



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 28 JUNE 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)
Councillor Solanki (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Pickering Councillor Rahman

Councillor Kitterick

In Attendance:

Councillor Clair, Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport, and Regulatory
Services

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor O'Donnell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

1. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny
Commission held 17 March 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS

The Chair noted that the Terms of Reference for Scrutiny Commissions were

set out in the Council's Constitution.

5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION FOR 2022/23

The Membership of the Commission for 2022/23 was noted.

6. DATES OF MEETINGS OF THE COMMISSION FOR 2022/23

The dates of meetings of the Commission for 2022/23 were noted.

7. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted that this was the first Commission meeting of the Municipal year and welcomed all Members and Officers to the Commission.

8. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

9. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

10. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services presented an overview of the key areas and services relating to the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission portfolio.

It was noted that Community Safety Services had now gone over to Adult Social Care and was now no longer covered by the Commission, but that the private rental team remained under Neighbourhood and Environmental Services.

In response to a Member question it was noted that public realm projects were related to making improvements to external environments such as street lighting, footpaths, and public sports equipment. These were typically funded through S106 contributions, the Capital budget, and grants.

AGREED:

That the Commission notes the portfolio.

11. WARD ENGAGEMENT AND FUNDING REPORT 2021-22

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report to provide an outline of how Ward Funding was spent across the city between April 2021 and March 2022.

The Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport, and Regulatory Services introduced the item, noting that this was an annual report on the spending of ward funding and also included details of the progress of Ward Community Meetings.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services presented the item, it was noted that:

- Each of Leicester 21 wards was annually allocated a £18,000 budget to support projects in the ward at the discretion of Ward Councillors.
- 482 applications for funding were received in 2021/22, of those 363 were supported, an increase on the previous year. £384k was awarded
- A breakdown of projects supported by category showed that community activities were increasing again after the pandemic.
- 19 applications were supported from Council Service led projects.
- Ward Community Engagement Officers were on hand to engage with applicants throughout the entire process, including before any formal steps.
- Ward funding could not fund ongoing running costs and staff costs.
- There were 3 funding rounds each year.
- Anyone who had delivered a project with ward funding was required to provide evaluations after delivery was complete.
- For every £1 of funding provided by the fund, there was £1.8 of match funding on average.
- Each ward was allowed 3 ward events in each municipal year, usually taking the form of a Ward Community Meeting.
- Some virtual Ward Community Meetings were held during the lockdown period, in-person meetings were now available. Councillors were currently being engaged as to when Ward Meetings should be held.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- Evaluations should be received a month after delivery had finished, Community Engagement Officers would work to encourage organisers to send those evaluations after that period. If evaluations still had not been received after a long enough period, the funding could be claimed back but this was very rare.
- Match funding was provided by the applicants.
- It wasn't a requirement that groups that received funding be constituted.
- Payments would be made by BACS, bank accounts for individuals were allowed to receive these payments.
- Most applications that were withdrawn were then eventually resubmitted as once an application had been submitted it could not be amended.
- The intention was for Community Engagement Officers to go out into the community more to generate interest in applying for funding.
- If there were any issues with language then Officers would try to meet in a location where people were available to translate.

AGREED:

That the Commission requests that comments from Members be

considered by Officers.

12. STOCKING FARM REGENERATION UPDATE

The Director of Planning, Development, and Transportation submitted a presentation updating the Commission on the planned regeneration project in Stocking Farm.

The Senior Development Manager presented the item, it was noted that:

- All buildings on the site being regenerated were now Council owned.
- The vision for the project was to create a new residential community of 50 Council homes. 22 Adult Social Care units would also be included.
- New community spaces would include the now open Community Shop, a Multi-Use Games Area, and more open space.
- The new Council houses were designed to go over and above new Building Regulations such as air tightness and Air Source Heat Pumps.
- Engagement was taking place in 3 phases in the local area, the final phase of consultation had completed in May 2022.
- The level of engagement online on the consultation was high, this led to a successful application to DLUHC for funding to support the final phase of consultation.
- The funding also enabled further digital engagement at Babington Academy, where a digital classroom toolkit was used to support the Geography curriculum.
- A 5th newsletter about the project would be sent to local residents in July following the submission of a Planning application.
- The majority of works costs would fall to the HRA budget provision already made in the 2022/23 Capital Programme.
- The aim was to submit a Planning application in July 2022 and have all works complete onsite by the end of 2025.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- The digital element of the consultation allowed responses to be quickly analysed. Responses were generally positive, the only area of concern raised was with regards to the Post Office, it was hoped that this could be moved to another location on the site.
- As a result of responses from the first phase of engagement, the location of the retail in the initial plans was changed, as the engagement demonstrated that most users approached the site from the west.
- Various sustainability measures were being considered for the project which would hopefully result in savings for residents.
- Using a Ground Source Heat Pump was considered but after analysis the Air Source option was chosen.
- There would soon be a meeting to consider a 2nd Community Shop elsewhere in the city.
- The room hire rates for Community Zone were consistent with rates across the city, user groups were consulted on this early on.

- The total cost was yet to be confirmed, it would likely be higher than a standard Council House build per unit due to the additional sustainability features.
- Procurement for contractors would take place in Summer, it was hoped the contractor could be local, but the priority was finding a developer who could successfully deliver a project of the scale and standard required.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission requests more details of the environmental measures at the site to be circulated to Commission Members.
2. That the Commission requests a progress update at a future meeting.

13. TREE STRATEGY REVIEW 2021/22

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report to provide Members with an update on progress for the period 2021/22 on the Tree Strategy.

The Trees and Woodlands Manager presented the item, it was noted that:

- The Strategy was launched in 2018 and aimed to sustain and enhance Leicester's tree stock.
- The tree stock was 168k, an increase of 18k from last year.
- In 2021/22 for every tree that was felled, 19 trees were planted.
- Funded projects took place across the city, the aim was to get projects in wards that had not had them so far.
- An action plan was being developed to combat Ash Dieback which was spreading across the city.
- The Council had hundreds of Tree Preservation Orders on trees in others' ownership.
- The team responded to issues with trees during storms.
- Leicester was one of only two Councils with accreditation with the Arboricultural Association.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- It was estimated that 300-400 Ash Trees would be lost due to Ash Dieback in 2022/23. It was estimated that around 15k Ash Trees would be lost over 10 years, around 80% of the Ash Tree stock. Other Authorities had felled 50-60% of Ash Trees already.
- The priority was to plant British native trees, in wider spaces it was possible to plant larger exotic trees.

AGREED:

That the Commission notes the update.

14. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair noted that any suggestions for future items should be emailed to himself or the Scrutiny Policy Officer.

Members requested an update on the issues with pollution at Aylestone Dyeworks.

Members also requested an update on the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy.

AGREED:

That an update on Aylestone Dyeworks and the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy be brought to a future Commission meeting.

15. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The meeting closed at 7.22pm.