



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 21 JUNE 2018 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Singh (Chair)
Councillor Govind (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bajaj
Councillor Cleaver
Councillor Cutkelvin

Councillor Dawood
Councillor Gugnani
Councillor Khote

Councillor Porter
Councillor Westley

Also present:

Sir Peter Soulsby City Mayor

Youth Council Representatives

Gary Concepcion

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Grant, who was attending a civic engagement in his role as Lord Mayor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair did not make any announcements.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 5 April 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

The Chair stated that at the previous meeting, it had been agreed to hold a meeting for all Members and the City Mayor to discuss the issues that had emerged as a result of the very cold weather. The meeting had now been arranged for 26 July. The City Mayor added that this would be an informal meeting but the intention was to hear from a range of officers about the issues they perceived arising from the winter situation and for Members to feedback to them as to how it actually worked. There were concerns relating to housing issues and the council's response amongst other issues. Councillor Cutkelvin asked for an officer to be present from I.T. to answer questions as to how on-line queries could be dealt with. The City Mayor commented that the council had been overwhelmed with the number of on-line queries and telephone calls, but had learned from that situation.

Action	By Whom
For an officer from I.T. to be present at the meeting on 26 July 2018 to discuss the issues that had emerged during the period of very cold weather.	Director of Finance

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

AGREED:

that the Terms of Reference for the Overview Select Committee be noted.

7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

AGREED:

that the membership of the Overview Select Committee as detailed on the front of the agenda be noted.

8. DATES OF MEETINGS FOR 2018 / 19

The Chair asked Members to note the dates for future meetings of the Overview Select Committee. The City Mayor expressed strong concerns that he had earlier that day received a copy of a call-in notice, which he said could have been brought to the meeting if it had been submitted earlier than the final day the decision could be called-in. He said he was very disappointed that the Members who had called in the decision had not spoken to him. The call-in related to the refurbishment of the Haymarket car park, the lift and Haymarket House. The Overview Select Committee was the most appropriate scrutiny to consider the call-in and the City Mayor asked the Chair whether a special

meeting could be arranged for 5 July, as the next scheduled meeting of the committee was not until 13 September.

Councillor Porter commented that the Members had the right to call-in the decision and a proper scrutiny of the decision to spend £10m might have prevented this happening. Councillor Porter added that he hoped this would open up a wider discussion as to how public money was spent. The City Mayor stated that he was not suggesting that the matter was not one for scrutiny to consider but he was of the view that it was not good administration or courteous to submit the call in too late for it to have been considered at this evening's meeting.

The Chair stated that as it was a corporate issue, he was in agreement for the Overview Select Committee to consider the call-in. It was noted that there was meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission at 5.30pm on 5 July, and it was agreed for that commission to be moved to a later start and for a special meeting of the Overview Select Committee to be arranged for 4.30pm.

Members noted the planned dates of future meetings of the committee, as detailed in the agenda.

AGREED:

- 1) that a special meeting of the Overview Select Committee be arranged for Thursday 5 July 2018 at 4.30pm; and
- 2) that the dates of future meetings of the Overview Select Committee as detailed in the agenda be noted.

For a special meeting of the Overview Select Committee to be arranged for Thursday 5 July at 4.30pm.	The Democratic Services Officer
For the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission currently arranged for Thursday 5 July at 5.30pm to be moved to a later time.	The Democratic Services Officer

9. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

10. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

11. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT

The Chair reported that all the petitions were either marked as 'Green' or 'Amber and as such were being processed effectively.

AGREED:

that the Tracking of Petitions Monitoring Report be noted.

12. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR

Members raised the following questions for the City Mayor

Grants and subsidies for Businesses

Councillor Porter said that the following question had been raised by a local resident who had said that the council should make all money spent on economic development public information. The tax payers had the right to know where the money was going and how much each business received in grants, loans and subsidies along with other details such as interest rates, length of loans etc. There should also be justification as to why public money was needed and why those businesses should be allowed to succeed.

The City Mayor responded that he agreed with the resident and asked Councillor Porter to pass on his reassurances that was how the council proceeded. Councillor Porter asked for a list of such information and the City Mayor stated that the information, which was extensive, was already on public record. If Councillor Porter wanted to collate it he was welcome to do so, but he did not feel it was necessary to duplicate what already existed. The Chair added that transparency was one of the hallmarks of the Council.

The City Mayor

Councillor Porter asked a further question which had been raised by a resident and questioned how the City Mayor had been able to finance his daughter's business to the value of £70k. The City Mayor responded that the money had been raised through a mortgage on his property which was replaced by an inheritance from his late wife. Comments were made from other Members of the Committee that Cllr Porter had asked this question previously at a meeting of the full Council and had received an answer.

Evington Leisure Centre

Councillor Khote stated that she had heard that the swimming pool would be closing earlier in the evening and she expressed concerns that many women used the pool between 8.00pm and 8.30pm. The City Mayor responded that some minor adjustments had been made to opening hours, to avoid pools being kept open at times when there was limited demand. They had tried to ensure that if one pool was closing early, there would be another open at that time. Councillor Khote was advised that further information regarding Evington Leisure Centre, would be sent to her.

Action	By
For details of swimming pool opening hours along with the rationale behind any adjustments to those hours at Evington, to be sent to Councillor Khote	Director of Public Health

National Health Service and Adult Social Care funding

Councillor Cleaver referred to a recent Government announcement relating to an additional £20b funding for the NHS; and expressed concerns that none of that extra money would go towards adult social care. The City Mayor was asked how the local authority would be able to meet its statutory duties.

The City Mayor responded that the Government had not explained where the £20b would come from and there was a strong concern that there would be further cuts to local authorities' budgets. People who were suffering needed support from the NHS and adult social care and there was a real concern that Councils would find themselves under even more pressure.

13. REPORT OF THE FINANCE TASK GROUP

The Chair introduced the report of the Finance Task Group. The minutes of the Task Group, which had met to discuss the different finance reports, had been included in the agenda and Members were invited to raise any further questions or comments.

A Member noted that there had been a reduction in income from the Leicester Market and the bereavement services. Further to this there was an increase in expenditure in waste management and Looked After Children. It was questioned whether these issues had been taken into account in the main budget. The Director of Finance stated that the issues the Member had highlighted were not new at the outturn but had been reported during the year and were considered as part of the budget for 2018/19. The Director added that there had been a decline in income from Gilroes Crematorium and the Council was working to mitigate the situation. Pressures on market traders had become a national issue but there was a plan to improve the offer in the market to help it achieve its target income budget. There had been a legislative change to landfill waste, and the cost of this change had fallen to the Council. The Council were working with Biffa on this. There was also a concern as to the rising costs relating to Looked After Children which had also become a national issue.

The Director was asked how much additional funding the Council received for Adult Social Care (ASC) as the Government had permitted local authorities to increase council tax towards this service. Members heard that the amount spent on ASC far exceeded the amount raised through the ASC precept on council tax. The Director explained that she was required to sign a return to Government that the money raised through the precept would be used for ASC and she gave her assurance that this is the case.

A Member queried the under-spend in the ASC budget and the Director of Finance explained that efficiencies in that area had been made earlier than planned. The under-spend had been set aside to meet the demographic pressures in that service going forward.

The Chair expressed concerns at over-spends in the Looked After Children and Special Educational Needs services. He expressed further concerns that there could be a substantial increase in child protection plans following the introduction of universal credit and urged the new Chair of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission to look into these issues. A comment was made that while there had been criticisms of universal credit, the system gave people the opportunity to choose how to manage their money. A Member responded that the National Audit Office had criticised the new benefit regime and there were concerns that it was causing more poverty for people. Some claimants had to resort to relying on food banks because they had to wait eight weeks before they received their money. The Council were working hard to help people and mitigate the impact.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and asked Members to note the four finance reports.

AGREED:

that the following reports be noted:

- 1) Revenue Budget Monitoring Outturn 2017/18;
- 2) Capital Budget Monitoring Outturn 2017/18;
- 3) Income Collection April 2017 – March 2018; and
- 4) Review of Treasury Management Activities 2017/18

14. SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS' WORK PROGRAMMES

Councillor Bajaj, the current Chair of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission presented the Task Group Review Report on 'Engagement with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offer'. Councillor Bajaj presented the report on behalf of Councillor Unsworth who had chaired the review.

Councillor Bajaj explained that following on from previous work by the Commission, Members had wanted to look at who was actually engaging with the Arts and as a result benefitting from them and what could be done to mitigate any potential barriers for those who currently were not engaging.

Members considered the report and the comments made included the following:

- There seemed to be a presumption that people who were not engaging with

the arts needed help to do so. There also appeared to be an unnecessary focus on the outer estates.

- The review offered a useful discussion in ways to help people participate in the Arts if they so wished.
- People of all backgrounds enjoyed the Arts in general and going to places such as Curve. There was a good engagement with Arts projects in schools, where they were offered.
- The report was welcome. People, regardless of their economic situation should be able to engage with the Arts.

The Chair thanked the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny commission for the review.

AGREED:

that the review report on Engagement with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offer be endorsed.

15. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair stated that the Overview Select Committee work programme would be populated as appropriate.

AGREED:

that the Overview Select Committee work programme be noted.

16. PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Chair asked Scrutiny Chairs to be mindful of items on the Plan of Key Decisions that related to their Commissions.

AGREED:

that the Plan of Key Decisions be noted.

17. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.27 pm.