

**LOUGHBOROUGH AREA COMMITTEE
6TH JANUARY 2020**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Hamilton)
The Vice Chair (Councillor Tillotson)
Councillors Bailey, Boldrin, Bolton, Brennan,
Draycott, Forrest, Goddard, C. Harris, K. Harris,
Mercer, Miah, Morgan, Parsons, Parton and
Smidowicz

Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Head of Leisure and Culture
Head of Strategic Support
Head of Finance and Property Services
Head of Planning and Regeneration
Group Leader Plans, Policies and Place-Making
Team Leader Regeneration and Economic
Development
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor J. Bradshaw, Campsall and Ward

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. He also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

At this point in the meeting the Chair announced that the Loughborough Half Marathon would take place on 29th March 2020 in aid of Living Without Abuse. More information can be found at lwa.org.uk/events/Loughborough-half/take-part.asp.

15. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 18th September 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

16. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

The following disclosures were made:

- i. Councillor Tillotson disclosed a personal interest in item 9 Allotment Security, as a family member was an allotment holder.
- ii. Councillor Parton disclosed a personal interest in item 7 Towns Funding, as a Member of Leicestershire County Council Towns Team.

- iii. Councillor Parton disclosed a personal interest in item 10 Bedford Square Gateway Project, as a Member of the working group.

17. QUESTIONS UNDER COMMITTEE PROCEDURE 12.8

No questions were submitted.

18. LOUGHBOROUGH SPECIAL EXPENSES DRAFT BUDGET 2020/21

A report of the Head of Finance and Property Services, to advise the Loughborough Area Committee on the draft Loughborough Special Expense Budget for 2020/21, was submitted (item 5 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Finance and Property Services, the Head of Neighbourhood Services, the Head of Leisure and Culture and the Head of Strategic Support attended the meeting to provide assistance in consideration of this item and gave the following responses to questions raised:

- i. The £5k request from the Loughborough Special Rate to facilitate the Remembrance Day Parade in Loughborough was necessary as service responsibilities had changed. The events team within the Council would coordinate future Remembrance Day Parades due to staff knowledge and experience in this area of work. However, budget constraints meant that funding from the Loughborough Special Rate was required. The £5k would be used to support delivery costs and infrastructure, such as traffic management, barriers, medical support and health and safety measures.
- ii. The Loughborough Special Expenses Budget was drafted based on estimated Council Tax base predictions. However, the final Council Tax base figures, when available, could influence the overall Loughborough Special Budget. Any changes to the budget would be adjusted in the final report.
- iii. There was a process which enabled the Chair and Vice Chair of the Loughborough Area Committee to periodically review the Loughborough Special Expenses Budget and any potential overspends or underspends. Any Members also had an opportunity to consult relevant Cabinet Members on any matters of interest relating to this if they wished to do so. In addition, reference was made to the Loughborough Special Expenses Budget 2020/21 consultation which would end on 15th January 2020.
- iv. Budgeting Officers were able to use virements to move funds to compensate and balance budgets within the Loughborough Special Expenses in order to adhere to financial regulations.
- v. The Town Centre Management funding of £109k was a net figure that included staffing costs, delivery of the Christmas programme and various events that took place throughout the year.
- vi. The total income generated by Loughborough Fair was in excess of £90k, £88k of which was from pitch rent. There were significant financial outgoings in

relation to the operation of the fair, but this was managed to ensure the event remained efficient. There was interest in further cost and income breakdown.

RESOLVED

1. That the Loughborough Area Committee noted the draft Loughborough Special Expense budget for 2020/21 set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
2. That the Head of Leisure and Culture provide a further breakdown of the costs and income associated with the Loughborough Fair.

Reasons

1. To enable the views of the Committee to be sought on the draft Loughborough Special Expenses for 2020/21 in accordance with its terms of reference, prior to the final budget report on the 13th February 2020.
2. To provide Members with additional understanding of the expenditure and income associated with the Loughborough Fair.

19. LOUGHBOROUGH TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN 2018 - PROGRESS REPORT

A report of the Strategic Director for Housing, Planning and Regeneration, and Regulatory Services, to advise the Loughborough Area Committee of progress made in the delivery of the Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan, was submitted (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development assisted with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to questions raised:

- i. The Council had no control over the tenancy of private sector housing. If units within purpose built student accommodation or terraced homes previously accommodating students were empty and could not be let, it would be for the owner of that property to decide on the future of that building.
- ii. There had been an increase in the number of apartments designed for the general population housing market in Loughborough, in addition to that designed specifically for students. It was a matter for investors whether they were satisfied that developments would be occupied by their target customers.
- iii. Specific accommodation was Council Tax exempt, and this was thought to be a Central Government initiative.
- iv. There had been considerable improvement in the level of activity in Loughborough Town Centre and this was a consequence of the collective effort between the Council and various partners. The Council did not have the same level of funding available as larger neighbouring authorities, such as Leicester City, and its ability to make the same level of interventions was therefore much

less. Work to improve the Town Centre was continuing with prospective plans in place.

RESOLVED that the report was noted.

Reason

To ensure that Members of the Committee were kept fully informed of interventions to support the long-term vitality and viability of Loughborough Town Centre.

20. TOWNS FUND

Councillor Keith Harris left the meeting at 7:10pm.

A report of the Strategic Director for Housing, Planning and Regeneration, and Regulatory Services, to inform the Loughborough Area Committee of the government's announcement of the establishment of a £3.6 billion Towns Fund to assist 101 towns across England, including Loughborough, in achieving their full economic potential, was submitted (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development assisted with the consideration with the item and gave the following responses to questions raised:

- i. The Loughborough Town Deal Board would be established by the end of January 2020. Board membership was prescribed by Government guidance. It was suggested that to avoid Board membership becoming too large, existing partnerships could be used, with representatives on the Board. This would provide an opportunity to work with a wider range of partners to gather intelligence as well as delegate activities needed to support the deal. The Board's first task would be to prepare an Investment Plan. This would include a vision for Loughborough, and consideration of potential challenges and ways to overcome these.
- ii. It was clarified that there were two separate projects being undertaken by Central Government. The Future High Streets pilot had commenced, although Loughborough would not be a participant in this. Instead, Loughborough had the opportunity to bid for funding from the Towns Fund through a Town Deal.
- iii. The 'My Town' campaign was live at a national level. The Council's Communications team were working to ensure the Council could utilise this in order to engage the community in the Town Deal. The Loughborough Town Deal Board would monitor public feedback through this channel.

RESOLVED

1. That the report was noted.
2. That following the approval of governance structures, the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development consult the Group Leaders, and

independent Members where applicable, in order to receive nominations for the Member Reference Group.

Reasons

1 and 2 to ensure that members of the Committee were kept fully informed of initiatives to attract investment to drive the economic growth of Loughborough.

21. DRAFT CHARNWOOD LOCAL PLAN 2019-36

A report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration, to enable the members of the Committee to be consulted on the Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36, was submitted (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Group Leader for Plans, Policy and Place Making assisted with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to questions raised:

- i. Once it had been adopted, the Local Plan 2019-36 would supersede the Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (2017).
- ii. The draft Local Plan continued the approach set out in the Housing SDP of using a threshold approach. In high concentration areas, the threshold would be considered as part of the balance of issues in the decision-making process.
- iii. The development west of Snells Nook Lane had been through a formal testing process. The planning application included an analysis of the possible impacts of the development at the Priory crossroads. The evidence had satisfied the highway authority, with the proposed schedule of infrastructure improvements planned to mitigate the impacts. The developers were not required to mitigate existing traffic problems, only those that arise as a consequence of their proposal.
- iv. Purpose built student accommodation blocks were not included within the calculations for thresholds on HMO applications. This was due to student accommodation blocks often being too large to entirely fit into the 100m radius used. The proximity of Halls of Residents and purpose-built student accommodation was taken into account in the decision-making process.
- v. There was currently no evidence to support the comprehensive restriction of HMOs in Loughborough. A saturation threshold was used to identify tipping points in communities, in which one section of a community had become dominant. Each applicant was considered individually to ensure an appropriate balance was maintained. Available evidence indicated that approximately 50% of HMOs were not occupied by students, providing an important part of the housing market for the town.
- vi. Both Cabinet and the Scrutiny Management Board had confirmed that recommendations of previous scrutiny panels set up to review the impact of

student accommodation in Loughborough had all been satisfactorily implemented.

- vii. A range of options, including the concentration and dispersal of new homes, were contemplated in the formulation of the draft Local Plan 2019-36, as well as the options of a new settlement in Cotes. Urban concentration and intensification was the preferred model, a decision based upon evidence and local priorities. The Sustainability Appraisal demonstrated the assessment of options and formed part of the consultation documentation.
- viii. The Council was not a major landowner and this was an issue with regards to the potential for building new local authority owned social housing for rent.

RESOLVED that the members of the Committee considered the Draft Charnwood Local Plan 2019-36 as it related to Loughborough and that Members provided their responses through the consultation process including;

- *The consideration of re-establishing reference to instances where the impacts of new HMOs in the area with an already high concentration might be considered acceptable, preferably with similar wording to that used previously in the supplementary planning documentation from 2017 (4.11).*
- *A high degree of transparency should be communicated to residents across Charnwood, and in particular in Nanpantan, where there would be considerable development planned. Further consultation would be desirable.*
- *The consideration of including purpose built student accommodation in the calculations for the threshold during the decision-making process on HMO applications.*
- *The consideration that there should be no more family homes in Loughborough converted into HMOs.*
- *The consideration of alternative locations for growth as there were existing infrastructure concerns within and around the Loughborough area, specifically heavy traffic, which could worsen with the additional developments proposed.*

Reason

To perform the Committee's function to be consulted on matters of policy and strategic direction which relate to or affect the Loughborough town area.

22. ALLOTMENT SECURITY

A report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces to consider issues around security at the Council's allotment sites was submitted (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces assisted with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to questions raised:

- i. The Council had planned to incorporate good quality combination padlocks for allotments in some areas. Codes would be changed periodically, and allotment holders would be informed of this.
- ii. The Council had previously attempted to establish an association of residents to oversee the operations of allotments, although there was limited interest in this scheme.

RESOLVED

1. That the report was noted.
2. An update be provided by the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces at the Loughborough Area Committee in September 2020 to outline improvements made to the allotment sites in terms of security, and the subsequent impact of this.

Reasons

1. To ensure that members of the Committee were informed on issues around security at the Council's allotment sites and the procedures in place to help prevent further issues.
2. To provide Members with additional understanding of allotment security and how the work undertaken by the Council has impacted the issues faced by allotment holders.

23. BEDFORD SQUARE GATEWAY PROJECT

A report of the Strategic Director for Housing, Planning and Regeneration and Regulatory Services to appraise the Loughborough Area Committee of progress made towards the delivery of the Bedford Square Gateway public realm improvement project was submitted (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development assisted with consideration of the item.

RESOLVED that the report was noted.

Reason

To ensure that members of the Committee were kept fully informed of interventions to support the long-term vitality and viability of Loughborough Town Centre.

24. MEETING DATES

Further meetings of the Committee have been scheduled for:

Wednesday 18th March 2020

Wednesday 17th June 2020.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 20th January 2020 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Loughborough Area Committee.

