



Leicester  
City Council

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**MINUTE EXTRACT**  
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Minutes of the Meeting of the  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, TRANSPORT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY  
SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 19 JANUARY 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Joel (Chair)  
Councillor Sandhu (Vice Chair)

Councillor Malik  
Councillor Porter

Councillor Rae Bhatia  
Councillor Singh Johal

In Attendance

Councillor Clarke – Deputy City Mayor, Environment and Transportation  
Councillor Myers – Assistant City Mayor, Jobs, Skills, Policy Delivery and  
Communications

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**51. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fonseca and Valand.

**52. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interests they may have in the business to be discussed on the agenda.

Councillor Malik declared an interest in agenda item 6, Community Renewal Fund, in that he worked for an organisation which was part of one of the Consortium which had been successful in the funding program.

Councillor Porter declared an interest in agenda items 7 and 8 that he was not in favour of bus lanes but believed he should not be excluded from any debate in terms of the agenda items.

Councillor Joel declared an interest in agenda item 6, Community Renewal Fund, in that she knew Zinthiya Ganeshpanchan from Zinthiya Trust who was present at the meeting, having worked with her previously around domestic violence.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest. The Members were not, therefore required to withdraw from the meeting.

### **53. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Porter stated he should be recorded as being in attendance at the last meeting of the Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency held on 15 December 2021.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency held on 15 December 2021 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the amendment above.

### **60. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23**

#### **DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2022/23**

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted a report the purpose of which was to describe the City Mayor's draft budget for 2022/23. The Commission was recommended to consider and comment on the City Development and Neighbourhoods Element of the budget. The Commission's comments would be forwarded to the Overview Select Committee as part of its consideration of the report before presentation to the meeting of Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

Amy Oliver, Head of Finance, presented the report. It was noted the revenue budget looked at the day to day running costs of the Council, and cost of individual divisions, and as had been for a number of years, was focused around the decade of austerity the Council had experienced, the current pandemic that had affected some of the budget reviews that would have taken place, and the current social care funding crisis.

Members were asked to note the budget presented showed a funding gap for the next financial year and the years after, which was forecast to rise to £50million for 2023/24. For 2022/23 the budget gap would be met from reserves, but for 2023/24 the project gap could no longer be managed by the Reserve Strategy. The report talked about a budget review to try and bridge the gap.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions, and the following responses were given:

- It had been reported across the country that as a result of Brexit and the pandemic that a large number of people had left the country. It was asked that, in terms of Leicester's population and the money received from Council Tax, had the Council seen a decline in the tax received from vacant properties? The meeting was informed that Council Tax was based on the properties rather than the number of people living in the city, and there were also various discounts given for example single people households that would impact on the Council Tax due.. It was further noted that if a property became vacant then the owner continued to be liable for Council Tax after the first month.
  - Members were informed the Council Tax base had increased slightly for the past financial year which was helping the Council's budget. New builds were also adding to the tax base, for example, schemes such as Ashton Green.
  - Members referred to section 4.23 in the report, and the £4.3million income shortfall in City Development and Neighbourhoods. It was reported that the shortfall was being met with Government grant received to support the authority though Covid.
- The Chair thanked the officer for the report.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. Information on Council Tax changes per population be provided to Members.

### **DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23**

The Deputy Director of Finance submitted a report the purpose of which was to provide information to the Commission on the draft Capital Programme for 2022/23. The Commission was recommended to consider the report and comment on report. The Commission's comments would be forwarded to the Overview Select Committee as part of its consideration of the report before presentation to the meeting of Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022.

Amy Oliver, Head of Finance, presented the report.

The Chair asked that at section 3.19(c) in the report, it mentioned £250,000 had been set aside for festive decorations, and as reported was a higher than usual amount. It was noted the authority was given money to help with the impact of Covid, and it was identified that some of the schemes, such as improving the decorations, would help with the regeneration of the city and assist with economic recovery, so rather than the £50,000 as usual for the annual programme, additional money had been invested upfront, and would help upgrade decorations around the city, and they would be more environmentally friendly.

The Chair thanked the officer for the report.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.