



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Joel - Chair

Councillor Batool  
Councillor Kitterick  
Councillor O'Neill  
Councillor Porter  
Councillor Waddington

Councillor Dave  
Councillor March  
Councillor Osman  
Councillor Rae Bhatia  
Councillor Zaman

In Attendance

City Mayor – Sir Peter Soulsby  
Assistant City Mayor Councillor Sood (Online)

Youth Council Representative - Shanade Marsden

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**149. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair welcomed those present.

Apologies were received from Councillor Pickering. She would join online.

**150. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

Councillor March declared a tangential interest with regard to Council Tax.

**151. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2025 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **152. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair noted that the Committee was tasked with challenging officers and Councillors, and asked that they do so with respect.

The Chair noted that papers could be taken as read, and as such officers did not need to go through reports page-by-page.

## **153. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING**

It was noted that members had been updated via email.

It was noted that issues on transport affordability had not yet been taken to Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency scrutiny.

## **154. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATION AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations and statements of case had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

## **155. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

## **156. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which provided an update on the status of outstanding petitions against the Council's target of providing a formal response within three months of being referred to the Divisional Director.

With regard to the Oakland Avenue petition, it was noted that a meeting had been held with the City Transport Director and was almost resolved. The status of this petition could be changed to amber.

With regard to the Peebles Way petition, this was still pending, however, the Assistant City Mayor for Environment and Transport had been briefed and a *pro forma* was imminent.

AGREED:

That the status of the outstanding petitions be noted.

## **157. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR**

The Chair accepted the following questions to be asked to the City Mayor:

The Chair invited members to raise questions for The City Mayor.

- The attending Young People's Council Representative asked for an update on the market-place. The City Mayor responded that there were ongoing archaeological finds at the site, and works should continue, for completion the following year.
- In response to a question from the Young People's Council Representative on opportunities for young people to trade, the City Mayor indicated that this could be possible with flexible pop-up stall options.
- In response to member questions regarding the X Ltd mitigation case, the City Mayor advised:
  - Legal advice currently limited the sharing of details for 10 days.
  - This was a unique case which had seen significant input from external auditors.
  - The Director of Finance explained this was not something the Council regularly saw and was an operational matter. It was customary for the Council to handle legal claims and the Council was clear that the settlement was in the best interest of the taxpayer. Full details of why the decision was confidential has been published and was allowable within the constitution that is based on law. The decision would be brought to a private session of scrutiny in the future.

**AGREED**

- 1) That the City Mayor would discuss with the City Barrister the possibility of expediting the sharing of details regarding the X Ltd mitigation case.
- 2) That the responses to the questions raised be noted

## **158. SCRUTINY REVIEW - A REVIEW OF THE CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

The Chair submitted a report, which was taken as read, examining changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. Members were invited to comment on the recommendations put forward in the report. In response the following was noted:

- The Equality Impact Assessment was considered as part of the original

decision.

- Communications encouraged those requiring support to make early contact.
- The website was adaptable to different languages.
- Support applications could be accepted through councillors, and more information on support mechanisms could be presented to the commission.
- Forecasting for the year indicated a reduction in savings.
- Households where couples both receive Personal Independence Payment (PIP) are automatically awarded this through the discretionary scheme.
- Consultations on policy changes were conducted based on the extent and significance of the amendments, in line with guidance from the City Barrister.
- A full year of data would allow analysis of debt accumulation.

#### AGREED

- 1) That the report and comments be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the commission accept the report recommendations.
- 4) That the report be presented to the Executive and the response from the Executive be brought back to the Commission

*Cllr Porter left during the consideration of this item.*

#### **159. SCRUTINY REVIEW - A REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS**

The Chair submitted a report, which was taken as read, examining support for Adventure Playgrounds. Members were invited to comment on the recommendations put forward in the report. In response the following was noted:

- The report would be presented to the executive, and the response would be communicated to the commission.
- Members requested that outcomes were expedited for prompt support to the playgrounds.
- Benchmarking information, particularly relating to Manchester, indicated the potential for positive outcomes.
- Members requested more information on the equality impact assessment.

- The underspend reflected initial steps toward addressing the financial deficit, but did not represent available surplus funds.
- Members drew attention to the recommendation that the Council provide longer leases, to help play associations be eligible for certain types of funding. It was noted that the property team were investigating possibilities.
- Members requested that an equality impact assessment on the eventuality of the closure of Adventure Playgrounds be produced by the year end.

#### **AGREED:**

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That the commission accept the report recommendations.
- 4) That the report be presented to the Executive and the response from the Executive be brought back to the Commission.

### **160. UPDATE ON ASSET SALES**

The Strategic Director of City Development and Neighbourhood Services gave a slide presentation, as attached with the agenda, updating the Committee on asset sales.

In response to member questions and comments, it was noted that:

- Public interest was measured through interactions with the building asset and likely impact to services being delivered from these sites.
- Corporate assets providing a return below a 4% yield could be considered for sale as borrowing costs are higher.
- Sustained growth and future prosperity were central to deliberations.
- A range of companies were engaged for evaluations together with in house experts.
- Disposal figures would be circulated to members.
- Special purchases were exclusive transactions, where they were the only person able, for example if selling a freehold to the current lessor.
- The Council would consider selling if the value was agreed commercially.
- The board would give consideration on potential for community interest, prior to disposal.
- Before a decision rigorous assessment of the asset was completed in

terms of value, public interest, community and strategic development value,

- Capitalisation had not been required due to a positive financial performance. A budget gap remained, and asset sales may still be necessary.
- Targets included mixed criteria.

#### AGREED

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) To circulate the percentage of total assets that could be disposed of.

*Councillor Osman left as the item concluded.*

### **161. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF CONSTRUCTION**

The Director of Estates and Building Services gave a presentation outlining the environmental impacts of construction projects and the standards achieved by recent council projects.

In addition to the information on the slides as attached with the agenda, other key points to note were as follows:

- The solar panels at St Margaet's Bus Station were expected to generate more electricity than the building needed. It was also a good example of making use of an existing building to cut down on emissions.
- Dock 3-5 were built to high environmental specifications. They were well insulated, had Photovoltaic (PV) panels on the roof, had heat pumps and were also expected to generate more electricity than they used. This was measured through the Energy Performance Certificate.
- Having 'Green Features' could help in the marketing of units. For example, one company moving into Dock had chosen it partly due to having criteria for their accommodation to meet high environmental specifications.
- New Council housing had high environmental specifications, including air source heat pumps, and additional benefits, including cheaper bills for tenants, were emphasised.
- In terms of the carbon impact of construction materials, buildings were re-used where possible. Canopy was an example of this, prior to the upgrade, the Energy Performance Rating had been D, following the upgrade it was now expected to reach B, which was close to that of a new-build.
- Stocking Farm had incorporated all energy efficiency and low carbon

measures. Calculations were being trialled on how to keep carbon emissions low.

- Existing buildings were being retrofitted, including with solar panels.

The Chair invited the committee to raise questions and comments. Key points to note were as follows:

- There was a system in place for monitoring operational buildings. Figures were gathered each year, and a carbon footprint was calculated. Buildings were looked at in terms of how well they were performing or otherwise, and detail was looked at with regards to how new buildings were performing against what was expected of them. In these cases, minor adjustments were often needed following the initial build, such as with heating, and this could optimise efficiency.
- Buildings were not checked at set dates, checks were ongoing through the annual process of collecting figures. If the building was found not to be performing as expected, then a review would be undertaken at that point to consider how the building could be further improved or the systems optimised. An example of this were tweaks made on the way systems worked in Dock. A company had been consulted that fitted the systems and had provided extra training, ensuring staff in buildings knew how to operate systems.
- Ratings were always being looked to be increased, for example in the Sports Estate, the 'Clean and Green' initiative had been launched with a view to upgrade. Additionally, more energy efficiency was sought for key buildings such as City Hall, and schools were being worked on too.
- More was being done in terms of trying to reduce the 'embodied carbon' of construction materials, however, as with other local authorities and the wider construction sector, this had been slower to take off than reducing the 'operational' emissions. The focus had been primarily on the operation of buildings; therefore, more was now being done to try and reduce the carbon footprint of the materials. Stocking Farm was an example due to the way that calculations had been done on the embodied carbon from materials, however, there were limitations in terms of low-carbon products available, for example, low-carbon concrete was available, but in limited quantities.
- Timber frame could be a good solution and had been used for structures such as the Food Hall at Leicester Market, however, it was not always a preferred material due to technical issues.
- The Planning system has a role in ensuring that all developments meet certain standards for energy efficiency and reduction of carbon emissions. Currently the Local Planning Authority applied the Core Strategy Policy CS02 on Climate Change when assessing Planning Applications, however, the Council's exemplar standard also went above current policy and legal requirements. For Planning Applications for

major development an energy statement was needed, setting out how the proposed development will save energy and cut carbon emissions. Building regulations were now more stringent and would become more stringent still in the Future Homes Standard and Future Buildings Standard.

- In terms of controlling environmental damage from construction, on site there were environmental protection rules in place such as the prevention of dust escaping and ensuring that no liquid pollution entered rivers.
- In terms of changes in technology and futureproofing, solar panels were now permitted in development unless there were specific circumstances. More use of heat pumps was being considered, and as such it was ensured that radiators and pipework were installed in such a way that gas boilers could be swapped out for heat pumps in the future, without having to replace all the radiators and pipework. Changes in technology were difficult to predict.
- Issues surrounding district heating would be looked into.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.

## **162. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING APRIL-JUNE 2025/26**

The Director of Finance submitted a report providing an early forecast for the 2025/26 financial year.

The Committee was recommended to consider the overall position presented within this report and make any observations it saw fit.

The Chair invited the commission to raise questions and comments. Key points to note were as follows:

- The report considered the budget that had been approved and what had happened since. Savings had been approved as part of the last monitoring report, and this was reflected in the current budgets.
- The Corporate budget considered factors with limited control, such as housing benefits and discretionary Council Tax support and audit fees and bank charges. Corporate Services referred to services such as Human Resources and IT.
- Homelessness was still a key pressure. Adult Social Care was also a pressure with regard to package costs. There were also pressures in children's residential care and internal care. Additionally, the pay award was slightly more than had been budgeted for in February.

- The summary report was at high-level as too much detail could lose context. Therefore each narrative area had a summary report with key figures, for example in Adult Social Care, much of the key figures were to do with staff vacancies.
- There was a need to pay attention to any areas forecast for overspend.
- With regard to achieving the savings target, directors were met with regularly and there was confidence that it would be achieved. Some decisions would required formal decisions.
- Savings were noted in the reports, where Directors had actioned.
- It was suggested that a report could go to the Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency scrutiny commission on falls in Planning and Building Control income in terms of whether it signals a decline in construction in the City or whether it is within the margin of error.
- A report could come to the Committee on the use and take-up of the Household Support Fund.
- With regard to revised fees for cremation services, it was confirmed that the Council expected to raise £300k form cremation services. Points were raised surrounding numbers declining at City crematoria and people using crematoria outside the city. It was suggested that crematoria needed to be profitable and as such facilities needed to be improved.
- It was clarified that the Action Plan following the CQC report had been intended to go to an Adult Social Care scrutiny commission that had been postponed. A formal plan would come before scrutiny in November.
- With regard to staffing and vacancies in Adult Social Care in terms of Social Workers and Occupational Therapists it was explained that:
  - Sine April, 13 qualified social workers and an occupational therapist had been added to the establishment, which had been funded through vacancy level turnover. This insured that staff were in place and the budget was optimised.
  - There were a total of 208 Social Workers in the current establishment with 31 vacancies.
  - 17 Newly Qualified Social Workers had started.
  - The current vacancy rate was 7%, which was low compared to national figures.
  - 15 overseas experienced social workers had been recruited since last November, from South Africa and Zimbabwe, working to Level 3 Social Worker qualifications.
  - There were 14.5 Occupational Therapists with two vacancies, although one was awaiting starting. Some triage and assessment had been outsourced. In June 2024 the waiting list was 1160, this had reduced to 288.
  - £790k was spent on agency workers, workers now had have three year post qualifying experience in a local authority to be an agency worker and there were regional pay caps, which had been

implemented by government agencies.

- Information could be provided on how many staff were capitalised, however, it was noted that the capitalisation of staff was not a new concept.
- OSC requested Councillors were kept informed of modification to public toilet opening times in their wards.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission be taken into account by the lead officers.
- 3) That a report go to EDTCE Scrutiny on Planning and Building Control income.
- 4) That a report come to OSC on the Household Support Fund

#### **163. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING APRIL-JUNE 2025/26**

The Director of Finance submitted a report presenting the position of the capital programme for 2025/26 as at the end of June 2025.

The Committee was recommended to consider the overall position presented within this report and make any observations it saw fit.

The Commission were invited to ask questions and make comments and the officers to respond.

- A timeline could be provided on improvements to the Railway Station. It was clarified that the project was not funded with Council Money and any additional costs would not be picked up by the Council. There was no change in terms of the planning application.

AGREED

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That comments made by members of this commission to be taken into account by the lead officers.

#### **164. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The work programme for the Committee was noted.

#### **165. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 8:44pm.

