

Minutes of a meeting of the Leicestershire Together (Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership) Board held at County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester on Thursday 16 November 2006.

PRESENT

Members

Mr D R Parsons CC (Chairman), Leader of Leicestershire County Council – in the Chair

Councillor M Bevins, Chairman, Hinckley and Bosworth Local Strategic Partnership

Mrs H Broughton, Chairman, Leicestershire Cultural Strategy Forum

Mr P Callis CC, representing Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Combined Fire Authority

Mr J Earnshaw, Chairman, Leicestershire and Rutland Association of Parish and Local Councils

Mr R Flude, representing Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership

Mrs D Gillett, Finance Director, Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce and Business Link

Councillor M Graham, Chairman, Melton Local Strategic Partnership

Ms J Hamilton-Colcough, Chair, Harborough Local Strategic Partnership

Mr M Haslam, Vice-Chairman of ENABLE

Councillor M Hunt, Chairman of Charnwood Together (LSP)

Mr P Panchal, Chief Executive, Leicestershire Ethnic Minority Partnership (LEMP)

Mrs L Pendleton CC, Chairman, Leicestershire Rural Partnership

Mr J B Rhodes CC, Chairman, Leicestershire Police Authority

Councillor G Tacey, Chairman, North West Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership

Mr M Traynor, Vice-Chairman of LeicesterShire Economic Partnership (LSEP) and Chairman of Connexions, LeicesterShire

Mr J Walker, Director of External Relations, Loughborough University (representing the University sector)

Councillor E Webster-Williams, Chairman, Blaby Local Strategic Partnership

Chief-Superintendent M Wilson (Leicestershire Constabulary), representing the Community Safety Programme Board

Observers/Officers in Support

Ms L Aisbett, Chief Executive, Melton Borough Council

Dr K Allen, Leicestershire County and Rutland PCT (Health Sector)

Ms M Antoine, GOEM

Mr S Atkinson, Chief Executive, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Ms C Fisher, Chief Executive, North West Leicestershire District Council

Mr J Leach, representing Chief Executive, Blaby District Council

Ms D Mackay, Senior Policy Officer, Chief Executive's Department, Leicestershire County Council

Mr S F Phipps, representing Chief Executive, Charnwood Borough Council

Ms N Rickard, Policy Team, Leader, Leicestershire County Council
 Mr A Robinson, Assistant Chief Executive, Leicestershire County Council
 Mr H Robinson, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service
 Mrs M Rogers, Leicestershire Learning and Skills Council
 Ms S Smith, Chief Executive, Harborough District Council
 Mr G Cave, Committee Officer, Leicestershire County Council

Also in Attendance

Mr A M Kershaw CC, County Council Cabinet Lead Member with responsibility for the LAA (minute 211)
 Mr J P Wright, LAA Senior Policy and Performance Officer, Leicestershire County Council (minute 211)
 Mr J Prescott, Chief Executive, Leicestershire Rural Community Council (minute 214)
 Mr T Purnell, Policy Group Manager, Leicestershire County Council (minute 217)
 Ms J Hurst-Jones, European Officer, Leicestershire County Council (minute 219)

205. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and extended a particular welcome to new attendees.

206. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were reported on behalf of:-

(a) Board Members

Mr J Connelley (JobCentre Plus), Mr J Gant (Chairman, Leicestershire County and Rutland PCT), Rev G Jackson (Faith Communities' Representative), Mr I D Ould CC (Chairman, Leicestershire Children and Young Persons' Board) and Mrs A White (Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership).

(b) Officers/Observers

Mr B Hayes (Chief Executive, Charnwood Borough Council), Ms J Sensier (GOEM), Mr J Sinnott (Chief Executive, Leicestershire County Council) and Ms S Whiles (Chief Executive, Blaby District Council).

207. Declarations of Interest

Mr Parsons and Mr Rhodes each declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 12 on the agenda (Draft Regional Plan) considered under minute 217 below.

Mr Parsons and Mr Traynor each declared a personal and non-prejudicial interest in respect of item 14 on the agenda (European Social and Regional Development Funds) considered under minute 219 below.

208. Minutes of the meeting of the Leicestershire Together Board held on 3 July 2006

The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 3 July 2006 were agreed and signed.

209. Minutes of the meeting of the Leicestershire Strategic Senior Officers' Group (SSOG) held on 19 October 2006

The minutes of the meeting of the SSOG held on 19 October 2006 were noted.

The Board's attention was drawn to the Invest to Save bids which had been made as detailed under minute 32.

210. Implications of the Local Government White Paper for Leicestershire Together

Mr A Robinson gave a Powerpoint presentation to the Board on the implications for Leicestershire and, in particular, for Leicestershire Together of the recently published Local Government White Paper. Copies of the slides were circulated at the meeting and are filed with these minutes.

The following main points were made:

- The White Paper placed an increased emphasis on enhanced partnership working.
- It would become a duty for upper tier local authorities to prepare local area agreements and to consult on a sustainable community strategy.

(It was noted that a Community Strategy was in place for Leicestershire and that SSOG would be asked to review it to provide a strong foundation for the future.)

- The role of local authorities as strategic leaders and "place shapers" was stressed.
- Local authority Cabinet members should have key roles in the LSP and themed partnerships.

(In this regard, leading roles for councillors were being addressed through the peer review proposals for Leicestershire

Together which were the subject of a further report to this meeting (see minute 212 below.)

- A comprehensive engagement strategy was to be co-ordinated.

(It was intended to refer this to SSOG for development.)

- It should be ensured that the LSP acts as the umbrella body for the themed partnerships.
- A reduced number of approximately 50 targets would be set and developed through the LAA for which more funding would be made available but it would remain area-based. A duty to co-operate between the principal authority and named partners would be imposed.

(It was noted that the current Leicestershire LAA provided a strong base for future changes. It was intended to refer to SSOG for consideration the future arrangements for the economic development and environment block and a review of arrangements for community cohesion.)

- It should be ensured that regional and sub-regional links were improved.
- Neighbourhood empowerment proposals were made.

(In this regard, proposals for Leicestershire were contained in a further report to this meeting of the Board (which recognised the role of elected members) (see minute 214).)

The Chairman commented that Leicestershire was well advanced in developing proposals that address a number of the themes in the White Paper.

211. The 6-monthly Self-Assessment of the Leicestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA)

The Board considered a report by the LAA Lead Performance Officer on the first 6-monthly self-assessment of the LAA attached to which was the draft self-assessment document for submission to GOEM. A copy of the report marked 'B' is filed with these minutes.

Mr A Kershaw CC (the County Council's Cabinet Lead Member with responsibility for the LAA) drew attention to the "outcomes and delivery" chart on page 3 of the self-assessment and also to paragraph 3.6 of the document on data development issues about which he expressed disappointment that, due to the delay in receiving data, 59 of the 140 indicators could not be reported on at this review. He added that many

useful comments had been made from a cross-section of partners at the Leicestershire Together Conference on 30 October.

Mr Wright then expanded on the progress against key issues arising from the self-assessment which indicated that the programme of outcomes was good, the delivery programme was very good, issues were being properly managed and the particular issue regarding data management was being addressed. The Board was informed that block leads were discussing the draft self-assessment with GOEM officials in advance of the Review meeting with GOEM on 20 November. GOEM would then provide its own report to central Government on progress on the Leicestershire LAA.

The following specific comments were made:-

- Mr Haslam drew attention to DEFRA's 'Fly Catcher' database which would be a good data source in respect of fly tipping under the 'Cleaner and Greener' theme. He also commented that the increasing importance being given nationally to climate change issues would need to be reflected in the Refresh process.
- Councillor Hunt considered the recycling target for the County was low compared with the national figure. Members were informed that, although the year 1 target was 45%, the aim was for this to be stretched to 60% by year 3.

It was AGREED that the draft six monthly self assessment of the LAA be noted and endorsed as the final version for submission to GOEM.

212. Developing Leicestershire Together following the Peer Challenge

The Board considered a report of its Peer Challenge Sub-Group attached to which was a draft action plan for the development of Leicestershire Together. A copy of the report marked 'C' is filed with these minutes.

Ms Rickard outlined the recommendations to date of the Peer Challenge Sub-Group and reported that the Sub-Group had noted that the Board may wish it to meet again to consider the developing action plan further before a final report is presented to the Board and the changes launched at its meeting in February 2007.

The following points arose from the ensuing discussion:-

- The proposal that the Leader of the County Council should be ex officio Chairman of the Leicestershire Together Board should be clarified.

- It was not intended to be prescriptive in requiring that all DLSPs should be represented on the Leicestershire Together Board by an elected member, but rather that DLSPs should have regard to this suggestion when appointing their representative to the Board.
- Officers would continue to be invited to attend meetings of the Board in an advisory capacity.

It was AGREED:-

- (i) That the draft action plan and governance chart for the development of Leicestershire Together be approved;
- (ii) That a further meeting of the Peer Challenge Sub Group be arranged for consideration of the developing action plan and a further report from the Sub Group then be made to the next meeting of the Board on 5 February 2007;
- (iii) That the membership arrangements, set out in the report, be agreed in principle and the new membership arrangements would become operational at the February meeting of the Board following prior consideration by the Sub Group and approval by the Chairman of the Board.

213. Leicestershire Community Strategy – Annual Review

The Board considered a report by Leicestershire County Council detailing annual progress on actions contained in the Leicestershire Community Strategy. A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

Members were informed that 54 of the 135 actions in the strategy had now been completed and that arrangements would be made to align the document more closely with the LAA when it is reviewed in 2007/08.

Mr Haslem drew attention to page 25 of the annual update and reported that the achievement of 21 schools with Eco-School status had now been completed.

It was AGREED:-

- (i) That progress against each of the actions within the Community Strategy be noted; and
- (ii) that the Board continues to support the work of individual partners and partnerships in achieving the outstanding actions.

214. Leicestershire Neighbourhood Engagement Policy

The Board considered a report of the Leicestershire Strategic Senior Officers Group (SSOG) seeking approval of the Neighbourhood Engagement Policy. A copy of the report marked 'E' is filed with these minutes.

The report was introduced by Jeremy Prescott (Chief Executive of the Leicestershire Rural Community Council) who had chaired meetings of the Task Group established by SSOG to consider the development of a Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy for Leicestershire in order to ensure a common approach that avoided duplication. Mr Prescott outlined the framework of proposals for Community Forums (Appendix A to the report). In this regard, he drew attention to the proposal that the number of Forums should not exceed 25 as to do otherwise would have additional resourcing issues. It was accepted that there may be some local variation in the way the Forums operate. Regarding the terminology to be used, a suggestion had been made at the last meeting of SSOG for the term 'Area Forum' to be used instead of 'Community Forum'.

The Chairman reported that the proposals had also been considered by the County Council's Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 15 November when two particular comments had been made with which he had agreed, namely: (a) that Community Forum meetings should be resident-focussed; and (b) that there should be some flexibility in the suggested Forum boundaries.

Councillor Tacey reported that the DLSPs generally supported the proposals but they had suggested an amendment to the recommendations in the report in respect of detailed matters, i.e.:

- (a) It was queried why it was necessary for the Leicestershire Together Board to give specific approval to the Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy (Appendix 1 to Appendix A);
- (b) It was considered that the DLSPs should roll out the Forums within the framework adopting it as necessary for local conditions.

Mr A Robinson clarified for the Board that Appendix 1 to Appendix A dealt with a range of community engagement activities and that the Community Forums were part of the proposed framework to be established. It was considered necessary for the Board to agree to both the framework for rolling out the Forums and to policy statement. The intention was that the boundaries of the Forums would be determined by the DLSPs.

Upon further discussion, it was proposed by Councillor Tacey, seconded by Councillor Bevins and AGREED unanimously:-

- (i) That the framework for Community Forums and the Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy, set out in Appendix A to the report, be approved; and
- (ii) that the District LSPs roll out the Community Forums within this framework adapting it as necessary for local conditions.

215. Leicestershire Together Conference 2006

The Board considered a report by Leicestershire County Council providing initial feedback from the annual Leicestershire Together Conference held on 30 October and inviting members to provide feedback on the Conference. Copies of the report were circulated at the meeting and a copy is filed with these minutes.

Members noted that the Conference had been well attended and positive feedback had been received to the sessions. Evaluation forms were also circulated to members who were requested to complete and return these to the County Council.

It was AGREED that the initial feedback from the 2006 Leicestershire Together Conference be noted and a more comprehensive report be presented to the next meeting.

216. Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury

The Board considered a report by Leicestershire County Council providing an update on the Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury Project. A copy of the report marked 'F' is filed with these minutes.

It was AGREED:-

- (i) That the quarterly progress report on the Black and Minority Ethnic Citizens' Jury Project be noted; and
- (ii) that all partners be encouraged to develop and implement their own action plans using the Citizens' Jury Action Plan as a generic framework and to note that assistance and support with this process was available from the Citizens' Jury Lead Officer (Julian Harrison, telephone no. 0116 265 7018, email jharrison@leics.gov.uk); and
- (iii) that Board members would act as champions for the Citizens' Jury Action Plan.

217. Consultation on the Draft Regional Plan

(Mr Parsons and Mr Rhodes each declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in this item as members of the East Midlands Regional Assembly).

The Board considered a report by Leicestershire County Council on the programme for responding to the consultation Draft Regional Plan and the current position on issues that would be taken into account. A copy of the report marked 'G' is filed with these minutes.

Mr Purnell informed the Board of the following main issues:-

- The Draft Regional Plan took account of advice of the County Council that had been submitted to the East Midlands Regional Assembly on the distribution of housing (set out in Appendix 1 to the report).
- The Draft Plan's approach was to proposed large sustainable urban extensions.
- The County Council had reserved its right to amend its final advice to take account of further work now being undertaken.
- The large sustainable urban extensions proposed in the advice to EMRA would generate substantial extra traffic and a transport assessment was therefore being carried out and its results would be used to inform the further report to the County Council's Cabinet in December.
- The Government had recently announced that the 'Three Cities and Three Counties' area, including the whole of Leicestershire, had been designated as a New Growth Point and would be eligible for substantial funding to support the level of housing provision to be agreed through the Regional Plan process. A briefing paper setting out the position in this regard was circulated at the meeting and a copy is filed with these minutes.

The following main comments were made during the discussion:-

- Councillor Hunt stressed that the results of the transport assessment were crucial to future consideration of the proposed allocation of sites. He commented that, although a site 'west of Loughborough' was referred to as a broad location, locally its location was regarded to be narrow.
- Responding to a comment by Mr Haslam, Mr Purnell confirmed that, in respect of the New Growth Point, the delivery plan would take into account the provision of green environmental infrastructure.
- Mr Walker expressed concern that the status of the Science Park, west of Loughborough may become downgraded under the new Regional Plan. Mr Purnell undertook to give consideration to this concern.

It was AGREED:-

- (i) That the issues regarding housing allocations, transport assessments and employment land outlined in the report be noted and to note that these would inform the County Council's revised advice to the East Midlands Regional Assembly on the draft Regional Plan; and
- (ii) That a further report on New Growth Point designation and funding be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

218. Review of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership

The Board considered a report by Leicestershire County Council advising of changes being made to the structure and operations of the Leicestershire Rural Partnership (LRP) and seeking views on how best the LRP could support the delivery of key initiatives, including the LAA, in Leicestershire. A copy of the report marked 'H' is filed with these minutes.

Mrs Pendleton (Chairman of the LRP) outlined the main points in the report and informed members of the decisions of the LRP Board at its September meeting in this regard. She drew particular attention to the LRP Board's decision to seek approval from the Leicestershire Together Board for the LRP's Co-ordination Group to be represented on each of the LAA Block Groups by a 'Rural Issues' champion.

It was AGREED:-

- (i) That the LRP's on-going review of its structure, operations and Rural Strategy be noted;
- (ii) that the proposal that the LRP be represented on each LAA Block Group be supported; and
- (iii) that it be acknowledged that the Strategic Senior Officers' Group had agreed to the LRP taking forward the review of the Rural Strategy and its structure and operations.

219. Review of European Social and Regional Development Funds

(Mr Parsons and Mr Traynor each declared a personal and non prejudicial interest in this item).

The Board considered a report by Leicestershire County Council advising of formal consultations being carried out on the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Operating Programmes and that the Strategic Senior Officers' Group had established a task group to develop responses to the consultations on behalf of Leicestershire Together. A copy of the report marked 'I' is filed with these minutes.

Ms Hurst-Jones explained Leicestershire's current position in relation to the funding criteria for the Programmes and that it might be possible for parts of Leicestershire to receive ERDF monies in the next programme if a strong case could be put forward. Mr Traynor commented that there would be an opportunity to draw significant funding into Leicestershire providing that the necessary preparatory work was begun at this stage.

It was AGREED that the contents of the report be noted.

220. Skills Issues Arising from Partner Activity

Mr Flude circulated at the meeting details of a training course, which had been developed by the Leicestershire and Leicester City Learning Partnership in collaboration with De Montfort University, aimed at people with strategic and/or operational responsibilities and who were involved in partnerships across the public sector in Leicestershire. Details of other courses were also provided. Copies of the details are filed with these minutes. Board members were asked to contact Mr Flude (tel. 0116 282370; email: rflude@llclp.org.uk) for more information if required.

221. Ms Mo Murray

Members were informed that Mo Murray, who had represented the voluntary sector on the Board, had tendered her resignation as a member on grounds of ill-health. The Chairman stated he would write to her on behalf of the Board and express members' appreciation for the contribution she had made to Leicestershire Together and extend their best wishes for the future.

222. Date of Next Meeting

It was NOTED that, as previously agreed, the next meeting of the Board would be held on Monday, 5 February 2007 at 11.00 am.