

**SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
25TH OCTOBER 2017**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Miah)
The Vice-chair (Councillor Shepherd)
Councillors Bebbington, Jukes, Parsons, Seaton and
Smidowicz

Chief Executive
Head of Landlord Services
Head of Strategic Support
Interim Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

APOLOGY: Councillor K. Harris

20. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16th August 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

21. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

Disclosures of personal interest were made by Councillors Miah, Seaton and Shepherd in respect of item 8 on the agenda, as Leicestershire County Councillors (reference in Appendix 1 of the report to Superfast Leicestershire Broadband).

The above disclosures were made later in the meeting, but are recorded here.

22. DECLARATIONS – THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

23. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

24. DECENT HOMES CONTRACT SCRUTINY PANEL – FURTHER UPDATE REPORT

Councillor Bebbington arrived at the meeting at 6.05pm. He wished to apologise that his arrival at the meeting had been delayed.

Considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support to enable the Board to consider the implementation of the decisions 7-12 taken by the Cabinet following its consideration of the report of the Decent Homes Contract Scrutiny Panel and whether any further action was required (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Landlord Services assisted with consideration of the report. He agreed to send to Councillor Smidowicz details on the position in respect of apprentices working for the contractor.

RESOLVED

1. that a further, brief update in respect of Cabinet decision 7 be submitted to the Board's meeting in June 2018;
2. that it be noted that implementation is complete in respect of the Cabinet decisions 8-12 and no further monitoring is required.

Reasons

1. Cabinet decision 7 was the only decision not yet marked as complete in the report and the Board's discussion at this meeting focused on this issue (retention of staff by the current contractor as the contract approached its end and the risks associated with that, whether any difficulties were being experienced and how the position was being managed and the contingency arrangements in place). The Board considered that it would be useful to be informed in due course of what had been experienced in the remaining months of the current contract and whether the risk had transpired.
2. The Board was satisfied that the decisions had been satisfactorily implemented.

25. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS COMMITTEES – MINUTE FORMAT AND CONTENT

Considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support to enable the Board to consider the approach taken to writing minutes of the Council and its committees, in terms of format and content, and the reasons for that (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Chief Executive, the Head of Strategic Support and the Interim Democratic Services Manager assisted with consideration of the report.

Members of the Board expressed personal views on the format, content and purpose of minutes, including how that might differ between committees dependent on their purpose. In particular, it was noted that minutes were made available shortly after meetings and were always subject to confirmation by a committee at its next meeting. Also that, once audio recording of all Council and committee meetings was in place, minutes could indicate where there had been significant discussion of a matter and that a sound recording was available.

The Democratic Services Officer agreed to check that the information Councillor Bebbington had requested at the last meeting of the Board had been sent to him (reference Scrutiny Management Board Minute 16, 16th August 2017).

RESOLVED that the following be noted as the view of the Board:

- (i) that no fundamental changes are required in respect of the approach taken to writing minutes at the Council;
- (ii) that the audio recording of all Council and committee meetings which will be taking place from mid-November 2017 will be helpful;
- (iii) that further narrative on key points discussed can be provided in the minutes where appropriate, to be guided by the Chair of the meeting concerned;
- (iv) that Chairs will need to be more proactive in respect of (iii) above;
- (v) that the Council has in place suitable systems to follow up actions agreed at meetings of the Council and its committees.

Reason

To record the Board's conclusions following discussion of the matter.

Councillor Jukes stated that he disagreed with the view set out in (i) above and asked that that be recorded.

26. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME AND ISSUES ARISING FROM SCRUTINY GROUPS AND PANELS

Considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support to enable the Board to agree the Scrutiny Work Programme, including considering requests from other scrutiny bodies and updates on the delivery of the Work Programme, and identify Key Decisions on which scrutiny could be undertaken, also to consider whether scrutiny of any procurement activity should be programmed (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

An updated Notice of forthcoming Executive Key Decisions and Decisions to be taken in Private by the Executive had been published on 18th October 2017, after the agenda for this meeting had been published. Therefore, an updated Appendix 1 to the report had been made available, copies of which were circulated at the meeting.

The Chief Executive assisted with consideration of the report.

The Board discussed in some detail at this meeting its role in setting the work of scrutiny, in particular how it might do so more effectively and in a more forward thinking and planned way that enabled scrutiny to be a better critical friend.

Advice was provided to Councillor Smidowicz on how she might progress the consideration of a particular policy by the Policy Scrutiny Group.

The Democratic Services Officer agreed to send to Councillor Seaton information as to where a list of previous scrutiny panels was available.

RESOLVED

1. that the following item be added to the Performance Scrutiny Panel's Work Programme:

Scrutiny of further progress against the actions in the Housing Strategy;

2. that the following item be removed from the Policy Scrutiny Group's Work Programme:

Assisting Communities;

3. that the following item be added to the Policy Scrutiny Group's Work Programme, to be scheduled by the Group in due course:

Asset Management Strategy 2018/19 to 2022/23;

4. that the following amendment be made to the Policy Scrutiny Group's Work Programme:

Replace the item "Landlord Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy" with the item "Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy" and reschedule from 21st November 2017 to 6th February 2018;

5. that it be noted that the Performance Scrutiny Panel will be considering options to improve its scrutiny of the Council's performance at its meeting scheduled to be held on 12th December 2017;
6. that forthcoming Executive Key Decisions or decisions to be taken in private by the Executive, set out in the updated Appendix 1 to the report, and scheduled scrutiny of those matters, be noted;
7. that the Annual Procurement Plan and additions to the Plan, set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be noted;
8. that, prior to the start of the 2018/19 Council year, an additional meeting of the Scrutiny Management Board be held, for the purpose of identifying and planning potential topics for scrutiny in the forthcoming year, and that the Leader, together with, at the Leader's discretion, other members of the Cabinet, be invited to attend that meeting to assist the Board;

9. that the Scrutiny Work Programme, set out in Appendix 3 to the report, be noted and updated in accordance with decisions taken above and at this meeting.

Reasons

1. To agree the suggestion made by the Policy Scrutiny Group at its meeting on 26th September 2017 (Minute 16, Resolution 3). The Group considered that, although good progress in delivering the Strategy had taken place, it might be useful to continue to monitor the situation.
2. To agree the suggestion made by the Policy Scrutiny Group at its meeting on 26th September 2017 (Minute 20, Resolution 2). The Group had reviewed the item and considered that the topic was too broad to be the subject of effective scrutiny, scrutiny should focus on the Council's own functions and responsibilities and assisting communities in the way suggested was more the responsibility of ward councillors than the Council as a whole.
3. To agree an item recommended by the Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Group who had been granted authority by the Group to identify possible further items for the Group's Work Programme from the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions.
4. To agree an amendment recommended by the Chair of the Policy Scrutiny Group after information was provided by officers that the Landlord Services Anti-Social Behaviour Policy would be superseded by a Corporate Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and that Chair's view that the latter should be scrutinised at an appropriate time.
5. To ensure that the Board is aware of the Panel's intentions.
6. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny.
7. The Board has decided to consider the Annual Procurement Plan and Quarterly Updates (submitted to Cabinet) to ensure that timely and effective scrutiny of any procurement activity is programmed or to ensure that the Cabinet is informed of any views of the Board on procurement matters.
8. Such a meeting would enable the Board to undertake its role in setting the work of scrutiny more effectively, and in a more forward thinking and planned way. That process would be assisted by the Leader (and other Cabinet Lead Members should the Leader wish them to attend) informing the Board of the Executive's priorities for 2018/19. The Board noted that topics for scrutiny remained a matter for the Board to decide.

9. To ensure that the information contained within the Work Programme is up to date.

NOTES

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at Council on 22nd January 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 ordinary meeting of Scrutiny Management Board.