provided the following responses:

- (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.

HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2018/19

Recommendations of the Overview Scrutiny Group

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

Reasons

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.

Meeting Discussion

Following questions from the Group the Head of Landlord Services 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.

BUSINESS PLAN 2018/19

Recommendation of the Overview Scrutiny Group

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 to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.

Meeting Discussion

Following questions from the Group, the Chief Executive provided the following responses:

- (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.

LEICESTER AND LEICESTERSHIRE STRATEGIC GROWTH PLAN

Recommendation of the Overview Scrutiny Group

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 to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.

Meeting Discussion

Following questions from the Group, the Head of Planning and Regeneration provided the following responses:

- (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.

LEICESTERSHIRE'S COUNTY COUNCIL'S EARLY HELP REVIEW CONSULTATION – PROPOSED RESPONSE

Recommendation of the Overview Scrutiny Group

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 of Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate to approve the recommendations as set out in the report.

Meeting Discussion

Following questions from the Group, the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services provided the following responses:

- (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.