

**SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
29TH MARCH 2017**

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

Chief Executive
Strategic Director of Corporate Services
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing
Community Safety Manager
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (LS)

Inspector Barker (Leicestershire Police)

APOLOGY: Councillor Morgan, Lead Member for Communities and
Customer Service (in respect of item 6 on the agenda)

32. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th January 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

33. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

A disclosure of a personal interest was made by Councillor Smidowicz as clerk to the trustees of a charity which looked after almshouses in the Borough (item 9 on the agenda).

34. DECLARATIONS – THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

35. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

36. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

Considered a report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services providing a review of the work of the Community Safety Partnership so that the statutory responsibility to scrutinise the Community Safety Partnership, at least every six months, was undertaken and to ensure the continued monitoring of incidences of crime in Charnwood and the identification of issues requiring further scrutiny (if any) (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Neighbourhood Services, the Community Safety Manager and Inspector Barker assisted with the consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the report be noted;
2. that future reports to the Board include information on all Police beats in Charnwood;
3. that the next report submitted to the Board (16th August 2017) includes more information on drug misuse and its impact on Crime and Disorder Reduction and Community Safety in Charnwood.

Reasons

1. To acknowledge the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership.
2. To assist ward councillors in better understanding the position with Crime and Disorder Reduction and Community Safety in the local areas they represented.
3. The issue was highlighted as a particular problem at this meeting and the Board wishes to consider it in more detail.

37. DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2016/17

Considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support presenting a draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2016/17, with a view to it being recommended to Council for approval (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. **that it be recommended to Council** that the Annual Scrutiny Report 2016/17, as set out in the report of the Head of Strategic Support, be approved;
2. that the Democratic Services Manager send to all members of the Board, by email as soon as possible after the meeting, a hyperlink to the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's website, on which the submission by this Council, and the other submissions, to that Committee's Inquiry into scrutiny in local government were now published;
3. that the Democratic Services Manager be asked to submit a report to the next meeting of the Board (14th June 2017) setting out guidance as

to the occasions on which it might be useful and appropriate to make reference to the minutes of scrutiny bodies at full Council meetings via the provision to do so in the Council's Constitution – Full Council Procedure 9.11(b), with a view to further promoting the work of scrutiny.

Reasons

1. To report annually, as required by the Council's Constitution, on the operation and workings of Scrutiny.
2. The draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2016/17 submitted to this meeting included reference to the Board having responded to the Inquiry (via the Chair and Vice-chair) and it would be appropriate for that submission, and those made by other councils, to be made available to all members of the Board.
3. The Board considered that the provision could provide an effective way of promoting the work of scrutiny, but wished to ensure that it was used only when useful and appropriate, for example where scrutiny had achieved an outcome of particular value or where more focus needed to be given to that scrutiny. It might also be useful for the requested report to consider the practice of other councils.

38. SCRUTINY OF THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET

Considered a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services to consider the process for scrutiny of the 2018/19 budget (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services and the Chief Executive assisted with the consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the process for scrutiny of the 2018/19 budget be as set out in Paragraph 9 of Part B of the report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services, but with the following amendments:
 - (i) that Meeting 3 be titled "Planning Meeting" rather than "Informal Meeting";
 - (ii) that the Performance Scrutiny Panel continues to undertake capital and revenue monitoring in accordance with its current practice and for performance monitoring purposes;
 - (iii) that the Budget Scrutiny Panel considers final capital and revenue outturn for the previous financial year at Meeting 1 for context purposes, but there be no requirement for the Budget Scrutiny Panel to consider capital and revenue monitoring reports at Meeting 2 and Meeting 4, unless considered

- necessary to the context of the budget scrutiny process at that time;
- (iv) that feedback from Meeting A (informal consultation with Loughborough councillors on the Loughborough Special Expenses) be made to Budget Scrutiny Panel Meeting 2 rather than Meeting 3, recognising that, at that stage, feedback will comprise only the suggestions put forward and not any responses to those;
 - (v) that it be clearly stated that feedback from Meeting A (informal consultation with Loughborough councillors in the Loughborough Special Expenses) to the Budget Scrutiny Panel will be in writing and not via Loughborough councillors attending a Budget Scrutiny Panel meeting;
 - (vi) that it be made clear at Meeting 4 which suggestions put forward at Meeting A by Loughborough councillors have been included in the draft budget (if any);
2. that a chart setting out the revised budget scrutiny process agreed in resolution 1. above be prepared and made available to members of the Board, and to all councillors involved in the process in due course, including at Meeting 1 of the Budget Scrutiny Panel;
3. that it be noted that the Board supports the following for promotion by officers:
- (i) councillors wishing to take part in budget scrutiny ensuring that they attend finance training sessions offered by the Head of Finance and Property Services prior to doing so;
 - (ii) Loughborough councillors preparing, in advance of Meeting A, their suggestions on the Loughborough Special Expenses so that what is being requested and the reasons for and benefits of the suggestions are clearly presented and thought out.

Reasons

1. The revised process would enable the budget to be scrutinised on a more strategic basis, with the added context of outturn for the previous year, and actual expenditure where considered necessary to the context of the budget scrutiny process at that time. It would also provide a clearer distinction between the Loughborough Councillor budget consultation and the budget scrutiny process. The Board noted in particular that the way in which the Council prepared its budgets to some extent limited the opportunity for scrutiny to shape those.
2. To ensure that the process is clearly set out and understood, so that it is as effective as possible.
3. To ensure that both budget scrutiny and the consultation with Loughborough councillors are as effective as possible.

39. EMPTY HOMES SCRUTINY PANEL – 6 MONTH UPDATE

Considered a report of the Head of Strategic Support setting out the implementation of decisions taken by the Cabinet following its consideration of the report of the Empty Homes Scrutiny Panel and to consider what further action may be required, if any (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing and the Chief Executive assisted with the consideration of the report.

RESOLVED

1. that the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing send to all members of the Board, by email as soon as possible after the meeting, the further information on the position with and work on empty homes in the Borough reported verbally at this meeting;
2. that it be noted that the implementation of the Cabinet decisions is complete and no further monitoring is required.

Reasons

1. The information was of interest to members of the Board.
2. The Board was satisfied that the decisions had been satisfactorily implemented, noting in particular the positive change that scrutiny had effected on the issue, with the assistance of the Head of Service.

40. TIMETABLE OF CRITICAL DATES IN THE CONTRACTING PROCESS FOR REVENUES AND BENEFITS

Considered a report of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services providing an update of key dates in relation to the Revenues and Benefits Contract following the Board's previous consideration of the matter at its meeting on 28th October 2015 (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Corporate Services assisted with the consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that scrutiny of the matter be scheduled for consideration by the Board in approximately 15 months' time (June 2018).

Reason

To acknowledge the contracting process for the Revenues and Benefits Contract and the key dates in that respect and to ensure that scrutiny of the

matter is timely, following the advice of the Strategic Director of Corporate Services in that respect.

41. 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 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Chief Executive assisted with consideration of the report.

RESOLVED that the length of the meeting be extended for up to a further 30 minutes.

Reason

In order to conclude this item of business, in accordance with Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.19.

RESOLVED

1. that the following items be added to the Policy Scrutiny Group's Work Programme, as recommended by the Policy Scrutiny Group at its meeting on 7th February 2017:
 - (i) Draft Empty Homes Strategy (25th April 2017);
 - (ii) Review the Council's current policies and procedures in relation to its methods of conducting surveys and consultation (11th July 2017);

2. that the following items be added to the Policy Scrutiny Group's Work Programme, as requested by the Chair and Vice-chair of the Policy Scrutiny Group since the last meeting of the Group:
 - (i) Housing Assistance Policy (25th April 2017);
 - (ii) Choice Based Lettings Allocation Policy (25th April 2017);
 - (iii) Tenancy Strategy and Policy (to be scheduled);
 - (iv) Houses in Multiple Occupation Accreditation Scheme (to be scheduled);

3. that the item "Changes to Mandatory Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation" scheduled for consideration by the Policy Scrutiny Group on 11th July 2017 be replaced with the item "Housing in Multiple Occupation Licensing Policy" (to be scheduled), as requested by the Chair and Vice-chair of the Policy Scrutiny Group since the last meeting of the Group;

4. that the following item be added to the Board's Work Programme, as suggested by the Chair and Vice-chair of the Policy Scrutiny Group since the last meeting of the Group:

New Housing Capital Programme (Decent Homes) Contract (16th August 2017);

5. that consideration of the item "Parking Matters in the Borough" be rescheduled to the Board's next meeting on 14th June 2017;
6. that forthcoming Executive Key Decisions or decisions to be taken in private by the Executive, set out in Appendix 1 to the report, and scheduled scrutiny of those matters, be noted;
7. that the Annual Procurement Plan, set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be noted;
8. 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;
9. that the Chairs and Vice-chairs of scrutiny groups and panels have particular regard to the amount of work they have programmed moving forward, with a view to recommending to the Board where that might be reduced, where possible and appropriate.

Reasons

1. (i) To enable the Group to scrutinise the draft Strategy before it is submitted to the Cabinet.
(ii) To allow the Group a final opportunity to comment and agree the report before it is considered by the Cabinet.
- 2&3. To ensure the scrutiny of new or revised policies in a timely fashion by the Group.
4. The current Notice of Executive Key Decisions (published 15th March 2017) stated that the Cabinet would be deciding on the award of the new contract at its meeting in October 2017. Consideration of the matter by the Board in August 2017 will ensure timely and effective scrutiny.
5. The Board had been due to consider at this meeting a report setting out the results of the Deputy Lead Member for Regulatory Services and Town Centre's work with officers on parking matters in the Borough, following the Board's consideration of this matter at its meeting on 26th October 2016. The Deputy Lead Member had since advised that he was unable to attend this meeting and, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Board, it was appropriate to reschedule the matter

to the next meeting, so that the Deputy Lead Member was able to attend to assist the Board.

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. To ensure that the information contained within the Work Programme is up to date.
9. The Board briefly discussed at this meeting the amount of work on the Scrutiny Work Programme and whether that was reasonable. Overall, Chairs and Vice-chairs of scrutiny bodies considered that work was carefully planned and considered, would add value and was sustainable. Some items listed were standing items repeated for relevant meetings over the year. However, The Board wished to be effective in its role setting the Work Programme and would be assisted in doing so if Chairs and Vice-chairs undertook the action requested.

NOTES

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at Council on 24th April 2017 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.