



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2025 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Joel - Chair

Councillor Batool
Councillor March
Councillor Pickering
Councillor Rae Bhatia
Councillor Zaman

Councillor Dave
Councillor O'Neill
Councillor Porter
Councillor Waddington

In attendance:

City Mayor Sir Peter Soulsby

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169. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Kitterick, Cllr Sahu substituted.

A Youth Council Representative joined online.

170. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the committee were asked to declare any interests that they may have in the proceedings, none were declared.

171. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted that this was a special additional meeting which was scheduled to accommodate a large number of items.

The Chair noted that the Recruitment item had been due to come to this meeting but would now go to the first meeting of the new year. Members were encouraged to contribute areas of interest for scrutiny.

- That the Director of Corporate Services and the Governance Services Manager work on the scope of the Recruitment item.

172. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE - SCRUTINY REVIEW - A REVIEW OF SUPPORT FOR ADVENTURE PLAYGROUNDS

The City Mayor provided an Executive Response to the recommendations made by the Task Group on Support for Adventure Playgrounds. The following was noted:

- The City Mayor expressed thanks to the task group members for their work.
- It was noted that Leicester City Council was among the last local authorities still providing support to adventure playgrounds.
- Previous decisions to withdraw financial support had been taken in response to austerity measures.
- The City Mayor stated that he hoped there would be an opportunity in the future to provide broader support for youth activities.
- Meetings had been held with the adventure playgrounds and the locality organisation that supports them, and alternative forms of support offering longer-term security had been explored.
- It was clarified that a Community Asset Transfer would require opening the process to wider bids.
- Longer-term arrangements would involve transferring responsibility for the maintenance of buildings.
- Adventure playground associations had been approached to determine whether they wished to pursue longer-term arrangements; none had responded to date, though the Council would be sympathetic to such discussions.
- It was noted that short-term tenure could limit the associations' ability to secure external funding.

In response to member discussions and questions, the following was noted:

- A detailed letter had been sent to the adventure playground associations, outlining the range of options available to them.
- It was noted that each adventure playground had different needs and circumstances, with some being more sustainable than others.
- To provide short-term protection, a five-year licence had been agreed.
- Members expressed the hope that further meetings could be arranged with the adventure playground associations.
- Members highlighted ongoing issues relating to building maintenance and stressed the importance of adherence to maintenance agreements.
- Members raised concerns about financial stability for the associations, fearing imminent closures, members advised that some had already issued redundancy notices.
- Members noted that the University of Leicester had produced a report on the five adventure playgrounds, which would be circulated.
- Members also noted that other councils were developing or maintaining

free-play provision. Hackney had introduced free-play schemes, and Nottingham and Manchester continued to operate adventure playgrounds. Members felt such provision reduced pressure on other council services.

- In response to questions on capital bidding, officers advised that legislation prevented the use of capital funding for revenue purposes, and that the Council did not meet the criteria required to sell capital assets to raise funds.
- The Commission would be informed on progress, with an update coming in the new year.
- The Chair would be meeting with Locality and the Adventure Playground Associations in the new year.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- For the Commission to view the University report which members would forward.

AGREED:

- An future update would be added to the Work Programme.
- That the report be noted.

173. EXECUTIVE RESPONSE - SCRUTINY REVIEW - A REVIEW OF THE CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

The City Mayor provided an Executive Response to the recommendations made by the Task Group on Changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. Key points to note were as follows:

- The City Mayor expressed gratitude to the work of the Task Group.
- A substantive response could be provided after the service had been operating for a full year.

In response to member questions and comments, the following was noted:

- When setting the budget, projected figures were given for discretionary support, but capping was not permitted.

AGREED:

- That the report be noted.

174. CORPORATE ESTATE ANNUAL REPORT FY24/25

The City Mayor introduced the item noting that there was a substantial portfolio of around £147m, with a good rate of return going towards Revenue budgets.

The Director of Estates & Building Services submitted the Corporate Estate Annual Report for the 2024/25 Financial Year. The report was taken as read and a slide show was presented as appended.

Key points of member discussion to note were as follows:

- There was a good relationship with customers. There was availability of assets for customer expansion. Case studies on support provided would be circulated.
- The Haymarket Shopping Centre strategy was had seen improved net to gross performance.
- Details on the Travelodge hotel would be circulated to the commission.
- Members suggested receiving a Customer Satisfaction Report.
- Traditional tenancy agreements were in place with inbuilt obligations for landlord and occupiers. Tailored arrangements could be made to support customers in short term financial trading difficulties / debt.
- In response to a member question on the annual net cost to the council to comply with Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES), officers would circulate figures.
- Many of the buildings previously operating as retail businesses, were now run as food and leisure enterprises. A link would be distributed to the commission for trend analysis. Leicester benchmarked similarly to other local authorities in terms of national trends.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Members requested a Customer Satisfaction Report.

AGREED:

- Business Support case studies would be circulated.
- To provide details on the income from the Travel Lodge.
- More detail on MEES standards would be provided.
- The RICS link would be shared.
- That the report be noted

Cllr Rae Bhatia left at the end of this item.

175. DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN LEICESTER - BRIEFING

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report updating the Committee on local domestic abuse need, the types of service currently available locally, the approach in Leicester and plans to continue to better meet local need.

In response to member discussion and questions, the following was noted:

- The statutory duty remained focused on supporting survivors, with linked work undertaken alongside children's services and the criminal justice system.
- Ongoing work with Housing and commissioned providers continued to improve accessibility for disabled people and young people; a pilot project on young people's accommodation had recently been completed.
- Members requested that future standing items include data on individuals misusing support services.
- The extended three-year grant would support long-term sustainability of services.
- A multi-layered range of support mechanisms was in place to aid workforce development, with an annual refresh scheduled. Members requested that future reports include case studies.
- Practice included engagement with older people, alongside substantial work with the Safeguarding Adults Board.
- The Domestic and Sexual Violence portal was the primary referral pathway.
- Provider contracts were generally long-term and delivered wrap-around specialist support.
- In response to Member queries on refuge unit numbers, it was confirmed that 46 units were commissioned, with 48 units available in total when including non-commissioned provision. The Council commissions a minimum number of units rather than specific locations, with providers determining the final offer through the market response process.
- The statutory duty was to ensure provision without placing restrictions on individuals' movement outside the city.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Members suggested that the next report include case studies.
- Members suggested providing a breakdown of figures for those misusing support services.

AGREED:

- That the report be noted

Councillor Waddington left during the consideration of this item.

There being no other items of consideration, the meeting ended at 20:14.

*THE
CORPORATE
ESTATE
ANNUAL
REPORT*

FY24/25

Kathryn Ellis FIRR V



The Corporate Estate
Annual Report FY24/25

*KEY
PERFORMANCE
METRICS*





FY24/25

£154.4m Valuation of the Corporate Estate
(£147.2m value of the Corporate Estate FY23/24)

£12.29m Gross income
(£11.27m gross income FY23/24)

7.96 % Gross Yield considered 'very good'
(7.66% Gross Yield FY23/24)

£6.10m Net income has increased by 7.5%
(£5.68m net income FY23/24)



FY24/25

7.96% Gross Yield

(7.66% Gross Yield FY23/24)

*CCLA Local Authorities' Property Fund gross yield 4.92%
(Annual Report March 2025). Up 0.37% on FY23/24*

*3.95% Net Yield***

(3.86% net yield FY24/25)

95% Occupancy

(95.5% Occupancy FY24/25)

1.51% of the Council's Net Revenue

(1.57% of the Council's Net Revenue FY23/24)

£0.9m Current Debt Position

(Opening position: £3.2m; 23/24 £1.1m; future goal: £0.65m)

*** Whilst net yield is important in determining the actual profitable return achieved, running costs can fluctuate dependent on how efficiently land and property is managed. As a result, gross yield is generally used to compare the financial performance of property investments.*



FUTURE STRATEGY

Continue to develop and professionalise the Strategic Property Team, including ensuring succession planning and building the team to deal with the wide breadth of skill and knowledge required.

Continue to methodically review rents, service charges, charging policy and procedure and consistently report on performance.

Continue to tackle and reduce bad debt through consistent monthly monitoring processes in place.

Realising transactions and negotiating opportunities that deliver the best outcomes for the Council and the City, including our Heart of Leicester Strategy.

Continue to develop the Capital Programme to ensure sustainability, protection of asset valuations, and meeting legislative requirements for H&S, MEES and ESG (Environmental and Social Governance).

To continue to invest for the future and to enable relevant investment in a sustainable Commercial Real Estate portfolio. Wherever possible, improving on the quality of our estate or at end of useful lifecycle re-developing/investing in it through the capital programme.



ANY QUESTIONS?

Kathryn Ellis FIRRV

Head of Strategic Property

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