



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: MONDAY, 20 MARCH 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)

Councillor Batool

Councillor Pantling

Councillor Halford

Also present:

Sir Peter Soulsby  
Councillor Russell  
Councillor Clarke  
Natasha Deacon  
Mariam Khan  
Dena Al-Showali  
Alretaj Al-Showali  
Henry Zawadzki

City Mayor  
Deputy City Mayor  
Deputy City Mayor  
Care Experience Consultant  
Care Experience Consultant  
Youth Representative  
Youth Representative  
Youth Representative

\* \* \* \* \*

**95. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Joel and Westley.

**96. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

There were no declarations of interest.

**98. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **99. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING**

The Chair noted that Committee Members had received a note detailing the progress on actions agreed at the last meeting.

The Chair noted that a site visit to the Waterside Development site had taken place. The Chair praised the development.

## **100. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations and statements of case had been submitted in accordance with the Council's procedures.

## **101. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

## **102. TRACKING OF PETITIONS - MONITORING REPORT**

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report which provided an update on the status of outstanding petitions against the Council's target of providing a formal response within three months of being referred to the Divisional Director.

AGREED:

That the status of the outstanding petitions be noted, and to remove those petitions marked 'Petition Complete' Ref: from the report.

## **103. COST OF LIVING CRISIS UPDATE**

The Director of Public Health provided an update on the Council's ongoing response to the cost-of-living crisis. The Head of Revenues and Customer Support was also present to update on available support. It was noted that:

- The ONS estimated that 1 in 3 adults were currently having difficulty affording rent and mortgage payments and that around half of adults were buying less food when shopping.
- Leicester was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> nationally in regard to vulnerability with cost of living. With the main difficulty being in median annual pay.
- An Incident Management Team had been running since September to co-ordinate the Council's response to the crisis. Within this there were a number of sub-cells focusing on different services and issues such as emergency food, as well as working with the voluntary sector and other partners.
- As part of the fuel poverty programme there was now a bespoke energy advice service now in place. With regards to energy advice there was a policy of 'no wrong front door' meaning that staff across different services would be trained to be able to give advice on these matters.

- Various anti-poverty grants were in place to support targeted vulnerable groups. A new round of grants would be advertised soon.
- All support that was noted at previous meetings was still ongoing.
- BetterOff Leicester was a website which provided financial advice and made users aware of benefits they were entitled to. The site also created a risk score for users using the budgeting tool and would notify those on high-risk of options for help.
- Usage of BetterOff was being closely monitored, with fuel advice and the income maximisation tool being the most used pages.
- Over 60% of the funding from the Household Support Fund through applications and professional referrals had been used to support fuel costs. The fund was targeted towards households which were 'just about managing' financially.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that:

- With regard to the Household Support Fund, it was a national scheme, an individual could only apply for support once in the current round however it could be twice for the next financial year.
- With regard to energy advice work there would be an awareness programme in primary schools on energy efficiency to educate pupils. This would be launched in September.
- Mental health first aid training would be provided to Food Bank staff and others in order to have more sustainable support.
- A breakdown of users for BetterOff was not possible as BetterOff was anonymised so there was no information on users.
- BetterOff was promoted heavily on social media and in libraires and advice on using the site was also provided.

In response to questions from Youth Representatives it was noted that:

- In relation to the role of schools in providing support, schools could make referrals to the Household Support Fund and ensure access to other support for those not eligible for free school meals. Applications were open for the Easter Holiday Activity and Food Programme.
- On Council support for Food Banks, Food Banks were run independently but supported by the food network coordinator in order to maximise supplies and volunteers. Food Bank demand had gone up, but no Food Banks had reported shortages with food. The numbers of Food Banks had remained stable.
- In respect to those with no access to public funds, the aim was to make support as universal as possible so that those with no access to public funds could also receive help.
- The Council aimed to reduce the stigma around seeking help by publicising data about the scale of the crisis.

The Chair praised the extensive work of Officers and voluntary organisations on this.

AGREED:

That the Committee notes the update and thanks all involved in providing support during the cost-of-living crisis.

#### **104. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a presentation outlining the Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy. The Head of Corporate Parenting presented the item, it was noted that:

- The overarching principle to the Council's approach to Corporate Parenting was 'as if this were my child'.
- There were currently 640 Children Looked After in the city alongside Care Leavers.
- Elected Members had been involved in developing the Strategy alongside Officers from across a wide range of Council services.
- One of the key principles of the Strategy was around participation for CLA and Care Leavers. This participation model was based on the Lundy model and Officers across the Council would be trained in this model.
- Another key principle of the Strategy was a focus on wellbeing both physical and mental.
- Preparing CLA for later life both with housing and independent living was also covered by the Strategy.
- The Strategy also detailed the pledges for CLA and Care Leavers.
- Future priorities included educating a wide range of Officers and new Councillors on their role as Corporate Parents.
- The Council was keen to set an example as an employer of Care Leavers and had a number of current Apprenticeships for Care Leavers.
- Training was available for all Councillors on Corporate Parenting and all Councillors were encouraged to attend the Corporate Parenting Board.

Representatives of the Care Experience Consultants were present to provide a presentation on their input and thoughts on the Strategy. It was noted that:

- The Strategy was focused on ensuring that CLA were happy and could succeed.
- The principle of the Lundy Model was added by the Generation Select panel.
- An area for further development was the current level of implementation of Corporate Parenting principles across the Council.
- Some of the language was felt to be too obscure for young people and this could be addressed to make the document more accessible. It was also suggested that the statistics in the Strategy could also include UK-wide data.
- Generation Select had found that CLA who were consulted didn't know what a Corporate Parent was. It was agreed that the term shouldn't be changed but more should be done to clarify the role.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that:

- In relation to terminology, the change in language from Looked After Children to Children Looked After was to change the culture of the service and put their status as children first before being looked after.
- The term Lundy Model was used as a shorthand when talking about the general principles of participation.
- With regard to wider department involvement in Corporate Parenting, the broader role for all staff in Corporate Parenting was a work in progress. However, Leicester was further ahead of this than many Councils where only Children's services were involved. All new Social Workers had an induction on Corporate Parenting.
- In response to concerns about the title of the Strategy it was noted that this was decided by the Generation Select panel.

In response to a question from a Youth Representative it was noted that Generation Select had agreed to continue using the term Corporate Parenting as it was now widely understood.

The young person presenting the presentation shared her own experience of support provided for independent living and made further suggestions as to how this could be improved.

The Chair noted his hope that all Councillors new and old would attend Corporate Parenting training as part of the post-election induction.

AGREED:

1. The Committee notes the update.
2. The Committee requests a further report to come to a future meeting setting out progress on actions.

## **105. CARBON NEUTRAL ROADMAP**

The Director of Estates and Buildings Services submits a report to present the findings of the Leicester Carbon Neutral Roadmap Study.

The Deputy City Mayor for the Climate Emergency introduced the item, noting that the focus was now on being 'climate ready' which meant being prepared for the adverse impacts of the climate emergency alongside net-zero work.

The Change Manager (Climate Emergency) presented the item, it was noted that:

- Adverse impacts of the climate emergency were already being felt in Leicester with flooding and the severe heatwave in the summer of 2022.
- The biggest contributor of greenhouse gases in Leicester was from heating.
- Consultants had done modelling of various scenarios showing different

levels of ambition for getting to net zero. Under the most ambitious scenario 50% of all journeys would have to be walking or cycling and a 3x increase in public transport usage was needed alongside other major infrastructure shifts.

- The roadmap was focused on reducing demand for energy and fuel in the city alongside moving away from fossil fuels.
- The roadmap was now being unpacked with the scale of work needed being considered. The Council was also considering what areas it had control over and what areas it had no control over.
- Next steps involved the development of a new action plan, and aligning with other plans, strategies, and funding bids across the Council.
- The report had previously been to the Economic Development Scrutiny Commission and comments from the Commission had been noted.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that:

- With regard to air quality measurement in the city, air pollution was considered in 2 different categories, firstly pollutants affecting health and secondly those affecting climate, known as greenhouse gases. Many of the measures to reduce one would also reduce the other. The Government provided data on greenhouse gas emissions from Leicester as a whole, which was used alongside the Council's data for its own greenhouse gas emissions.
- With cycleways, the 2-way paths were preferable, with 1-way paths normally due to space restrictions.
- On the possibility of heat pumps in new homes, there were currently no planning regulations in new place requiring heat pumps in new homes. The council's ambition was for new developments in Leicester be carbon neutral as soon as possible. Retrofitting older buildings was a major challenge.

AGREED:

That the Committee requests that a further update be brought in the new municipal year.

#### **106. REVENUE MONITORING APRIL- DECEMBER 2022**

It was noted that the Revenue Monitoring and Capital Monitoring reports would be considered together.

The Director of Finance submitted the third report for the monitoring cycle for 2022/23.

The Director of Finance presented the reports, it was noted that the overall general fund overspend was £10m which was slightly lower than previous forecasts..

AGREED:

1. That the Committee notes the report.
2. The Officers consider including the toilet blocks at Eyres Monsell Primary School in the Capital Projects and Minor Works Programme.

#### **107. CAPITAL MONITORING APRIL- DECEMBER 20222**

The Director of Finance submitted the third report for the monitoring cycle for 2022/23. It was noted that there was significant slippage on Capital Programmes due to inflationary pressures and issues with contractors.

A Member noted concerns with the toilet blocks at Eyres Monsell Primary School, suggesting that funding could be made available for the works. The City Mayor stated he would refer the case to Officers to consider including in the Capital Projects and Minor Works Programme.

In response to a question from the Chair it was noted that cladding at Phoenix Square was being removed in order to mitigate fire risk.

AGREED:

1. That the Committee notes the report.
2. That the Committee requests that Officers consider including the toilet blocks at Eyres Monsell Primary School in the Capital Projects and Minor Works Programme.

#### **108. 'ENCOURAGING WOMEN TO PARTICIPATE IN SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES IN LEICESTER' A REPORT OF THE HERITAGE, CULTURE, LEISURE, AND TOURISM SCRUTINY COMMISSION**

The Chair of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure, and Tourism Scrutiny Commission submitted a report on its review into women's sport and physical activity in Leicester.

Councillor Halford as Chair of the review presented the report. It was noted that the review had found that women faced more barriers to exercise such as family commitments. The report noted good practice examples locally and nationally. The report considered women's preferences for physical activity and the range of partners currently working in this area.

A concern was raised about the use of a QR code on Active Leicester promotional materials which linked to the information. It was suggested that the posters should include the information without the link.

The City Mayor welcomed the report and stated he would take the recommendations seriously.

AGREED:

1. That the Committee notes and welcomes the findings and

- recommendations of the report.
2. That the Committee requests that a response report of the findings be taken to a future meeting of the Heritage, Culture, Leisure, and Tourism Scrutiny Commission.

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

There were no questions for the City Mayor.

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

It was noted that this was the final meeting before the election and therefore a Work Programme for future meetings was not yet in place. There were a number of issues listed on the current work programme that were likely to form part of OSC's work during 2023/24,

#### **111. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair thanked all Members of the Committee for their work and thanked Officers for their work supporting the Committee.

The City Mayor thanked Members of the Committee and the Chair for their role scrutinising the work of the Council.

There being no other items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 7.52pm.