



Leicester
City Council

Meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission

DATE: MONDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2024

TIME: 5:30 pm

PLACE: Meeting Room G.01, Ground Floor, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Members of the Committee

Councillor Dawood (Chair)

Councillor Mohammed (Vice-Chair)

Councillors Aldred, Chauhan, Halford, Haq, Joshi and Singh Johal

Members of the Committee are invited to attend the above meeting to consider the items of business listed overleaf.

For Monitoring Officer

Officer contacts:

Ed Brown and Julie Bryant (Governance Services)

Tel: 0116 454 3833, e-mail: committees@leicester.gov.uk, Edmund.Brown@leicester.gov.uk or Julie.Bryant@leicester.gov.uk

Leicester City Council, City Hall, 115 Charles Street, Leicester, LE1 1FZ

Information for members of the public

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You have the right to attend formal meetings such as full Council, committee meetings, City Mayor & Executive Public Briefing and Scrutiny Commissions and see copies of agendas and minutes. On occasion however, meetings may, for reasons set out in law, need to consider some items in private.

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- ✓ to ensure that the sound on any device is fully muted and intrusive lighting avoided;
- ✓ where filming, to only focus on those people actively participating in the meeting;
- ✓ where filming, to (via the Chair of the meeting) ensure that those present are aware that they may be filmed and respect any requests to not be filmed.

Further information

If you have any queries about any of the above or the business to be discussed, please contact: **Ed Brown or Julie Bryant, Governance Services**) on Edmund.Brown@leicester.gov.uk or Julie.Bryant@leicester.gov.uk . Alternatively, email committees@leicester.gov.uk, or call in at City Hall.

For Press Enquiries - please phone the **Communications Unit on 0116 454 4151**.

PUBLIC SESSION

AGENDA

Fire / Emergency Evacuation

If the emergency alarm sounds, you must evacuate the building immediately by the nearest available fire exit and proceed to the area outside the Ramada Encore Hotel on Charles Street as directed by Governance Services staff. Further instructions will then be given.

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To issue a welcome to those present, and to confirm if there are any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Appendix A

The minutes of the meeting of the Culture and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Commission held on Thursday 22nd August 2024 have been circulated, and Members will be asked to confirm them as a correct record.

4. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair is invited to make any announcements as they see fit.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

Any questions, representations and statements of case submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures will be reported.

Ms Wakley makes the following representation:

Leicester Friends of the Earth have been discussing the council's use of chemical pesticides in the parks with officers and councillors for the past three years. After trialling a different product last year, the council returned to using glyphosate in parks this year, albeit at a lower concentration than previously used. The council's target for pesticide use in the Biodiversity Action Plan is to reduce it by 50% by 2030. We think that target is disappointingly unambitious when other local authorities have already moved away from chemical pesticides altogether. The Pesticide Action Network provide detailed information for local authorities on how to go pesticide free on their website.

The areas that are sprayed in the parks do seem to have been reduced in the last couple of years - we can no longer see any sign of spraying around tree bases in parks, for example, which is an improvement. (Tree bases on road verges are still being sprayed, sadly.) But we are still seeing signs of spraying around and within children's play areas, which is concerning when it is known that children are more vulnerable to the effects of chemical pesticides than adults. I notice this in my local park in Evington, which makes me nervous about taking my nephew there. Like all toddlers, he likes to play with the soil and I spend a lot of time carrying him away from the sprayed, dead grass around the edges of the patches of woodchip and under the fence. Many people will not recognise what this dead grass means, so they will not be able to protect their children from being exposed to the pesticide residues there.

We are concerned about the use of any chemical pesticides, and glyphosate in particular, for a number of reasons. There have been several studies linking glyphosate to cancers in people, particularly non-Hodgkin lymphoma. The research was collated in a meta-analysis published in the academic journal *Mutation Research* in 2019. Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of pesticides, because their skin absorbs chemicals more easily and because they are more likely to be playing on the ground. The evidence for the ill-effects of glyphosate on bees and other wildlife has also been mounting over the last few years. It is now known that glyphosate harms bees' digestive systems, for example, affecting their ability to absorb food, and also damages the ability of wild bees to regulate the temperature of their colonies. When insect populations are falling so alarmingly, we do not believe we should be doing anything to make the situation worse.

Leicester has long claimed to be the UK's first environment city, but on this issue, it is clear that we are not taking the lead. In fact, we are falling far behind other towns and cities.

6. PETITIONS

Any petitions received in accordance with Council procedures will be reported.

Appendix B

7. BURIAL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services presents an annual report on the Burial Strategy Update which summarises the slide presentation appended.

8. HERITAGE PLACES FUNDING, NATIONAL LOTTERY HERITAGE FUND **Appendix C**

The Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment presents a report providing an overview of the Heritage Places Programme which is funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

9. LIBRARY STUDY ZONES **Appendix D**

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submits a report giving an overview of the Study Zones initiative in libraries, in the context of the digital support provided by libraries for people living, working and studying in Leicester.

10. WARD ENGAGEMENT AND FUNDING REPORT 2023-24 **Appendix E**

The Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Area Development Manger submit a report outlining how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2023 and March 2024. The report seeks to provide an insight into the variety of projects and initiatives that took place in the wards, and some of those that were important to residents locally.

11. WORK PROGRAMME **Appendix F**

Members of the Commission will be asked to consider the work programme and make suggestions for additional items as it considers necessary.

12. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS