



## **SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 17 NOVEMBER 2021**

### **ANNUAL DELIVERY REPORT AND PERFORMANCE COMPENDIUM 2021**

#### **DRAFT MINUTE EXTRACT**

The Commission considered a report of the Chief Executive which presented the draft Annual Delivery Report and Performance Compendium for 2021 and which set out some of the impact, significant work and reorientation required to support the Council's major response to the coronavirus pandemic and planning for recovery, which remained ongoing. A copy for the report marked 'Agenda Item 11' is field with these minutes.

Arising from discussion and questions asked, the following points were made:

- (i) A member highlighted the stark contrast in funding received by local authorities and that those located in London/to the South west were generally far better funded than some other areas particularly in the midlands and to the north. It was recognised that the calculation of local government funding had become increasingly complex over the years and it was suggested that a simplified explanation of this would be useful. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Director of Corporate Resources would be able to provide such an explanation.
- (ii) A member commented that the Council had performed well despite its low funded position and had done so year on year for some time. It was suggested that this painted a picture that did not perhaps support the Council's Fair Funding campaign. The Chief Executive emphasised that looking at just the currently available performance data in isolation did not provide the whole picture and highlighted that the report included details of the pressures, risks and demands faced by the Council going forward. The Council had done well despite its low funded position, but it was recognised that this was very unlikely to continue with the demand and funding pressures now emerging and the level of cuts still required.
- (iii) It was suggested that the Covid-19 pandemic had potentially been a tipping point for Leicestershire and it was clear that the County Council could not continue to meet all the demands put on it by Government, other stakeholders and service users, as well as make the savings required to achieve a balanced budget. Members recognised that the Council was becoming increasingly stretched and this would inevitably start to impact

service delivery. Members acknowledged that the County Council had established strong financial foundations over a number of years and had so far been able to respond to pressures, but that it could not continue to meet all the new future demands identified around adult social care and the environment agenda, for example, on the funding currently allocated.

- (iv) A Member emphasised that recent reports had suggested that the County Council would be unlikely to benefit from the levelling up agenda despite being one of the lowest funded county councils in the country. The identified and growing funding gap in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy would likely therefore have to be addressed locally which would inevitably affect both service delivery and council tax rates, unless the Fair Funding campaign was successful.
- (v) Some members expressed frustration at the length of the main report, particularly as this was a public facing document, and suggested that it risked obscuring those key issues both members and the public should concentrate on. It was noted that the Council was obliged to report and include certain performance information to meet its regulatory requirements and that this had increased this year due to new Covid guidance being introduced. However, the Chief Executive recognised that the scale of the information provided was significant and undertook to consider how best to present this in future.
- (vi) The Commission was concerned about the extent to which the report covered wider national issues and pressures rather than focusing on Leicestershire pressures and the County Council's direct areas of responsibility and identified outputs. Whilst informative in providing an overall local and national picture, it was suggested that the lack of focus on County Council activities made effective scrutiny of the Authority's overall performance difficult.
- (vii) The Commission indicated that in future years, it would like for the report, at least for the benefit of scrutiny, to be linked to the direct work of the County Council in order that it could see more clearly where the Council had made an impact and where performance might be below expectation. This would enable the Commission to better identify those areas that may benefit from closer scrutiny in the future.
- (viii) A member suggested that the inclusion of some comparison figures would be helpful to provide some context of what the Council had done in the last year to deliver, for example, sustainable transport options (e.g. to what extent had it had extended or introduced new cycleways and footpaths). It was further suggested that this would better demonstrate some of the negative consequences of the financial pressures faced by the Council e.g. showing how dry waste recycling rates had reduced due to less favourable contract arrangements having to be agreed by the Council in line with Government policy.

- (ix) A member suggested that the use of percentages within the report could be misleading and requested that instead, the actual figures might provide for a better understanding of the data by members and the public.

RESOLVED:

That the comments now made by the Scrutiny Commission be presented to the Cabinet at its meeting 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

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