



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 30 JUNE 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Cassidy Chair)

Councillor Joshi
Councillor Porter

Councillor Pantling
Councillor Westley

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In Attendance:

City Mayor, Sir Peter Soulsby

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Batool, Councillor Joel and Councillor Halford.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Committee held a moment of silence in remembrance of the former Chief Constable Simon Cole.

The City Mayor, took the opportunity to pay his tributes to the former Chief Constable.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS

The Chair noted that a table of actions from previous meetings had been circulated for information. The actions pending were from the Police Crime Commissioner's Office and the Chair informed the Committee he would be following up the issues that had been raised.

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

AGREED:

That the Terms of Reference be noted.

7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

AGREED:

That the Membership of the Committee be noted, as follows:

Chair: Councillor Cassidy
Vice-Chair: Councillor Gee

Councillors Batool, Halford, Joel, Joshi, Pantling, Porter, Thalukdar and Westley

8. DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE 2022/23

AGREED:

That the dates of the Overview Select Committee 2022/23 be noted as follows:

Thursday 30 June 2022
Thursday 8 September 2022
Thursday 3 November 2022
Thursday 15 December 2022
Thursday 8 February 2023
Thursday 23 March 2023

The meetings to commence at 5.30pm.

9. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS 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.

10. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

11. 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.

It was noted that the petition on Hungarton Boulevard would be debated at Full Council in July.

AGREED:

That the status of the outstanding petitions be noted, and to remove those petitions marked 'Petition Complete' Ref: 21/11/04, 22/02/02, 22/02/03 and 22/03/02 from the report.

12. SURVEY OF LEICESTER

The City Mayor introduced the item on the Survey of Leicester and noted that the last survey of this type conducted in-house with a similar breadth of topics and provided a wonderful snapshot of the city.

It was also noted that new information from the Census report was emerging and was being analysed. The survey was a useful supplement to the census because it provided information on topics not covered by the census and can be analysed in greater depth as the council owns the record-level data. Data from the latest Census report suggested that the city had an 11.8% increase in population in the last decade, which was above the England increase of 6.6%.

The Corporate Data Consultant delivered a presentation providing the Committee with an overview on the Survey of Leicester.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- The scope of the work carried out so far in the report was not the definitive or final version, comments raised by Members of the Committee can be included when producing the final report
- The cost of Council Tax was included within the utilities section
- There were real concerns that 10% of people reported on loneliness and Members of the Committee requested that the findings of the survey be taken seriously to ensure best service to the people of the city
- The findings suggested that there were people who did not have digital access or digital literacy, as a council it was important on how to alleviate this issue and to consider this as a guide for the authority to understand on how to best communicate with the people of Leicester
- Members of the Committee were reassured that public services were open to those groups that indicated in the survey they felt excluded from public services, but it was noted that it was vital that the authority understood the reasons as to why people felt isolated and both the positive and negative points in the findings of the survey be recognised
- The Chair of the committee suggested it was important for each of the Scrutiny Commissions to consider this survey on their work programmes and prompt debate at each of their individual Commissions areas

- Members of the Commission thanked Officers for the survey that provided vital information that can provide the grounds for in depth scrutiny
- It was suggested that although resolving the issues raised by the findings would take time, it gave the authority information to adapt policies in accordance with the findings of the survey

In further discussions it was noted that the figures on deprivation were high, and this survey was conducted before the cost-of-living crisis. It was suggested that comparisons to other similar cities and links between topics would be beneficial to further understand the information and that the information derived from the survey could help the future shape of the city.

AGREED:

- 1) That each individual Scrutiny Commission be recommended to look into the survey in more detail and:
- 2) That the Officers be thanked for providing the Committee with the presentation of the survey.

13. ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY - MICROSITE DEMO

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education introduced the item on the Anti-Poverty Strategy Microsite, including the new 'BetterOff Leicester' web tool

The Anti-Poverty Project Officer delivered a presentation to the committee demonstrating how the microsite worked.

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education informed the Committee that the targeted approach of work was to ensure that the work resulted in having a more positive impact on users. Work was underway with the Hospitals the Universities and the Police in the city as they were major employers to identify what they could do to improve the lives of their workforce and families and work with VCS organisations could help better understand any issues and challenges we may face.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- Members of the Committee had received positive feedback from constituents that had been directed to the site and that pensioners using the site had requested further information on pensions be added to the site
- It was noted that the initial launch of the microsite was a soft launch to ensure the site operated well and that the figures had suggested that it has worked well
- The site would have additional information and adjustments as more information is received
- A Member of the Committee was concerned on the cost of the project and whether the application was the best use of resources and whether the resources would have been of better use by improving the existing services during the difficult times at hand

- Members that had accessed the microsite suggested that it was important to roll out the publicity of the app and use the various faith organisations in the city to publicise the site
- Members of the Commission were reassured that the screen reader on the site could dictate translation in various different languages and that the option to use volunteer groups in the city to help guide users could be explored further
- It was noted that the Terms of Use explains the Privacy Policy to the user and that although there was a facility to share information, there was no database that held the input information

The Chair noted that the scoping document for the Overview Select Committee Task Group would be brought to the Committee in September and the Microsite could support with the Task Groups work.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education be requested to consider the comments made by the Committee Members;
- 2) That the Officers be thanked for the development of the new microsite; and
- 3) That the report be noted.

14. FINANCE REPORTS

15. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING OUTTURN 2021/22

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted to the Overview Select Committee the final report for the monitoring cycle for 2021/22 and reported performance against the budget for the year. The Committee was recommended to consider the overall position presented within the report and make any observations as it saw fit.

As part of the discussions, it was noted that:

- Money spent on children's homes was the capital spend budget
- The Adult Social Care budget dwarfed what was raised from the Council Tax Precept
- There was a robust plan in place to speed up tenancies and turn around empty homes, legal issues around gas and asbestos needed resolving before empty properties could be tenanted and that the Council also paid Council Tax on empty properties

In response to the Chair's query about future budgeting for Adult Social Care, the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education noted that a large proportion for underspend was a result of losing a significant number of service users during the pandemic. The Adult Social Care team had been very accurate at forecasting the budgets over the years and that the number of elderly people requiring services had remained the same with a growth in the number of working age people requiring support. The service were promoting

independent living and that national research had suggested being less dependent on care services slowed down the rate of deterioration in service users.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Committee note the outturn position detailed in the report; and
- 2) That the Committee support the recommendations detailed in the report for the Executive.

16. CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING APRIL-MARCH 2021/22

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted a report to the Overview Select Committee which showed the final position of the capital programme at the end of 2021/2022. The Committee was recommended to consider the overall position presented within the report and make any observations it saw fit.

The Head of Finance introduced the report.

The Strategic Director for City Developments & Neighbourhood Services, gave an update on the Jewry Wall Museum. It was noted that a new contractor had now been in place and the project would aim for completion in August 2024, the project was on budget although there were inflationary pressures and a rise in the cost of materials.

In response to Members, it was noted that:

- A significant number of homes have been developed at Ashton Green and the development of the site continued
- The Tree Strategy drew attention to the importance of trees and as a result the tree cover across the city had a dramatic increase
- The Leicester Museum and Art Gallery had undergone refurbishment works and would reopen next week, Members were welcome to attend the reopening
- The Museum service had a vast collection of artworks, with limited display space. The art works were in rotation and was the reason why some art pieces were not currently on display
- The Committee were reassured that the artwork was in rotation for the safety of exhibits and for maintenance reasons

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted; and
- 2) That the Committee support the recommendations for the Executive.

17. INCOME COLLECTION APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted a report to the Overview Select Committee which detailed progress made in collecting debts raised by the Council during 2021/22, together with debts outstanding and brought forward from the previous year. It also set out details of debts written off under delegated authority that it had not been possible to collect after reasonable

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

The Head of Finance introduced the report on Income Collection April 2021-March 2022.

The Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Commission took the opportunity to thank Officers in the Housing Department who had done a fantastic job in bringing down the outstanding rent arrears in very challenging circumstances.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Overview Select Committee support the recommendations for the Executive; and
- 2) That the report be noted.

18. REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES 2021/22

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted a report to the Overview Select Committee which reviewed how the Council conducted its borrowing and investments during 2021/22. The Committee was recommended to note the report and make comments to the Deputy Director of Finance and the Executive as they wished.

The Head of Finance introduced the report on the review of Treasury Management Activities 2021-22.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

19. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

In response to the Chair's request for a summary on Covid-19 in the City, the City Mayor noted that:

- The current data that was coming through was from the ONS and not granular data collected locally that was available when there had been wider testing to the public
- The numbers of positive cases per 100,000 was lower than the national average
- Still encouraging people to be cautious
- Work continued on local communications and work was underway with the NHS to promote the vaccination programme this autumn
- It was suggested that local NHS leaders needed to be given flexibility to deliver for the local needs.

The Strategic Director for Social care and Education noted that it was frustrating to have access terminated to the National Dashboard that collected data for care homes and home care staff that was created in 2020 following the Leicester Lockdown which was maintained by the DHSE.

The Members of the Committee took the opportunity to congratulate those involved in the new St Margaret's Bus Station. The City Mayor noted that those who had not yet had the opportunity to visit, people who were using the station were enthusiastic about it and the airport like quality. The facilities were a good invitation to use public transport and a good welcome to the city. The City Mayor took the opportunity to thank everyone involved and a specific thank you to the Head of Development Projects.

20. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission informed the Committee that a report on the 'Carers Strategy Consultation' was presented to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission on 16 June 2022. The Commission Members had questioned that consultation process and recommended that the Consultation be revisited.

In response to the Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission, the Strategic Director for Social Care and Education noted that the approach used for the consultation was the typical approach the Council used. It was noted that there were 59 responses to the consultation where there were 40,000 informal carers and queried whether the Overview Select Committee would like to consider the overall engagement process of how Leicester City Council engages with the people of Leicester.

The Chair recommended that an item on the latest date from the Census report be added to the Work Programme and the work programme for the Committee was noted.

21. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 8:11pm.