

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY SCRUTINY PANEL

At a meeting of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny Panel on Wednesday, 13 January 2016 at Authority Chamber - Mann Island, Liverpool

Present: Councillors Wainwright (Chairman), Brown, Connor, Hurley, Killen, Leech, O'Brien, Sullivan and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Jones and McGuire

Absence declared on Council business: None

Also in Attendance: David Parr, Ian Leivesley, Angela Scott, Dr Pernille Kousgaard and three members of the public

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

14 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2015, having been circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

15 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION DEVOLUTION DEAL

The Panel received a report of the Lead Officer – Scrutiny, which provided an update on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Devolution Deal (the Deal).

At its meeting on 20 November 2015, the combined Authority (CA) had approved the Deal. The key elements of the Deal included agreement with Government around devolution powers covering:-

- Economic Development and energy;
- Transport Infrastructure;
- Housing development and planning for growth; and
- Employment and Skills.

It was noted that the Deal also required the LCR to adopt a new governance model with the introduction of a directly elected City Region Mayor, with the first elections to that role taking place in May 2017.

Action

Attached to the report was a copy of the LCR Devolution Agreement. The section on 'Governance' stated that the LCR Mayor and the Liverpool City Region CA would be scrutinised and held to account by the LCR CA Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s). As the Scrutiny Panel had developed some experience of scrutinising within the CA setting, having carried out a number of reviews, it was considered important that the CA used the Panels' experience when developing the new governance arrangements.

Members discussed the following:

- The voting arrangements of the new CA and the autonomous powers of the Directly Elected Mayor;
- The political working arrangements, which included the allocation of portfolio responsibilities to each of the CA Leaders who would act in a supporting and advisory role within their respective policy areas;
- The interim officer arrangements with the appointment of the Head of Paid Service (Ged Fitzgerald) and the Chief Executive of Merseytravel (Frank Rogers);
- The preparation of a revised Constitution document which would be governed by legislation. This would be brought to the Scrutiny Panel as a working document;
- The role of the 'Shadow' CA from June 2016; and
- The commencement of the new CA with a Directly Elected Mayor, from May 2017.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The signing of the Devolution Deal be noted and welcomed; and
- 2) Members' comments on the new arrangements be noted.

16 AFFORDABLE TRANSPORT - SHORT HOP BUS FARES REVIEW

The Panel received a report of the Lead Officer – Scrutiny, on the Affordable Transport – Short Hop Bus Fares Review.

Lead Officer -
Scrutiny

As part of its Work Programme, the Panel identified Affordable Transport as one of its topics for review. This was further refined to examine the issue of the cost of short hop bus fares.

Attached as an appendix was a report which contained a number of recommendations from the work which the Panel had undertaken.

Councillor Brown commented on the issue of the removal of dedicated bus lanes in Liverpool and the impact this had had on arrival and/or journey times; it was noted that this had been commented upon by two of the bus companies that had provided evidence.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Subject to the inclusion of text relating to the impact of the removal of bus lanes, the report be endorsed; and
- 2) the Combined Authority be asked to consider the recommendations and report back to a future meeting of the Panel.

Lead Officer -
Scrutiny

17 EUROPEAN FUNDING - PROGRESS ON RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PANEL

The Panel received a report of the Lead Officer – Scrutiny, which provided an update on the progress made in relation to the implementation of the Scrutiny Panel’s recommendations arising out of the review of European Funding.

The Panel had approved a report and recommendations from its first review at its meeting on 8 April 2015. The response of the Combined Authority was considered at the meeting of the Panel on 8 July 2015 with a request for an update to be received in six months’ time.

Attached as an appendix to the report was a detailed update on action taken on each of the recommendations to date. Pernille Kousgaard attended the meeting to appraise Members of the current position as it related to Governance Arrangements and the formal role of the Combined Authority; the request for “Intermediate Body” status (which had been granted as part of the Devolution Deal); and the impact this would have on the Commissioning/Bidding Framework.

The Panel wished to thank Dr Kousgaard for attending the meeting and dealing with Members' questions.

RESOLVED: That the progress as reported be noted and a final update be presented to the Panel in 12 months' time.

18 DECISIONS OF THE COMBINED AUTHORITY

The Panel received a report of the Lead Officer – Scrutiny, which provided Members with a note of some significant decisions made by the Combined Authority since October 2015.

The report provided a digest of decisions made at Combined Authority meetings on 16 October 2015, 20 November 2015 and 18 December 2015.

Members agreed that this digest of decisions was useful and requested this be a standing item on future agendas and should include significant decisions made by the Merseytravel Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Lead Officer -
Scrutiny

19 WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel received a report of the Lead Officer – Scrutiny, on the Panel's Work Programme.

The initial Work Programme was set by the Panel in October 2014. It had completed reviews on European Funding and Affordable Transport, with the Housing Review to commence with its first meeting set for 27 January 2016. It was noted that of the original list of topics, one on Skills and Learning remained, although it was anticipated that this would also be completed before the end of the municipal year.

Members discussed the options for a Work Programme beyond 2015/16, and considered a break in the schedule would provide the opportunity to reflect on the first year of scrutiny, what the Panel had achieved and, (subject to the inevitable changes in the wider role of the CA and the Scrutiny function referred to elsewhere on the agenda), take time to consider future scrutiny needs as work progresses on the implementation of the Devolution Deal.

RESOLVED: That the content of the 2016/17 Work Programme be considered at the Annual meeting of the

Scrutiny Panel.

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Meeting ended at 1.07 p.m.