

Leicester
City Council

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND REGENERATION
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27th JULY 2005

REVIEW OF THE SPAR INVESTIGATION 2005

Report of the Chief Executive

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with a review of the in-depth investigation carried out by Leicester's Night Economy Review Group on behalf of the sponsoring committee SPAR and which officers in the Chief Executive's Office supported.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Night-time economy investigation is the first of its type to be undertaken by the Council and received praise from external organisation and partners, the public and Council officers. The exercise has provided the Council with a number of challenges, particularly around the concept of unified advice for those officers who had to support Councillors in the development of what is a Member-led process.
- 2.2 A number of principles were adopted for carrying out the investigation based on good practice, these addressed how contributors were to be involved in the process as well as how reports would be presented.
- 2.3 Based on discussions with the agencies involved in the review, and those who responded to the questionnaire survey, the majority rated their experience highly and felt that the Council should undertake more investigations of this nature on other subjects.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Strategic Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee are recommended:
- (i) note the report and the positive feedback that the night-time economy review received,

- (ii) consider topics for other investigations they would like officers to research and report back on, and
- (iii) ask Cabinet to agree that any further reviews take account of the feedback provided by contributors to this investigation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

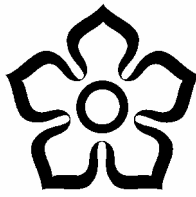
- 4.1 It was agreed at the meeting of SPAR in November 2004 the investigation the general cost of the review was met by the financial and human resources set aside by the Chief Executive's Office to support scrutiny committees in 2004/05. Apart from officer time the only direct costs that have been for printing and graphics work, for the draft and final report.
- 4.2 Also as agreed in November 2004, the costs of the Member's visit in March 2004 was met by Regeneration and Culture through existing departmental budgets, and did not exceed the sum of £1000 reported to the committee.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Under Part 2, Article 6 of the Council's Constitution, the role of Scrutiny Committees is (among others) to "...as appropriate, make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council, Cabinet or to any committee in connection with the discharge of its functions" and to "consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants".
- 5.2 In May 2004 the Council resolved that Scrutiny Committees should experiment with new ways of working. It was further resolved by the Council in July 2004 that certain committees would consider the benefits of working together jointly. A report went to Council in March this year detailing the results of such methods, with a further report is expected in September 2005.
- 5.3 The investigation outlined in this report could be seen as a contribution to these experiments. Members are however minded that future investigations of a similar scope to that covered in this report, should be carried out within the context of the role of Scrutiny Committees as set out in 5.1 above. There will also need to be an agreed rationale for the role of any third parties invited to contribute to any future investigations.
- 5.4 It is a matter of law that a committee that exercises delegated functions cannot delegate such function to any other person or body.
- 5.5 Any information that is supplied to the Council as part of the investigation, may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection and the Freedom of Information Acts. *John McIvor, Ext. 7035*

6. **AUTHOR**

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LEICESTER'S CITY CENTRE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY
SPAR INVESTIGATION 2005

Report of the Chief Executive

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 Report

Introduction

- 1.1 In May 2004 the Council resolved that Scrutiny Committees should experiment with new ways of working and in November 2004 the Strategic, Regeneration and Planning Scrutiny Committee (SPAR) agreed to investigate Leicester's city centre night-time economy and set-up Leicester's Night-time Economy Review Group to undertake the work. This investigation was the first of its type by the Council and has received praise from external organisation and partners, the public and Council officers.
- 1.2 Support for the investigation was provided by the Chief Executive's Office with support from Committee Services. Being the first review of its type the exercise has provided the Council with a number of challenges, particularly around the concept of unified advice for those officers who had to support Councillors in the development of what is a Member-led process.
- 1.3 The role of the public and external organisation in the investigation was also new. While anecdotal evidence indicated much support for the exercise officers took the consultation on the draft report as an opportunity to gather their views and opinions.

Officer Approach to Investigation

- 1.4 Officers adopted a number of principles in their approach to the investigation. This included how contributors were to be involved in the process as well as how reports would be presented.
- 1.5 The style of the Review Groups' draft report was adopted to distinguish it from other Council reports, as was the covering report presented to the SPAR (*considered previously at this meeting*) commending the conclusions and recommendations. While the final report will be produced by the Council's Creativity Works and made available to all contributors and interested parties.
- 1.6 Regarding the involvement of the contributors to the investigation the following principles, based on good practice from other Local Authorities and the Centre for Public Scrutiny, were adopted:
 - Clearly defined terms of reference and careful scoping of the exercise in order to make it effective as possible,
 - That the rules of the Council's Constitution governing the procedure and practice of Scrutiny Committees were observed during the investigation,
 - Held in public and in line with the rules governing access to information,
 - Witnesses kept informed throughout the review process
 - Worked closely with the department most likely to be affected by the review,
 - The financial constraints of the review were identified at the start and the process managed within it,
 - All reports were produced in the name of the Review Group or sponsoring committee, and
 - Supported in the same way as for other scrutiny meeting, with the exception of visits, scoping/brainstorming meetings
- 1.7 The leaflet 'Attending Scrutiny...As a Witness' that was produced to support attendees to the Health Scrutiny Committee was also used to provide the public and external contributors with an idea of what they could expect when they attended a meeting of the Review Group to give evidence.

Feedback on the Process

- 1.8 As part of the consultation on the draft report contributors were sent a questionnaire seeking their views on the investigation into Leicester's night-time economy and the value of the Council undertaking such projects in the future.

- 1.9 Approximately 70 questionnaires (*several questionnaires were sent to partner organisations including a number to City Council officers*) were sent out, of which 12 were returned (*5 from individuals and 7 from those representing an organisation*). Details of the responses provided are set out in Appendix A.
- 1.10 Overall 75% rated the overall investigation highly, with 83% rating it highly in terms of its ability to engage the public and stakeholders. Of those who attended one of the public sessions 78% rated the experience highly. Those who had responded on behalf of an organisation were more likely to be positive about the whole process, while all those that gave a preference agreed that the Council should undertake more investigations of this nature.
- 1.11 In light of the nature of this exercise the type of investigations respondents wished to see the Council undertake related to the city centre and the night-time economy. Anti-social behaviour and the marketing/promotion of the city centre being the two most popular suggestions.
- 1.12 Respondents were also asked to put forward suggestions on how the investigation could have been improved. The answers provided give an indication of the kinds of issues similar exercises in the future should consider.
- 1.13 For example, the amount of time given to the public to give their evidence compared to professionals and whether any level of disproportional influence is merited. Consideration to adopting less formal public sessions, such as those adopted by the night-time economy review, and undertaking focus groups that could allow for more in-depth scrutiny of an issue. Limiting political point scoring and providing tighter recommendations with an action plan and costs.
- 1.14 Comments were also received in other ways. Through e-mail and discussions, the police indicated their support for the process and the findings of the review though not agreeing with all the remarks directed at them. While a meeting with the City Centre Project Board illustrated their support for the process undertaken by the Review Group and its findings. For example, the need for a more holistic approach planning attractions in the city centre, such as the Market that has been developed over the years to meet a specific need during the day with probable little regard to its function in the evening.
- 1.15 The number of occasions the study has recently been referred to in meetings concerning the city centre is also testimony to the support it has and the role many feel it can play in developing a diverse and vibrant city centre.
- 1.16 Lastly in the words of one respondent to the survey “the challenge will be how you take your actions forward”.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 It was agreed at the meeting of SPAR in November 2004 the investigation the general cost of the review was met by the financial and human resources set aside by the Chief Executive's Office to support scrutiny committees in 2004/05. Apart from officer time the only direct costs that have been for printing and graphics work, for the draft and final report.
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3 Legal Implications

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- 3.4 It is a matter of law that a committee that exercises delegated functions cannot delegate such function to any other person or body.
- 3.5 Any information that is supplied to the Council as part of the investigation may be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection and the Freedom of Information Acts. *John McIvor, Ext. 7035*

4 Other Implications

| OTHER IMPLICATIONS | YES/NO | PARAGRAPH REFERENCES WITHIN SUPPORTING PAPERS |
|-------------------------------|--------|--|
| Equal Opportunities | NO | |
| Policy | NO | |
| Sustainable and Environmental | NO | |
| Crime and Disorder | YES | 1.11 |
| Human Rights Act | NO | |
| Older People on Low Income | NO | |

5 Background Papers – Local Government Act 1972

Implications Of The Nighttime Economy Of Leicester, Strategic
Planning and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee, 15th September 2004

Leicester's City Centre Night-time Economy, SPAR, 10th November
2005

6 Consultations

Consultee
Andy Thomas, Regeneration & Culture
Jeff Miller, Regeneration & Culture

Date Consulted
27th June 2004
27th June 2004