



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2017 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Singh (Chair)  
Councillor Govind (Vice Chair)

Councillor Cank  
Councillor Cutkelvin  
Councillor Gugnani

Councillor Khote  
Councillor Newcombe  
Councillor Porter

Councillor Unsworth

Also present:

Councillor Singh Clair – Deputy City Mayor  
Councillor Russell – Deputy City Mayor, Children, Young People and Schools  
Councillor Sood – Assistant City Mayor, Communities and Equalities

\* \* \* \* \*

**28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Grant, who was carrying out a civic duty on behalf of the Council, and Councillor Dr Moore. The City Mayor also submitted his apologies.

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Sood declared an Other Disclosable Interest as she was a Member of the Leicester Council of Faiths.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, the interest was not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice Councillor Sood's judgement of the public interest. She was not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

**30. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair made no announcements.

**31. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Select Committee held on 14 September be confirmed as a correct record.

**32. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair reported on progress on actions previously agreed:

Action requested	Action taken
A visit to the emergency control room located in City Hall to be arranged for interested Councillors.	An offer had been made to Members.
The Director, Delivery, Communications and Political Governance to be advised if Councillors wished to observe a simulated emergency exercise and one to be arranged accordingly if interest shown.	An offer had been made to Members.

**33. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

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

**34. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

**35. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT**

AGREED:

that the report be noted and petitions referenced 14/07/2017/2, 14/07/2017/4, marked 'petitions process complete' be removed from the monitoring report.

Action	By
Remove those petitions marked 'petitions process complete' from the monitoring report.	Senior Democratic Support Officer

## **36. QUESTIONS FOR THE CITY MAYOR**

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to raise questions for Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor and Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor for Children, Young People and Schools (CYPS)

### **Mental Health and support for Children**

Councillor Cutkelvin said that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission and the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission would be holding a joint meeting to consider the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). She asked the Deputy City Mayor, CYPS, what the Council could do to provide dedicated mental health staff in schools to support children and young people.

The Deputy City Mayor, CYPS, responded that the Council worked across schools to support children, to help them build on their mental resilience and there were also programmes to help teachers, teaching assistants to promote mental health. The Council were very aware of their responsibilities and mental health problems were becoming an increasing problem. The meeting heard that the exam culture, particularly with testing at the end of key stages, did impact on the mental health of children and young people.

### **Firework Night and Diwali Celebrations**

The Chair said the Bonfire Night event at Abbey Park had always been very successful and he asked the Deputy City Mayor about attendance figures and whether income met expenditure.

The Deputy City Mayor responded that Leicester had one of the biggest firework night celebrations in the East Midlands with increasing numbers of people coming to enjoy the mix of fireworks, fairground rides and entertainment. There was also a big screen so that people could watch from a distance. Over the last two years there had been a record number of attendees with up to 25,000 people present. The budget for the festival was £16k which had remained the same despite the budget pressures.

Councillor Govind congratulated the Deputy City Mayor and the entire team on the recent Diwali night celebrations; stating that that were a big improvement on the previous year. The Deputy City Mayor said that when the Diwali festival started 25 years ago in Leicester, it was attended by a very small number of people but the festival had grown into an event that Leicester could be proud of with attendance reaching approximately 80,000 or 90,000 people. The Deputy City Mayor congratulated all those involved including the Diwali Working Group and the officers who had been responsible for the lighting.

## **37. REPORT OF THE FINANCE TASK GROUP**

The Chair introduced the Report of the Finance Task Group which had met on 18 October 2017 to consider the Revenue Budget Monitoring and Capital Budget Monitoring Reports for Period 4, 2017/18. The Chair stated that the Finance Task Group had expressed particular concerns regarding pressures relating to the Adult Social Care budget.

The Director of Finance introduced the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report and stated that there were continued pressures in both the Adult Social Care and the Children's Services budgets. Those budget pressures were national issues rather than particular to Leicester, but Leicester was a relatively deprived city. The major issue for the Adult Social Care service was the increasing levels of needs of their existing service users, but the department continued to look at new ways of working to make budget savings. Within Children's Services, budget pressures particularly arose from the rising number of children in receipt of care.

The Director of Finance then referred to the Capital Budget Monitoring Report and explained that the focus of capital reports had changed from a particular programme's spend to its delivery. The Director assured Members that they would be informed where it was considered that capital projects would not be delivered to budget. The Chair commented that the format of the capital budget in the report was now very clear. Members heard that individual projects were given a RAG (Red, Amber Green) rating and Members asked that the code be included in all future reports where the RAG rating was used.

Councillor Cutkelvin referred to the Extra Care Schemes, which were on hold awaiting the announcement from the Government on the Housing Cap, and the Director explained that guidance had now been issued. While they were still waiting for some details, there was good news for the Council as the Government had realised that over 80% of schemes had stopped due to the uncertainty around the Housing Cap. There were two Extra Care Schemes ready to go, but as they were procured a long time ago, there was a need to check that the procurement was still compliant. Councillor Cutkelvin commented that this was an important issue and she would welcome a briefing for Members.

A Member said that there had been an over spend in relation to the Haymarket car park lift and questioned where the extra money would come from. The Director responded that she would be giving consideration to this, but underspends could be used towards overspends elsewhere.

In response to a query relating to the Anchor Centre, the Director explained that the Council had very recently taken possession of the new building and they anticipated that it would be ready for use soon. The Deputy City Mayor, CYPS, added that there would be a careful transition programme in view of the vulnerability of many of the service users.

The Director of Finance was asked about the vehicle replacement programme and explained that the fleet included a wide range of vehicles, which had cost a substantial amount of money. The Council were making savings by extending

the life of their fleet and looking at issues such as whether it was necessary to replace like for like. Some of the big industrial mowers for example were very expensive. There was a cost incurred in painting the Council vans yellow, and this also made them hard to sell. Therefore in future, Council vans would be white. In response to a question, Members heard that the Council had in the past, leased vehicles but this practise had stopped about ten years ago because it became too expensive.

Councillor Porter referred to a news article in the media, which stated that the Council were providing funding to a developer to refurbish a property near Curve, and he expressed a view that this was not fair and promoted unfair competition. The Director of Finance said that she was not aware of this matter, but would investigate and respond to Councillor Porter.

Councillor Newcombe questioned whether the Legible Leicester programme was on track and within its budget and asked whether any revenue could be raised by the sale of scrap metal signs. The Director of Finance said she would investigate further and send a response back to Councillor Newcombe.

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

AGREED:

that the Revenue Monitoring Report Period 4, 2017-18 and the Capital Monitoring Report Period 4, 2017-18 be noted.

Action	By
That the RAG code be included in every report where RAG ratings are used.	Director of Finance
That a briefing on the Housing Cap and Extra Care Scheme be provided for Members of the Committee.	Director of Finance / Strategic Director of Adult Social Care
That further information be provided to Councillor Porter regarding the article in the media re the Council providing £150k to a developer to refurbish a property near Curve.	The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation / Director of Tourism, Culture and Inward Investment.
That a response be sent to Councillor Newcombe as to whether the Legible Leicester Programme was on track / within budget and whether revenue could be raised by the sale of the redundant scrap metal signs	Director of Planning, Development and Transportation.

### 38. EMPLOYMENT MONITORING REPORT

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submitted a report that analysed the profile of the Council's centrally employed workforce as at 31 March 2017.

Councillor Sood, Assistant City Mayor for Communities and Equalities introduced the report and said that Leicester City Council was committed to having a workforce that was reflective of the community it served.

The Director explained that data on the employee's protected characteristics came from the employees themselves. Such declarations were not mandatory but staff were encouraged to submit that information. It was noted that employee's declaration rates for most of the protected characteristics had decreased over the past year. The Director commented that this was disappointing, but she and the Equalities Manager would be looking at ways to encourage more staff to complete their declarations.

Members heard that the 51 to 55 age group was the largest age group in the workforce and this potentially presented a risk to the Council where large numbers of staff might approach retirement at the same time. Work was ongoing to recruit and retain more graduates and the focus in particular was ensuring that the Council retained those graduates once their initial fixed-term placements ended.

The Director added that within the top 5% of earners, there was a high proportion of women.

The data overall demonstrated that Leicester was doing significantly better than comparable local authorities but they were not complacent and would focus on those areas where more work was needed.

The Chair commented that that it was good that Leicester was doing well when compared to those similar local authorities. He asked whether incentives were given to retain staff. Members heard that the Council wanted to retain more graduate employees and more could be done to achieve this aim. Consideration was being given as to how they could best use graduates to increase the Council's talent pool, so that when they reached the end of their temporary contract, they would then more likely to have the skills and experience to fill those hard to recruit to positions. A Member questioned what those 'hard to recruit to' posts were and heard that while more work was needed to define those positions, jobs in Planning and Social Work were two such examples.

In response to a question, Members heard that 18% of the top 5% of earners were from a Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) background, compared to 37% of the workforce overall. Members expressed concern at this. The Chair commented this pattern had continued for too long; the Council aspired to have a workforce that reflected the community it served and this was an area they needed to improve upon. The Chair added that rather than recruiting nationally, there should be a greater emphasis on internal recruitment and he questioned why the right BME candidates were not already employed in the organisation.

The Chair said that Councillors had raised their concerns with him and he believed that it was appropriate to challenge the issue. The Council needed to try to secure a better position and consideration needed to be given as to whether there was a radical way of doing this. The Chair added that this might be achieved through a change to policy.

Councillor Govind asked for the numbers of BME employees who were in each of the top three tiers of the Council. The Director responded that she did not have that information to hand, but it would be sent to the Councillor afterwards.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and asked that the report and comments expressed by Members be noted.

AGREED:

that the report and comments of the Overview Select Committee be noted.

Action	By
For Councillor Govind to be sent details of the numbers of BME employees in each of the top three tiers of the Council,	Director, of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance.

### **39. SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS' WORK PROGRAMMES**

Members made no comments relating to their Scrutiny Commissions' work programmes.

### **40. OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

There were no comments on the Overview Select Committee Work Programme.

### **41. PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Chair asked Scrutiny Commission Chairs to look at the Plan of Key Decisions so see if there were items that their commission might wish to scrutinise.

### **42. CLOSE OF MEETING**

The Chair closed the meeting at 6.42 pm.

