



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE AND SPORT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2020 at 4:00 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Halford (Chair)
Councillor Gee (Vice Chair)

Councillor Dr Barton
Councillor Cole

Councillor Dr Moore
Councillor Nangreave

Councillor Shelton

In attendance:

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor, Culture Leisure & Sport

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100. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from John Leach – Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services.

101. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nangreave declared an Other Disclosable Interest in that she was a resident in Leicester City and took part in heritage aspects.

102. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Sport Scrutiny Commission held on 1 December 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

103. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

Any items and topics pending to come back to a future meeting can be added to the work programme for 2021.

104. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair requested all Members of the Commission, Officers and Members of the Executive present and anyone else present that would be participating in the meeting to kindly introduce themselves.

The Chair advised the Committee that the meeting was a virtual meeting as permitted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 and outlined the procedures for the meeting.

Management and all staff were thanked for their continued commitment and hard work in providing essential services, and supporting ward Councillors, and creating online alternatives for the benefit of Leicester residents, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

105. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

106. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

107. DRAFT LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN (2020 – 2036) PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submitted a presentation on the Draft Leicester Local Plan (2020 – 2036) Public Consultation.

During the presentation, the presenting officer drew particular attention to the following points;

- The Government were consulting on a new approach to Planning; however the Planning White Paper would radically change the local plan process, national policies, a zoning approach and much more permitted development and changes to the way in which housing demand would be worked out.
- Leicester City Council had decided to continue with their Local Plan as the timespan for the implementation of the White Paper could be two or more years.
- The importance of the local plan which looked ahead up until 2036, sought to look at the Councils need for homes, addressing unemployment, shopping, and leisure facilities and allocate sites for the these.
- The plan also set out a range of the Council's planning policies (e.g. Climate Change and Public Health), encouraged investment & economic growth, facilitated place-making and set high quality design expectations.
- Housing site draft allocations were noted, these made up a range of 5

main strategic sites and approximately 85 other sites significantly located in the city centre and Brownfield sites.

- A proposed Leisure/ Tourism Use Site had been allocated on Red Hill Roundabout - Site Ref 575 (allotments Loughborough Road, A6) to support the Great Central Railway Museum. It was noted that a specific policy was present in the Culture and Tourism chapter to support certain developments.
- The Central Development area, which was noted as a key regeneration area, had been split into 9 allocations. Most of them had their own aims and objectives. Some of the particular areas relating to this commission included St Georges Cultural Quarter, Old Town and New Walk which carried a lot of emphasis on heritage. In relation to those areas with heritage assets, the local plan would be considering more of an evolution of growth without affecting the heritage assets.
- Members attention was drawn to a map which showed Heritage Assets in the City, it noted listed buildings, ancient monuments, conservation areas and buildings of local interest in addition to historic parks and gardens. There were strong policies in place in relation to protecting these areas.
- Employment Draft Allocations, Key strategies for Open Space and Transport in addition to key policies in the draft local plan relating to this commission were also noted in the presentation.

The Commission scrutinised the Draft Local Plan, commenting and receiving the following responses;

- The presenting Officer confirmed leisure facilities would be dependent on the infrastructure assessment which looked at a whole range of sports and leisure facilities including football pitches and which area they were required. The stakeholder event held with the national sports governing bodies, would look at the needs and identify areas.
- The service was working on Section 106 strategy on how to acquire development contributions for strategies.
- In terms of the housing strategy the officers had carried out works with the districts and further discussions would take place. The Government were introducing a new strategy of housing need; therefore, the plan would need to be reviewed, of which the current system required a review of the plan every 5 years.
- The Culture and Tourism chapter of the draft local plan further noted policies to support certain heritage, places of worship, retaining public houses and addressed the cultural needs of the city.
- A Member of the Commission expressed the importance of the plan recognising the contribution from the culture and diversity of the city including African Caribbean heritage and recognition of the impacts of mass contributions made.
- The presenting officer noted that allocations in the draft local plan were not currently fixed and it was requested that Members of the Commission engage and encourage people to engage in the consultation. Any representations received would be carefully

considered and also careful consideration made to points made by Members of the Commission.

- More information and work would be done on site constraints and it would be looked closely at providing onsite provisions or contributions to improving other sites around the city.
- Other points made by Members of the Commission included Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMO's) whereby the officer requested any particular areas of the city which may require further restrictions.
- It was noted that there was no current funding/ budgets for potential developments on the railway museum.
- Works would also take place with the universities to look into the need for the future.
- Members had concerns about the loss of green and open spaces and requested that more 'green painted walls' were created to offset and identify where open space had been lost and where heatsinks were created by higher densities.
- In terms of the next stages of process; any particular areas of concern or recommendations from this Commission would then go to the Overview Select Committee. Following this, another public consultation would take place. The Submission of Local Plan Consultation (Reg 19) would take place Autumn 2021 and the adoption Summer/Autumn 2022.

AGREED:

1. That the Local Plan specify essential green and open spaces which are well used by residents for recreation, exercise and sports should be protected and improved, not be considered for new developments.
2. That the Local Plan should consider building upwards for new homes and offices etc, rather than outwards, as open spaces are precious and valued.
3. The local plan should create more 'green painted walls' to offset and identify where open space has been lost and consider the heatsink effect created by higher densities.
4. That Planning officers should consider Members comments in progressing work on the Local Plan.
5. Existing heritage sites to be protected, and heritage forums in the city to be consulted on the local plan.
6. The Local Plan should reflect the culture, history and contribution of the diversity of Leicester City.
7. That there should be a report back to HCLS Scrutiny on sports and leisure facilities being included in the Plan – when finalised.

108. HAYMARKET CONSULTATION

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Investment submitted a report which noted where the service was in a process of consultation and feasibility research that had been initiated by the council in partnership with Arts Council England. This report invited comment and opinion from members of the commission as part of that process.

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Investment presented the report and provided an update on the current situation with the Haymarket theatre which included;

- Since the closing of the theatre there had been a lot of interest from organisations and individuals proposing to run programmes from the venue.
- The steps being taken to develop and consider options for the future of Haymarket were noted, this included consideration of further capital investment that may be needed to make the complex operate efficiently.
- Some challenges with the building included; access issues for instance disability access, operational efficiency including design flaws in the building and technical equipment whereby a substantive overhaul of lighting rigs and kit would be required for the venue to offer a full range of programming in the future.
- Potential developing options were reported, and it was noted that no decisions had yet been taken and all options were still available for considering the next steps.

Following Members queries, officers gave the below responses;

- Some Members of the Commission felt that when the building did reopen in the future, that the purpose should be multiuse, support a range of acts and include music and small-scale theatre.
- A Member suggested the prospects of it being a cultural centre/ a venue for African arts, however another Member of the Commission commented that this had previously been looked into however the high costs did not make this possible. The Officer noted that part of the work would be to look at feasibility.
- The service confirmed that it would be looking to produce and test the business case and ensure it was robust.
- It would be a couple of months ahead before a decision would be made in regard to what to do with the venue.
- One of the current solutions being explored to improve access to and through the building was to move the stage door to the new entrance, as well as installing a platform lift costing approximately £100k (subject to a structural engineer assessment) which would allow people to get to the stage level from the foyer and other areas.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. The results of the Haymarket consultation and progress to be reported back to this commission in 3 months' time.
3. That steps be taken to make the Haymarket fully accessible for all to enjoy.
4. The idea of a multipurpose use venue was welcomed.

109. VIRTUAL FESTIVALS 2020

The Director of Director Tourism, Culture and Investment submitted a presentation on Virtual Festivals 2020.

The presentation noted the following;

- Due to COVID-19 many festivals had to move to delivering content online.
- This had led to new ways of working and considerable innovation.
- Festivals and Events service had supported funded organisations to deliver online content.
- Information was provided on the funded and other festivals, virtual Diwali Leicester celebrations which took place and Christmas programme proposals.

Following Members queries, officers gave the below responses;

- Members of the Commission were very impressed by what the service had achieved and thanked the team for their efforts in providing online activity.
- There was some discussion as to Leicester Virtual Carnival and that it was not featured in the presentation. The officer noted that this could be added in the presentation but also noted that several organisations including the Leicester Carnival did not respond to the Councils offer of providing a virtual alternative.
- As Leicester was currently in tier 3, it was noted that under government rules indoor museums, Richard III Visitor Centre and Visit Leicester Information Centre must remain closed until further notice. In addition, some museum exhibitions had been cancelled due to Covid-19 restrictions.
- It was hoped that the Newarke Houses Leicester Blitz exhibition could open and be shown next year. However, a 360-degree film would be taken of the show and could be accessed via the Leicester City Council website.
- The following were concerns from Members of the Commission; how to find out about the programmes that take place virtually, the safety of the big wheel in relation to restrictions during the current situation with the pandemic. Fireworks being let off late at night of which the Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure and Sport would set up a meeting with the Licensing and Legal teams to go through procedures and enforcement.

AGREED:

1. Well done to the festivals and events officers for being creative and introducing these alternatives for people to enjoy in these difficult times.

110. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 6.08pm.