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# Leicester City Council Scrutiny Report 2021-22

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## **Message from the Chair of the Overview Select Committee, 2021-22**

I am delighted to have again served as Chair of the Overview Select Committee during 2021-22 and am very pleased to present a report that sets out an extensive range of work by scrutiny committees and commissions.

Throughout 2021 and entering 2022, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic still dominated the operation of the council and the city, and crucially, it remained at the heart of our scrutiny. It has been helpful for scrutiny to understand the implications on services and communities and my colleagues and I will continue to have a key role in examining the long lasting impacts of the pandemic.

We have however been able to spend more time this year focussing on services, strategic priorities and other emerging issues and I have been impressed with the volume and quality of scrutiny and the number of recommendations by scrutiny to the Council's Executive and to our key partners. I am once again thankful for the involvement and contributions of the City Mayor and his team, along with officers from across the organisation in supporting and equipping our scrutiny function. I am also particularly thankful for the level of engagement from our health sector partners, and I remain committed to engaging with decision-makers beyond the local authority.

At Leicester, we take great pride in our scrutiny, and we aim to examine those issues that are central to the lives of the people in our city. We have this year continued to scrutinise the key strategic priorities of the City Council, and have investigated many matters in detail, setting up task and finish work to allow a broader range of evidence to be gained by commissions. Examples of this include some focussed work on our corporate equality responsibilities, a review of a proposal to establish a new anti-social behaviour service and ongoing work in relation to the University Hospitals of Leicester reconfiguration and the emergence of the Integrated Care System (ICS).

I'm also pleased that further in-depth scrutiny work is progressing well, and I look forward to a number of reviews producing recommendations that will influence decision-making and improve service delivery for our citizens.

I look forward to developing scrutiny throughout 2022/23. It goes without saying that all local authorities face a mounting degree of pressure and challenge, and in a city such as ours, it is essential that my colleagues and I are ready to examine the implications of the circumstances that we face and to help to influence decision-making to support and enhance Leicester and its people.

**Councillor Ted Cassidy – Chair of the Overview Select Comm**

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## Glossary

The following abbreviations are used to describe each scrutiny body:

**ASC:** Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

**CYPE:** Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

**EDTCE:** Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

**HCLT:** Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

**HSC:** Housing Scrutiny Commission

**HWB:** Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

**JHSC:** Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

**NS:** Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission

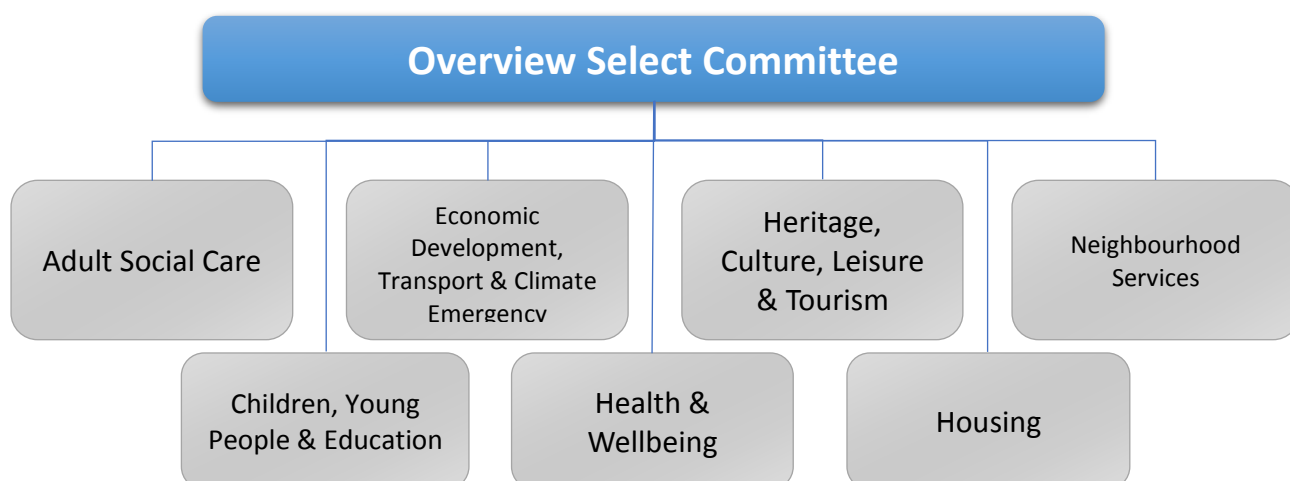
**OSC:** Overview Select Committee

# Introduction

## What is Scrutiny?

The Centre for Public Scrutiny defines scrutiny as “the activity by one elected or appointed organisation or office examining and monitoring all or part of the activity of a public sector body with the aim of improving the quality of public services. A public sector body is one that carries out public functions or spends public money. Scrutiny ensures that executives are held accountable for their decisions, that their decision-making process is clear and accessible to the public and that there are opportunities for the public and their representatives to influence and improve public policy.” As such, it is important that scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that the council and its partners remain effective and accountable.

## Leicester City Council’s Scrutiny Structure



As highlighted here, the council continued with the model of an Overview Select Committee supported by seven scrutiny commissions covering all facets of the council’s business. Since May 2021, the City Council has also acquired responsibility for leading the support to the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee; an arrangement that rotates on a bi-annual basis between Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council.

## Report Structure

This annual report covers the period between May 2021-May 2022, reverting back to the standard format following the production of two-year report that covered the 2019-2021 municipal years.

The report provides detail of the work of the Overview Select Commission, and each of the seven City Council scrutiny commissions along with the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee. The annual report does not intend to draw out a large quantity of detail or highlight each recommendation, and instead sets out some of the key achievements by the scrutiny bodies, examining areas of influence and work undertaken as part of focussed reviews or task and finish work. Full detail of each scrutiny meeting can be found by accessing relevant agendas, and minutes via <https://bit.ly/3P7AOEh>

The report does not also intend to provide full detail of what is covered by each of the scrutiny bodies. Detail of the configuration of scrutiny at Leicester City Council can be accessed via <https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/decisions-meetings-and-minutes/overview-and-scrutiny/our-scrutiny-system/>

Scrutiny by its very nature examines some work over a more considerable period of time, and this report also points to those strands of work that will continue throughout 2022/23. This is reflected as part of the commission summary pages throughout the report.

## Overview of Scrutiny 2021/22

During 2021/22, meetings developed a greater sense of normality with all public meetings being held in person at Leicester's City Hall. In light of continued implications as a result of the pandemic, scrutiny maintained a degree of caution in its operation, with a hybrid meeting function enabling non-voting elected members, presenting officers and other contributors to attend remotely.

In total, there were 56 public meetings across the nine scrutiny bodies. This was supplemented by a vast amount of further work performed by members in the form of separate scrutiny task group meetings or additional briefing sessions on topics of significance.

At Leicester, the majority of meetings are comprised of approximately seven elected members, with some commissions being supplemented by co-opted members or standing invitees. The Chairs of the scrutiny bodies throughout 2021/22 were as follows:

Overview Select Committee – Councillor Ted Cassidy  
Adult Social Care – Councillor Rashmikanth Joshi  
Children, Young People and Education – Councillor Stephan Gee  
Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency – Cllr Ashiedu Joel  
Heritage Culture Leisure and Tourism – Councillor Elaine Halford  
Health and Wellbeing – Councillor Patrick Kitterick  
Joint Health Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Patrick Kitterick  
Housing – Councillor Paul Westley  
Neighbourhood Services – Councillor Aminur Thalukdar

The commissions and committees continued to examine several strands of work that featured previously, particularly in relation to the pandemic, but also in respect of other key strategic priorities and emerging priorities. As in previous years, a significant proportion of scrutiny related to the consideration of executive decisions prior to them being taken. This equips scrutiny to challenge, support and influence the City Council's decision-making processes and remains a prime role of the scrutiny function. Scrutiny also strives to examine issues that emerge throughout the year that have significant implications for the people of Leicester. The work overseen by OSC in relation to women's safety is one of many examples where scrutiny has responded quickly in considering the implications and potential solutions for a key emerging issue.

Many of the scrutiny bodies have also performed an extensive level of work in addition to that taking place as part of ordinary scrutiny meetings. A number of focussed task group reviews continued throughout 2021/22 and several were also initiated during the year. It is commonplace for the concept of this work to originate at a formal meeting, often when it is apparent that the level of scrutiny required is extensive and requires a more detailed process of evidence gathering. One recent example is the Housing Scrutiny Commission's work to review the Council's proposal to introduce a new, in-house team for dealing with cases of anti-social behaviour. The proposal was initially presented at a commission meeting, and it was felt that a significant amount of further detail was required to allow the commission to assess whether or not they wished to support the proposal. A number of task group meetings then took place to gather the information that was required, and as a result, the commission provided support towards the proposal along with the compilation of a series of recommendations. Upon the completion of all task group work, the executive submit a report back to a commission meeting that details a response to the scrutiny recommendations.

Scrutiny continues to gather the majority of its evidence from City Council service departments, though it has always been necessary for this to be supplemented with input from other organisations and stakeholders. During 2021/22, scrutiny sought evidence from a range of partners including the Police and Crime Commissioner, Healthwatch and Serendipity. The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission continued to examine the work of health partner organisations and also empowered a number of youth representatives to contribute to the scrutiny process; a concept that is set to be developed during 2022/23. More generally, scrutiny once again provided a platform for the public to directly examine decision makers. This was particularly apparent in the Health and Wellbeing commission's work in inspecting the process for the establishment of the Integrated Care System board, with a significant number of questions being put to health partners by members of the public.

The following pages document some of the key achievements and highlights of each of Leicester's nine scrutiny bodies, drawing on areas of significance during the past year and referring to some of the priorities for taking scrutiny forward during 2022/23.

# Overview Select Committee

*This Overview Select Committee is the City Council's overarching scrutiny body. The committee primarily scrutinises the work overseen by the City Mayor, the council's strategic priorities and cross-cutting issues including equalities, property and the Council's finances. The Committee also engages with leaders and decision makers from key partner organisations across the city.*

The major Overview Select Committee scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Pandemic recovery** – throughout the year, the committee sought detail of the latest position in respect of council service recovery following the pandemic and examined a range of data sets, including those relating to infection rates, vaccinations and geographical trends, making recommendations to NHS partners, particularly in light of vaccination take up amongst certain cohorts. The committee also inspected the council's post-pandemic working practices and will continue to monitor these throughout 2022/23.

**Corporate Equalities** – the committee undertook some additional scrutiny work to examine the proposed Equalities and Workforce Action Plans in detail and made a number of recommendations for future service delivery. The commission also examined work in relation to tackling racism, inequality and disadvantage.

**Enhancing Women's Safety** – In light of prominent national cases, the committee reviewed existing safety measures and recommended the formulation of a multi-partner action plan to enhance the overall level of safety for women across the city. The committee will continue to examine progress with this work during 2022/23.

**Scrutiny of the Budget** – the committee examined the proposals for the City Council's revenue budget, capital programme and Housing Revenue Account. In doing so, the commission considered the comments of all scrutiny commissions, and endorsed these in advance of Full Council approval of the budget. As part of its ongoing work, OSC also considers the Council's revenue and capital budget monitoring reports throughout the year.

**Strategic Priorities** – the commission continued to review progress made with the City Mayor's key strategic commitments and ensured that OSC and the relevant commissions were able to examine these as appropriate.

## Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:

- To examine the final proposals for Leicester's local plan, which sets out the vision and objectives for growth in the city for the next fifteen years.
- Following an extensive scrutiny session with the Police and Crime Commissioner in March 2022, the commission aims to engage with other key leaders and decision-makers, including local universities.
- To understand more about the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities and strategy.
- To understand more about the findings and outcomes regarding the recently completed survey of Leicester, with a view to delegating commissions to examine areas of particular interest.

Further detail in relation to the work of OSC during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3A0nOuw>

# Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission

*This commission focuses on matters relating to the delivery of statutory adult social care functions, such as care services to allow independence in own homes, care services for those that require care away from home and policies for a broad range of health needs.*

The key Adult Social Care scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

- **Cost of Care Packages** – In light of the overall outlook for the ASC budget, a scrutiny task group was set up to understand more about trends in care costs and changes in demand – and the impact on budgets. This work concluded during the year though the final set of recommendations will be presented in early 2022/23. Moreover, the commission examined generally the budget pressures and workforce issues impacting on care services at a local and national level.
- **Healthwatch Leicester** – scrutiny has forged closer relationships with Healthwatch, the body responsible for championing the views of users of health and social care services. Healthwatch representatives have presented a number of reports to the commission and attend each meeting to compliment and add value to the scrutiny process.
- **Technology Care Aids** – This service has grown rapidly in recent years and was scrutinised in detail by the commission. Members examined the aids themselves to better understand how they support those in need and will continue to monitor developments during 2022/23.
- **Procurement of social care services** – the commission looked at the overall plan for service procurement over the next two years. There was particular interest in the monitoring of a number of individual contracts and further scrutiny was agreed to take place in relation to these.
- **Extra Care Provision** – in scrutinising the latest programme, members sought assurances around the opportunity to make progress over the coming year and enquired whether elements of the service could be delivered in-house.
- **Other key Adult Social Care strategies and policies** – the commission scrutinised various plans, strategies and annual reports, which included the Adult Social Care Operational Strategy, the Learning Disabilities Plan, the Mental Health Strategy and the Leicester Partnership Adult Safeguarding report. There was a commitment to undertake further scrutiny on many of these and several recommendations and actions were sought.

## **Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:**

- Understanding the outcome of the recommendations in respect of the cost of care packages task group review
- To continue to understand the future ASC budget implications on services
- To examine the upcoming Winter Care Plans
- To understand the implications of the health and social care reforms
- To undertake a greater amount of joint scrutiny with the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission in relation to areas of shared significance

Further detail in relation to the work of ASC during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3A1rJYf>



# Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission

*The Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission is responsible for considering children's social care, education & attainment and support provision for children and young people and families. Diocesan, trade union and school governor representatives work with elected members on this Commission.*

Key scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Scrutinising the continued impact of the pandemic** – Throughout the year the commission carefully monitored the impact of the pandemic on school children, teachers and support staff. Reports were continually provided that accurately reflected the position across the city and identified those individuals and services most in need of support. The difficulties behind obtaining completed parental consent forms for vaccination was made clear to the commission, who supported the Council's stance in presenting concerns to the NHS.

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)** – The commission considered several reports relating to the delivery of SEND services. This included a report that detailed significant progress in relation to a number of areas that had previously required improvement. Subsequent reports through the year demonstrated further progress being made, with the wider SEND framework coming under review from the Government.

**Dyslexia Support in Schools** – the commission sought to examine the level of support available and as a result, gained an understanding of the diagnostic process, the role undertaken by schools and the range of services provided.

**Ofsted Inspection Outcome** - the outcome reported to the commission indicated an across-the-board improvement in performance across a wide range of services for children and young people within the city. The Commission praised the department's performance under very challenging conditions and asked to be kept informed of future Ofsted involvement with the City Council and any further outcomes.

**Response to the task group report on the under-achievement of black Caribbean and white British working-class pupils** – the commission had previously presented a range of recommendations following an extensive scrutiny task group review. A response report was presented that set out a series of measures and upcoming work designed to improve outcomes for these particular cohorts of pupils.

#### **Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:**

- Examining non-clinical mental health services available for children and young people.
- Understanding more about the impact of the pandemic upon children's learning outcomes.
- Exploring further the SEND transport contact; responsible for taking children from their homes to places of education.
- Further scrutiny of the work in response to the task group recommendations on the underachievement of black Caribbean and white British working-class pupils.

Further detail in relation to the work of CYPE during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3SMiMKO>

# Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

*This commission reviews a range of matters which include regeneration, public transport and cycling provision, adult learning and job provision and tourism. It also now holds responsibility for examining climate emergency policy.*

The key Economic Development, Transport and Climate Emergency scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Traffic Regulation Orders** – the scrutiny of these became standard practice for the commission and served as a method of increasing public engagement and providing comments and suggestions towards schemes.

**Transforming Cities Fund** - the Commission sought multiple transport updates on schemes that related to the Connecting Leicester programme. Members suggested that officers considered several alternative areas for schemes.

**Local Level Review** – the commission had previously completed a review that examined how the disadvantaged and economically excluded neighbourhoods in the city could be levelled-up. A response to this work was presented and it was noted that the recommendations from the scrutiny review had helped plan the strategic direction of the Council’s Economic Recovery plan.

**Local Transport Plan and Workplace Parking Levy** – a special meeting of the commission took place to examine the draft Local Transport Plan in advance of public consultation. The commission has also examined the process to date in respect of the Workplace Parking Levy consultation exercise. In response of the latter, a series of points were raised, and the commission will continue to scrutinise developments.

**Leicester Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-31** – In inspecting this ten-year strategy, the commission sought a range of further information that related to pesticide use, a map of priority sites, methane emissions and the number of trees planted to offset emissions. On a broader level with regard to public engagement, several public questions were received in respect of the Council’s carbon reduction plans.

**Adult Education Services** – the commission received an update on how the service was operating following the pandemic. Amongst other things, it was recommended that digital skills be integrated into courses from the outset of learning.

## Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:

- To consider the findings of the Workplace Parking Levy public consultation exercise.
- To review in greater detail issues around the economic recovery of Leicester, including an overview of graduate retention.
- To examine key policy in relation to the Climate Emergency, including the City Council’s Carbon Neutral Road Map.
- To understand the latest position in respect of inward investment opportunities and the work of the Leicester and Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LLEP)

Further detail in relation to the work of the commission during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3QQHLuQ>

# Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism Scrutiny Commission

*This commission is responsible for scrutinising a range of service areas which include parks and play areas, museums, festivals & events, burial space and sports services. It also holds responsibility for examining Leicester's overall tourism offer and strategy.*

The key Heritage, Culture, Leisure and Tourism scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Post-pandemic recovery of major services** – a prime focus throughout the year was reviewing the recovery, re-opening, and promotion of culture and leisure services and venues in the city. Commission comments related to better use of digital technology and the need for an intensified marketing and publicity campaign.

**Women's Participation in Sport** – a task group review was initiated to gather evidence behind barriers to participation and to explore ways of increasing involvement. A range of local organisations and national bodies contributed to this work, which will conclude in the early part of 2022/23.

**Leicester Museums**– In light of the major programme of refurbishment, the commission carried out a site visit at the Jewry Wall redevelopment site, which assisted in understanding the vision behind the programme and has supported the ongoing scrutiny process. Members also scrutinised the changes to New Walk Museum Development project and posed several recommendations, primarily in relation to improved engagement with schools.

**Tourism Action Plan** – in scrutinising a proposed new plan, the commission lodged a number of recommendations, mainly relating to the performance and monitoring of the action plan goals.

**Black History Month** – in the build-up to Black History Month, the commission invited the organisers (Serendipity) to talk about the planning and programming of this annual event. Members were particularly interested in the involvement of schools and engagement with communities as well as examining ways to build on the successes of events in previous years.

#### **Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:**

- To conclude the work of the Women in Sport Task Group review and to present a series of recommendations to the Executive.
- To understand more about the future of the hotel industry in Leicester and the links between this and the tourism action plan.
- To review the major proposals for improvement and refurbishment within sports and leisure services.
- To have the opportunity to examine and influence proposals for major seasonal festivals throughout the city.

Further detail in relation to the work of HCLT during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3QH11e8>

# Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Commission

*This commission is responsible for examining the health services received by all Leicester residents, which includes the services provided by the local authority's public health team along with those delivered by the NHS and health sector partners.*

The key Health and Wellbeing scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Pandemic Recovery and Vaccination Programme** – the commission sought regular updates on the impact on health services as a result of the pandemic and closely inspected the patterns of vaccination uptake across the city. In light of concerns raised in respect of an overall lower rate coupled with higher infection rates amongst school-aged children, the commission requested weekly updates on the latest data. The commission also made a number of recommendations in relation to the geographical spread of vaccination hubs and the associated communication strategy.

**Health Inequalities Action Plan** – the commission examined carefully the action plan concerning health inequalities and the associated links with the pandemic. The work of the City Council and health partners was commended, though the commission recommended further scrutiny in light of a reported fall in life expectancy and widening inequalities as a result of the pandemic.

**Review into the Experience of Black People Working in Health Services in Leicester and Leicestershire** – the commission continued a piece of work to map and highlight experiences and to explore practices and outcomes for black staff managers and directors. The evidence gathering stage of the work was completed and a final set of recommendations will be published later in 2022.

**Community Pharmacy Scheme** – the commission examined the implementation of this scheme and supported the increased use of pharmacies as an alternative access route for patients, provided that the referral system retained an element of face-to-face contact and that there was an option for patients to be referred out of the service for further treatment.

**Services Commissioned by Public Health** – the commission continued to monitor and recommend improvements to a range of key strategies in relation to services such as alcohol support, tobacco control, oral health and mental health. The key focus for the commission was to understand the extent to which these services had returned following the pandemic and to ascertain whether there was a subsequent increase in service demand and budgetary pressure.

**Major regional developments in the wider health sector** – alongside the work of Joint Health Committee, the commission also scrutinised major health sector led schemes which included the hospital reconfiguration programme and consultation as well as updates on the Integrated Care System proposals and associated Place Led Plans that were in development.

## Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:

- Continuing to monitor major programmes of reconfiguration in the health sector, including the Integrated Care System (ISC) place led plan.
- To understand more about the current level of provision and demand for mental health support services.
- To build on previous scrutiny work in terms of the access to GP services in the city.
- To examine the programme of autumn/winter flu vaccinations as well as developments in relation to the covid-19 vaccination programme.

Further detail in relation to the work of HWB during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3c3dpGB>

# Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

*In addition to Leicester City Council's Health Scrutiny Commission, scrutiny of health services is also undertaken on a regional basis along with elected members from Leicestershire County Council and Rutland County Council. This committee requires the presentation of evidence from local authorities across the region and from lead health sector partners.*

The major Joint Health scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Mental Health Service Provision** - the Committee held a special meeting to examine the provision of mental health services across the region. In doing so, both the Step Up to Great Mental consultation and the outcome of the Leicester Partnership Trust CQC inspection were considered. This resulted in various recommendations and requests for further strands of information, including closer inspection of the key performance indicators (KPIs) and the need for a future dedicated meeting on mental health provision in 2022/23.

**UHL Acute and Maternity Reconfiguration/Building Better Hospitals**— A series of proposals were closely examined throughout the year. In scrutinising the outcome of the consultation process, a session took place which looked at the analysis on a thematic basis. The committee also inspected in detail the move of children's services from Glenfield Hospital to the Kensington Building at the LRI. The proposals were generally supported, and members were also kept informed of progress via several separate briefing sessions.

**The Pandemic Recovery and Vaccination Programme** – Further to the work of the Health and Wellbeing Commission, this was also carefully considered by the joint Committee throughout the year. Members identified barriers to accessing vaccinations from different areas and asked the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) to undertake a GP data exercise regarding vaccination uptake.

**Integrated Care System (ICS)** - the Committee considered multiple updates over the year regarding the development of the ICS Board and Partnership, including a delay to the process due to the legislative process taking longer than usual. The Committee reiterated the need for Health Partners to be as transparent as possible with the public on this development, which included sharing information more readily. The concerns of having private companies on the Board was also raised by the Committee, with partners providing reassurance that this would not be the case

**Continued partnership working** - Health Partners such as NHS Improvement (Dentistry) and East Midlands Ambulance Service (EMAS) engaged with the Committee, with the former presenting two reports on access to dentistry across the region. Members expressed issues with access to dentistry following the pandemic and requested a further update in the next municipal year.

## Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:

- To develop a greater understanding of the financial position of University Hospitals Leicester (UHL) including the position for the UHL reconfiguration programme.
- To continue to examine Mental Health Service Provision and the outcomes of the Step Up to Mental Health consultation as well as the previous CQC inspection.
- To seek further updates on the progress with the ICS arrangements and its implications
- To understand more about the transformative care plans for learning disabilities services.

Further detail in relation to the work of JHSC during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3ACrILL>

# Housing Scrutiny Commission

*The Housing Scrutiny Commission examines a wide range of issues relating to Housing and Homelessness. This covers council services as well as issues affecting private sector housing and housing associations. The commission actively engages with tenants and residents when conducting its business and it is common for reports to reflect the views of tenant participation groups.*

Key housing scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**A task group review of a proposal to introduce a establish a central housing anti-social behaviour team** – a small group of councillors initiated this review as a result of queries raised about the service at commission meetings. The group sought further evidence relating to a new service proposal and concluded that a dedicated in-house team was required. A range of further proposals were recommended which included ensuring that robust links were in place with other key agencies, establishing a comprehensive programme of training for the new team and undertaking an extensive communication strategy in terms of promoting the changes. An Executive response report was presented to the commission which confirmed that the scrutiny proposals had been accepted and documented progress to date.

**Initiating a review of the Housing Crisis in Leicester** – In light of an increasing shortage of affordable homes in the city, a Housing task group was formed to understand more about the reasons and implications of the current crisis and looked to make proposals aimed at both the City Council and national government. This work will continue throughout the summer of 2022.

**Providing advice in relation to the departmental budget and the annual rent-setting process** – the commission endorsed the proposed rent increases which were proposed, though it was noted that tenant representatives did not support the full increase. The commission developed an interest in the role of tenant representation more generally and is playing a key role in developing the Tenancy Support Strategy.

**Reviewing the continued impact of the pandemic on key services** – this featured heavily throughout the year and focussed on a range of services including the level of outstanding rent arrears and the impact of the programme on repairing and maintaining homes. The commission was broadly very supportive of the effective and flexible approaches in managing debt taken by the City Council under the most challenging of circumstances.

**Work in relation to Private Sector landlords/discretionary licensing** –along with OSC, the commission reviewed strategic plans for undertaking work within the private rented sector, as well as the proposal to introduce a discretionary licensing scheme throughout the city. A series of recommendations were raised which related to suggestions for priority locations and the need to engage with partners including local student unions.

## Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:

- A continuation of the task group review into the Housing Crisis in Leicester
- Understanding more about plans to deliver more homes in Leicester
- Monitoring progress with settling refugees and new communities into the city
- Further input into key policy including the Private Rented Sector (PRS) strategy, Tenancy Support Strategy and the Homelessness Strategy

Further detail in relation to the work of HSC during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3BXAJQx>

# Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission

*The Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission is responsible for examining many of the everyday services that people access within their own communities, including the provision of libraries, community centres, environmental and enforcement services. This commission also holds responsibility for looking at voluntary and community sector support and issues relating to community safety and community cohesion.*

Key Neighbourhood Services scrutiny developments during 2021/22 included:

**Draft Gambling Policy** – the commission examined the policy prior to a Full Council decision. Members recommended greater consideration in terms of how a ‘No Casino’ Policy would be implemented and requested additional information to be added to the gambling policy in light of concerns raised about TV advertising impacts to gambling. The evidence and findings of the previous scrutiny task group review into ‘Gambling Policy’ influenced and helped to shape this new policy.

**Community Lottery Review** – the commission had previously launched a review into whether a community lottery should be initiated in Leicester. Upon receiving a considerable amount of evidence, it was recommended to not pursue the concept of a local lottery. The Executive presented a response to the work and supported the recommendation of the commission.

**Litter and Fly tipping strategy** – when examining a new strategy proposal, the commission recommended the inclusion of clearance costs to the strategy. An increase in the number of bins outside shops with a higher prevalence of litter was also suggested, along with an enhanced marketing campaign to deter fly-tipping and littering.

**Hate Crime/Knife Crime Strategy** – both strategies were carefully considered by the commission and included information provided by Leicestershire Police. It was recommended that greater publicity of them was required, along with further outreach work with schools and younger people.

**Draft Domestic Abuse Strategy** – prior to its implementation, this strategy was reviewed by the commission. Members identified a specific area of community engagement work with women in the Belgrave area of the city and cited this as best practice

**Tree Strategy** – members monitored and commended the progress made since the adoption of the strategy in 2018.

**Pandemic Recovery work** – the commission received regular updates and endorsed the Council’s approach in supporting people and communities and by continuing to provide a broad range of services throughout the pandemic.

## Scrutiny plans for 2022/23 include:

- To further review the City Council’s Voluntary and Community Sector engagement and strategy work
- To inspect progress following the implementation of the Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy
- To scrutinise the work and operation of the Community Safety Partnership
- To explore potential income generation avenues for Neighbourhood and environmental services

Further detail in relation to the work of the commission during 2021/22 and detail of the meetings for 2022/23 can be accessed via <https://bit.ly/3JNgibb>

## Contacting Scrutiny

For more information please contact the Scrutiny Team via **[scrutiny@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@leicester.gov.uk)**.

Leicester City Council  
City Hall  
115 Charles Street  
Leicester  
LE1 1FZ

<https://www.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/decisions-meetings-and-minutes/overview-and-scrutiny/>