



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
CULTURE AND NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Dawood – Chair
Councillor Mohammed – Vice Chair

Councillor Agath
Councillor Chauhan
Councillor Karavadra

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Halford
Councillor Singh Johal

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12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th August 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

15. CHAIRS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leicester Mercury had reported that the Phoenix Building had unsafe cladding. The Chair asked Officers present for comment.

16. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

17. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

18. VOLUNTARY COMMUNITY SECTOR ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY REPORT

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submitted a report to update the Commission on the Voluntary Community Sector Engagement Strategy. A presentation was provided on the pledges and actions of the VCSE Strategy including some further updates to these.

Councillor Malik, Assistant City Mayor, Communities, Adult Learning, Jobs and Skills introduced the report. He informed the Commission that the item should have gone to the last Scrutiny meeting before the election, but due to a power cut the meeting was cancelled. He explained that it was a key service in the local community and played a crucial part in engaging the communities that can be harder to reach. Leicester City Council as a Local Authority acknowledge the importance the strategy has, which is mainly focused on a reconnect, refocus and rebuild approach for us to understand the sector and the communities needs and wishes.

The report and the following points were noted:

- The strategy will help to coordinate planning and working across the Councils divisions and service areas in relation to local VCSE groups, organisations, projects and services to develop better ways of working closely with VCSE Organisations.
- More regular meetings with a variety of representatives from the Local VCSE Sector and other Civil Society Partners, especially to help the review of the progress of the strategy.
- The VCSE team work with My Choice who have done some work with Be Inspired to help collect important data, which gave a better picture of the groups and organisations across the city, so the data would be more enhanced. The data would be used to create a map of VCSE groups and organisations across the city, on a ward by ward basis with support from the Ward Councillors.
- Once the Map had been signed off, it could then be used and shared by Ward Councillors to understand which groups and organisations exist in their wards and offer support for residents wanting to know more about VCSE groups.
- The focus would be to work with Leicester City based businesses, that have an understanding of the business landscape in the city and play a significant role within it.
- Work would be completed to build relationships and gain an understanding of organisations roles within VCSE, to enable a matching exercise.
- The VCSE Team currently use an organisation called MyCake which takes and interprets organisational and financial data from the Charity Commission and other sectors, which gives a picture of VCSE groups and organisations across the city on a subsector basis.

AGREED:

1. The VCSE will be a part of a strategic conversation.
2. The VCSE and LCC boards to potentially co-produce and join funding submissions together.
3. To consider a team for community developments to support and empower community groups.
4. Develop a business pledge for local businesses to sign up to be in partnership with LCC.
5. For the VCSE team to engage more with Ward Councillors in delivering the strategy.

19. DRAFT CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRIES STRATEGY REPORT

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment submitted a report to update the Commission on the Draft Cultural Industries Strategy.

Councillor Clarke, Deputy City Mayor for Climate, Economy and Culture introduced the item. He noted that this was a huge opportunity to develop a strategy that will enable our creative and cultural industries to do even better in Our City and to thrive. It also what funders are looking to see and would expect a strategy to be in place, to ensure that organisations and the Council can receive funding for a thriving creative and cultural calendar.

Members noted the report and the following points:

- The strategy is a joint initiative with Leicester City Council, Arts Council England and both universities in the city.
- The first round of the consultant had just completed with 80 responses, the data was being analysed.
- A further round of consultation was due to take place face to face with a host of other organisations.
- The city had done well in recent funding lines for the Arts Council. A host of new organisations had been added to the group that the Arts Council provides core funding for, which allows LCC more capacity.
- The LCC are keen to create a new Spirit Partnership, to create more joined up working across the sector.
- LCC had been very successful in attracting resources for creative industries. An example is Pilot House Scheme, on King Street that is referenced in the strategy. The scheme is specifically designed to be a workspace for new creative businesses, with particular focus on the design community.
- Another example is Space City on the development of new workspace. Where another 60,000sqf that will be available for new tech businesses in the spring of 2024.
- Both schemes were supported by the levelling up fund, round one allocations.
- There are different ways in which arts and culture activities can be used to raise ambition and help communities in a variety of settings.

AGREED:

The commission to receive the full report, once it is completed.

20. WARD FUNDING ANNUAL REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a summary report updating the Commission on the findings of the Ward Funding Annual Report.

Lee Warner, Head of Neighbourhood Services led on the presentation. Members noted the report and the following was noted:

- Currently there were not any plans to reduce the funding amount each ward receives.
- A Member training session was happening in October on Ward Meetings and funding.
- Each Ward receives the same amount of funding, regardless of the size and number of Ward Councillors.
- Most ward funding is spent on the 5 categories outlined in the report. On occasion requests are made outside of the categories and requests are different each year.
- The data based on the last two years hadn't shown an increase in the amount of funding requested.
- Further work needed to be completed on the guidelines for who was able to apply for ward funding and the amount of funding issued. Councillor Dempster suggested a task and finish group with Ward Councillors or as a Scrutiny Commission.

AGREED:

1. To consider increasing the amount of ward funding.
2. To set up a task and finish group to complete work around ward funding.
3. To recognise volunteers that support community work within the wards.

21. WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.