



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2017 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Unsworth (Chair)
Councillor Bajaj (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Shelton
Councillor Thalukdar

In Attendance:

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor

Also Present:

Suba Das – Associate Director, Curve
Tony Flint – General Manager, De Montfort Hall
John Rance – Chief Executive Officer, Phoenix
Claire Ward – Director of Communications and Fundraising, Curve

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43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Shelton declared an Other Disclosable Interest in agenda item 9, (Task Group Review: “Engagement with Leicester’s Arts, Culture and Heritage Offer”), in that he was a long-standing trustee of Phoenix Cinema and Arts Centre.

In accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, this interest was not considered so significant that it was likely to prejudice Councillor Shelton’s judgement of the public interest. He therefore was not required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of this item.

44. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

AGREED:

That the following minutes be confirmed as accurate records of the respective meetings:

- a) the meeting held on 8 August 2017; and
- b) the inquorate meeting held on 19 September 2017.

45. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

The Chair reported that there were no actions to carry forward.

46. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised the Commission that he would be attending a Special Meeting of the Overview Select Committee on Monday 20 November 2017, to discuss the Council's capital programme.

He encouraged members of the Commission to look at the papers for this meeting and pass to him any comments and observations relevant to this Commission's remit. These would then be reported to the meeting on 20 November on members' behalf.

47. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

48. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

49. OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION STUDY - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor, introduced the Open Space, Sport and Recreation (OSSR) Study, which currently was being consulted on, explaining that this would contribute to the development of the next Local Plan.

Councillor Clair stressed that open space was highly valued, for the many benefits it provided. However, it was recognised that it could be expensive to maintain and manage, and that issues such as anti-social behaviour also could arise.

Councillor Clair reminded Members that the consultation period on the OSSR Study had been extended to 30 November 2017 and that the results of the consultation would be fed in to the next stage of the development of the Local Plan.

Officers from Planning and Environmental Services service areas jointly presented further information on the OSSR Study. A copy of this presentation is attached at the end of these minutes for information.

During the presentation, the following points were made:

- The Local Plan was at an early stage of development. Once approved, the Plan would set the framework for planning decisions for the next 15 years;
- As part of the consultation, 220,000 leaflets had been distributed in the city and to areas outside the city boundary. Stakeholder events also had been held for people such as park users' groups, sports governing bodies and developers;
- Each local authority had to prepare its own Plan, but it was recognised that people crossed administrative boundaries to access facilities covered by the Plan, so the Council also consulted neighbouring authorities;
- The recommended standard of 2.88 hectares of open space per 1,000 population had been derived based on census population figures. On this basis, the city had a 153 hectare over-supply of open space, but 2016 population figures had not been factored in yet. As the population had increased, it was likely that the ratio of open space per 1,000 population in the city would change;
- School playing fields were not included in the calculation of open space, as the space had to be accessible to the public to be considered within the OSSR study;
- A separate Playing Pitch Strategy had been adopted. This had considered all kinds of pitches, as well as issues such as pitch provision, quality, capacity for increased use and how to increase their use in line with population increase;
- Assessment of the quality of open space had shown that some was overgrown, poorly lit and subject to anti-social behaviour. It was hoped that these issues could be addressed over a two-year cycle;
- Enhancement of open space was funded from the Council's capital programme, as well as sources such as developer contributions;
- The location of outdoor gyms initially had been determined by identifying areas where access to resources was limited, (for example, due to residents' economic situations, cultural reluctance to attend formal facilities, or a lack of formal facilities in the area). Areas where a demand had been identified, or requests made, were then considered, to see if the new equipment would complement existing facilities, (for example, children's play areas). Some funding for this had been provided through public health services;

- The majority of outdoor gyms in the city were well used;
- Members suggested that the reinstatement of entertainment in parks, (such as band concerts), would be welcomed. Some events were held, but many parks had space to stage events that was not being used. For example, even if parks no longer had bandstands, their bases often were still in situ and could be used as platforms for events;
- An important part of encouraging people to use parks and other open spaces was to provide the right quantity at the right quality, with appropriate access;
- The Council was required to assess the suitability of all open space in the city for development. As all open space had to be assessed, approximately 270 sites were listed in the draft Local Plan, but this did not mean that they all would be developed. No decisions had been made at this stage;
- The Council would not be able to provide the required amount of housing in the city, so was working with district authorities in the county to determine where it could be provided;
- The OSSR consultation was running alongside the Local Plan consultation. 80 responses to the OSSR Study consultation had been received by 9 November 2017. Approximately 50% of these respondents used open space daily and just under 40% used it weekly. Approximately 60% of the respondents felt that 2.88 hectares of open space per 1,000 population was too low and 35% thought it was about right. No respondents thought it was too high. Parks and Gardens were used most often, followed by Natural Open Space;
- As a result of the OSSR consultation, some suggestions had been received for open space that could be used for housing or employment land in the future, but any such change would have to be balanced against other Local Plan needs; and
- Over 1,000 responses to the Local Plan consultation had been received to date, which was considered to be a good rate of response. Further consultation would be carried out as the Plan evolved.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Festival and Events Manager be asked to consider how entertainment in parks can be reinstated;
- 2) That the Director for Estates and Building Services be asked to consider how anti-social behaviour on the site of the former Western Park can be addressed;

- 3) That all Members be encouraged to respond to the consultations discussed above, both with their own comments and on behalf of residents; and
- 4) That the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation be asked to advise this Commission of the outcome of the consultation on the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study.

50. TASK GROUP REVIEW: "ENGAGEMENT WITH LEICESTER'S ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE OFFER"

On behalf of the Commission, the Chair welcomed Suba Das (Associate Director, Curve), Tony Flint (General Manager, De Montfort Hall), John Rance (Chief Executive Officer, Phoenix) and Claire Ward (Director of Communications and Fundraising, Curve) to the meeting.

The Chair reminded Members of the scope of the proposed review of engagement with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offer. He particularly stressed the desirability of considering how people with limited resources could be encouraged to engage, how the offer was publicised and gaps in exposure to certain communities.

The Chair then invited the representatives of Curve, De Montfort Hall and Phoenix to give a brief outline of the methods and initiatives used to communicate with, and engage, communities.

Mr Rance welcomed the review as proposed. He explained that one of Phoenix's charitable aims was to reach out to communities, but the ways in which this was done were not always obvious. However, Phoenix was a small charity, so there was some concern about the amount of time that was available and work that would be required, to achieve these aims. It therefore would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council to identify what the Council would like the charity to be doing and how this could be achieved.

In reply, the Commission recognised that resources were limited, but expressed the wish to see tangible outputs of a high quality that could be expanded as they developed.

Ms Ward noted that, for Curve, audience development was key to all areas of its work. Feedback therefore was regularly sought from staff in all of the theatre's departments and gaps in the market identified in order to direct effort. As a result of this, some initiatives had been trialled this year, such as offering £5 tickets to students and £1 tickets for public dress rehearsals. Other things already offered included family days and various free activities, but people did not appear to be aware of some of these.

To help address this, it was hoped that, over the next year, Curve's "harder to reach" plan could be rewritten. This could include an examination of the prices of tickets. It was recognised that people had limited resources, so had to prioritise expenditure. Theatre attendance was not always a high priority and for many it was an occasional activity, so needed to be an enjoyable

experience in a safe environment. It was hoped that initiatives such as the availability of £10 tickets for Made at Curve productions could help address this. Consideration also needed to be given though to issues such as whether access shows were on the right days to enable people to attend and were shows that they were interested in.

Mr Das advised the Commission that:

- Curve made various offers, such as discounted tickets and a non-audition youth group;
- The theatre was gold-rated for physical access to the building and for staff training in access issues;
- The theatre was increasingly focussing on its community ambassadorial role. One way of developing this could be to create a community ambassador role, as had been done in other cities;
- As part of its agreement under the National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) scheme, consideration was being given to Curve's shared audience development plan, as it was known that when people accessed one arts space, it generated confidence to go to another;
- It had been identified that approximately 65% of people attending the theatre over the last year had been from black and minority ethnic communities and that approximately 35% were first time attendees;
- Over the previous two years, initiatives had been undertaken such as the development of a book club to read books relating to shows being staged at Curve, community projects and visits;
- The quality of productions at the theatre also was very important in maintaining and extending community engagement;
- An important part of Curve's work was to produce work by authors whose work was not frequently seen, such as some of the English modern classicists;
- The scale of some productions, and the subsequent costs involved, meant that theatres, including Curve, increasingly were having to do co-productions, (for example, with other theatres);
- Curve continually tried to encourage smaller production companies to stage their shows at Curve, but touring dates did not always make this possible; and
- Curve was seeking to expand its relationships with organisations such as those involved in disabilities theatre.

Ms Ward explained that Curve had joined Audience Finder, a national audience data and development tool, which gave the opportunity to analyse audiences in different ways. For example, with this tool it was possible to look at a postcode area and determine the likelihood of there being a particular demographic make-up of that area. This would help Curve target people by demographics such as age or socio-economic situation. This information could be shared as part of this review.

Mr Rance confirmed that most NPO-funded organisations used Audience Finder, so this was a useful tool with which to find baseline data for the proposed review.

Mr Flint reminded the Commission that De Montfort Hall was a very different organisation to Curve or Phoenix. All of the shows at De Montfort Hall came “ready made”, and usually were only on for one or two nights. These tended to be populist shows and attracted large audiences, as the shows were based around one or more celebrities.

The operators who provided these shows were financially driven, so were not interested in where their audiences came from. However, the Commission agreed that there still could be opportunities to investigate where there was an overlap of audiences, and therefore any inter-relationships between them. This could be beneficial in encouraging people to visit venues other than the one(s) they usually visited.

Mr Flint also advised the Commission that De Montfort Hall was working with the University of Leicester to find the best way to display, or otherwise enable public access to, some of the memorabilia from previous productions at De Montfort Hall.

The Commission also noted that:

- Other arts organisations, such as Soft Touch Arts, also operated in the city and had community initiatives, such as discounted tickets;
- As part of the review, account should be taken of issues such as the reluctance of some people to walk on their own through certain parts of the city, which could restrict access to venues;
- Clarifying the activities of NPO organisations in the city and adopting a strategic approach to marketing these was both a challenge and an opportunity, but could be very useful in seeking additional support for those organisations in the future; and
- An important aspect of improving access to the arts was ensuring that initiatives were directed appropriately, (for example, ensuring that cheap tickets were bought by the people they were intended for, not those who could afford to pay full price).

On behalf of the Commission, the Chair thanked Mr Das, Mr Flint, Mr Rance and Ms Ward for attending the meeting and their contributions to the discussion.

AGREED:

- 1) That the scoping document for the review of engagement with Leicester's arts, culture and heritage offer be endorsed;
- 2) That the evidence received at this meeting be considered as part of this review; and
- 3) That the representatives of Curve, De Montfort Hall and Phoenix each be invited to make a written submission of the main points for their organisations arising from the discussions at this meeting, along with any other points they consider relevant, these to be received by 30 November 2017 if possible.

51. WORK PROGRAMME

The current work programme for the Commission was received and noted.

52. CLOSE OF MEETING


The meeting closed at 7.09 pm



Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study
14th November 2017

New Local Plan

- Aim to meet needs for homes, jobs, shopping, and leisure
- Policies to protect historic and natural environment
- Encourage investment & economic growth
- Policies to consider planning applications
- Mediate between different competing needs/uses
- Aspirational but realistic



Consultation

26th July to 30th November 2017

- City wide letter/leaflet drop
- On line consultation, on social media and in libraries
- Exhibitions in Highcross
- Community Ward meetings
- Stakeholder events




Help shape the future of Leicester

Have your say on the new Local Plan for the city
consultations.leicester.gov.uk

2007 Open Space, Sport and Recreation study

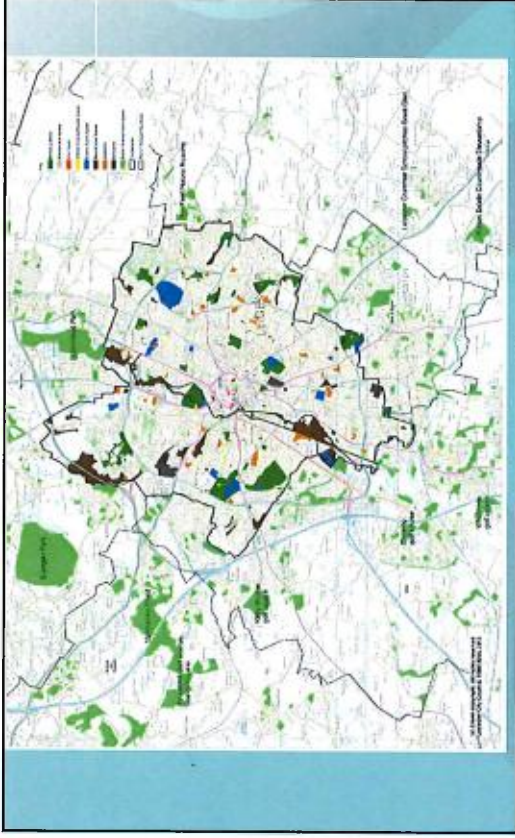
- First undertaken in 2007.
- Considered Quality, Quantity and Accessibility of open space.
- Recommended a standard of 2.88ha/1000 population.



2017 Study

- Change in central government policy
- Surveys all open spaces owned and managed by public bodies/trust.
- Categorised into six types.
- Use of new areas to calculate quantity.

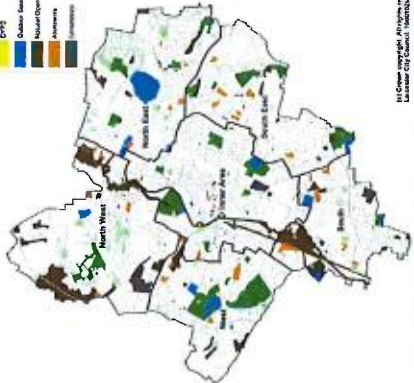
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study
2017



Types of Open Space, Sport & Recreation Provision in Leicester

Leicester

- Parks & Green Spaces
- Natural Open Space
- Civic Spaces
- CPSP
- Outdoor Sports Areas
- Natural Open Spaces
- Amenities
- Other



Map © Leicester City Council, 2017



Results


TOTAL FOR CITY BY AREA	Total Existing Quantity (Publicly Accessible) ha	Required Quantity (ha)	Sufficient/Deficiency
Inner Area	151.31	337.31	-186.00
North East	198.97	132.78	66.19
North West	257.68	99.69	157.99
South	175.39	108.81	66.58
South East	115.63	110.40	5.24
West	203.07	159.31	43.76
TOTAL FOR CITY	1102.05	948.29	153.75

These results are using the 2.88ha /1000 population standard.
Currently the city is providing 3.35ha /1000.




Quality of Open Space

- Overall Good, number of national Green Flag Awards.
- Local 'Love Parks' award instigated this year.
- Regular quality audits.
- Series of Outdoor Gyms installed.
- Some open spaces would benefit from enhancements but dependent on available funding.



Key Challenges in the Local Plan

- Population Growth
- Housing Need— 34,000 by 2031
- Future Employment Needs – 45ha Employment land
- Open Space – 1102ha – retention?
- Biodiversity and Heritage



Healthy Places



Extending cycle networks



Leigle Leicester promotes walking route




Outdoor gyms located in city parks and open spaces



OSSR questionnaire

- Runs alongside the Local Plan Consultation
- Designed to assess quality, quantity and accessibility.
- Considers cross boundary implications.



Next Steps

- Consideration of contributions from public, stakeholders and members
- Undertake technical studies which will inform development options.
- Draft plan with draft policies and site allocations
- Balance to be struck on delivering on housing, employment and open space allocations



Timetable

- Emerging Options, Sites & Development Management policies consultation: July - November 2017
- Revised Draft Local Plan: Winter 2017 - Spring 2018
- Further public consultation
- Public Examination and plan adopted: end of 2018

