

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
10TH AUGUST 2020**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Seaton)
Councillors Hamilton (Vice Chair), Bolton, Grimley,
Hadji-Nikolaou and Ranson

Councillors Morgan (Leader of the Council), Bokor
(Cabinet Lead Member for Loughborough),
Harper-Davies (Cabinet Lead Member for
Community Support and Equalities) and Rattray
(Cabinet Lead Member for Business Support)

Chief Executive
Strategic Director of Housing, Planning,
Regeneration and Regulatory Services
Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Head of Landlord Services
Head of Neighbourhood Services
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing
Head of Leisure and Culture
Leisure Centre and Contract Business Manager
Community and Covenant Development Officer
Communications Manager
Communications Officer
Information Development Manager
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Brookes

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She 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.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 6th July 2020 were approved.

31. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

32. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

33. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

34. RECOVERY CELL UPDATE

A report of the Strategic Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration and Regulatory Services To provide the Commission with more detail on the approach to community recovery was considered (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Housing, Planning and Regeneration and Regulatory Services attended the meeting, provided a presentation and assisted with the consideration of this item. The Leader of the Council and the following Officers also attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item; the Head of Neighbourhoods and Communities, the Head of Leisure and Culture, the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing, the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces, the Head of Landlord Services, the Community Covenant Development Officer, the Communications Manager and the Comminutions Officer. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Councillors acknowledged the extensive, comprehensive and significant work undertaken by Officers in relation to community recovery and thanked them for their efforts. It was recognised that the response and recovery efforts employed had ensured all members of the community had been considered and assisted where required. In addition to this, the Chief Executive put on record his thanks to Officers at all levels and stated that he was proud of the response and the recovery of the Council. He noted the pace, scale and complexity of the issues responded to and assured Members that the Council was able to manage the situation efficiently in a calm and authoritative manner.
- ii. The community hub developed to support residents during the pandemic was currently subject to a transitional plan. This would ensure work reflected the needs of the community throughout the stages of recovery. It was acknowledged that some members of the community had become accustomed to the increased support offered and it was highlighted that the response efforts of the Council would not be abruptly removed. The Council had recognised an opportunity to improve best practice as a result of the response to the pandemic and build a lasting legacy. In addition to this, the Council had developed contingency plans to ensure the community response efforts were in a suitable position to restart quickly in the event of a further outbreak.
- iii. The Government Next Steps Accommodation Programme provided funding to Councils to assist with the move on of those placed through the Every One in requirement to accommodate rough sleepers and those at imminent risk of rough sleeping. The funding was not allocated and there was a bidding process for two primary sources of funding. Meetings had taken place with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Advisors and Districts and Boroughs across the County to support joint bids. The funding was for short-term accommodation, immediate support and longer term move on accommodation. Bids were to be submitted by 20th August 2020 and funding would be spent by the end of March 2020.

- iv. The Council had considered the importance of ensuring much of the good work undertaken during the pandemic would continue as part of a lasting legacy. The Community hub had been fundamental in terms of signposting and assessing individual needs. Partner organisations had discussed plans moving forward and the Council would assist where possible and continue to work closely with partners to ensure the positive work undertaken continued. In addition to this, the Council had reshaped grants to offer more accessible funds to community organisations.
- v. The Council had supported community organisations offering befriending schemes to isolated and vulnerable residents in the Borough. It was anticipated that this would encourage the positive work undertaken during the pandemic in preventing loneliness and promoting community engagement.

RESOLVED that the Commission noted the report.

Reason

To ensure the Commission was kept informed of the Council's recovery efforts.

The following Officers left the meeting at approximately 6:45pm; Eileen Mallon, Julie Robinson, Matt Bradford, Peter Oliver, Alison Simmons, Victoria Coomber, Mike Roberts and Stacey Simpson.

35. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF ANY SPECIFIC FINANCIAL MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET

There were no items of this nature on the Cabinet agenda for the Commission to consider.

36. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The following items were identified for pre-decision scrutiny from the Cabinet agenda for 13th August 2020.

37. LEISURE CENTRE CONTRACT RECOVERY

An exempt Cabinet report of the Head of Leisure and Culture was circulated to Members and was considered under item 12 of the agenda.

38. OPTIONS FOR THE 2020 LOUGHBOROUGH REMEMBRANCE PARADE, LOUGHBOROUGH FAIR, LOUGHBOROUGH CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH ON AND TOWN HALL PANTOMIME

A Cabinet report of the Head of Leisure and Culture to discuss major Loughborough events during the remainder of 2020 and to seek support for proposals for alternative delivery or cancellation of these events was considered for pre-decision scrutiny (item 8b on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Loughborough, the Lead Member for Business Support and the Head of Leisure and Culture attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was acknowledged that the decisions recommended in the report to the Cabinet had been difficult but inevitable in order to comply with Covid-19 guidance.
- ii. There had been a publication notice of the potential decisions taken regarding Loughborough events prior to consideration of the Cabinet. This was due to the Council receiving numerous enquiries from the media and members of the public, which had meant there was significant pressure to respond. Since publication of the potential decisions, the Council had received support and generally positive feedback.
- iii. The Council had explored alternative arrangements in order to minimise disruption and financial implications for the several cancelled events. This would include employing the Town Hall Auditorium for other social activities, such as dining and socially distanced entertainment in the coming months, which could be pre-booked in advance. The cost efficiency of this was currently being calculated and the Council would only pursue these plans following confirmation that there would be no additional cost to the Council or partners than the usual events that would take place. If agreed, the Council would publicise events at the earliest opportunity to the widest audience possible.
- iv. For shows in the Artistic Programme that had already been postponed, the vast majority of customers had chosen to retain their tickets for the new dates. This was considered to be a testimony to the high standards of performance at the Town Hall and demonstrated considerable public support.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Leisure and Culture.

Reason

The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.

39. **SCRUTINY COMMISSION PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CABINET RESPONSE**

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Commission on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet's responses to the Commission's recommendations be noted.

Reason

The Commission was satisfied that it added value where appropriate and welcomed the Cabinet's consideration of the Commission's views and recommendations as part of its decision making process.

40. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered to enable the Commission to review its own work programme, including considering the list of forthcoming Executive Key Decisions in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Commission was due to receive an update on organisational recovery from Covid-19 at its next meeting on 14th September 2020. It was requested that this update included the implications of the pandemic on the Council's IT service and any contingency plans for the future.
- ii. A meeting was scheduled for the Chair and Vice Chair of the Scrutiny Commission and the Chair of the Audit Committee to discuss the strengthening of the relation between the two committees as discussed at the Scrutiny Commission meeting on 1st June 2020 (minute reference 5 2020/21). The Commission would receive an update on the outcomes of this meeting when available.
- iii. The Questions Under Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.16 function would be promoted through the Communications Team to encourage participation from members of the public. Questions should focus on the Council's response to recovery from Covid-19.
- iv. At its meeting on 4th March 2020, the Corporate Services Scrutiny Committee resolved the following;

That it be recommended to the Scrutiny Commission that scrutiny of the Council's draft budget 2021/22 be undertaken on the same basis as for the 2020/21 budget, that being via a Budget Scrutiny Panel, and that that Panel also monitor the outcomes of this year's Panel report.

Following that meeting, all scrutiny committees and panels were suspended until review in September or October 2020 (Scrutiny Commission, 1st June 2020, minute reference 5 2020/21). However, in order to fulfil the requirements of the Budget Scrutiny Panel as stated, the Commission was required to agree the establishment of the panel, giving authority to programme dates and to identify a Chair and member interest in participating on the panel.

RESOLVED

1. that forthcoming Executive Key Decisions or decisions to be taken in private by the Executive, set out in Appendix 2 to the report, and scheduled scrutiny of those matters, be noted.
2. that the Commission's current work programme be noted.
3. that the organisational recovery update submitted to the Scrutiny Commission at its next meeting on 14th September 2020 include implications of the pandemic on the Council's IT service.
4. that the Questions Under Scrutiny Committee Procedure 11.16 be promoted through the Communications Team.
5. that the Budget Scrutiny Panel be established, and that Councillor Hadji-Nikolaou be appointed Chair of the Panel.

Reasons

1. To ensure effective and timely scrutiny, either to provide Cabinet with advice prior to it taking a decision or to ensure that the Council and external public service providers and partners were operating effectively for the benefit of the Borough.
2. To ensure effective and timely scrutiny.
3. To ensure Members were informed on the implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's IT service.
4. To encourage public participation in the Council's response to recovery from Covid-19.
5. To ensure the most effective approach to scrutiny of the Council's budget.

41. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED that members of the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of this item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest of disclosing the information.

At this point in the meeting the live streaming was switched off.

42. LEISURE CENTRE CONTRACT RECOVERY

An exempt Cabinet report of the Head of Leisure and Culture was considered for pre-decision scrutiny (exempt item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Lead Member for Community Support and Equalities, the Chief Executive, the Head of Leisure and Culture and the Leisure Centre and Business Manager attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item.

A summary of the Commission's discussion on this matter is provided in the exempt minute (Scrutiny Commission Minute 42E. 2020/21).

RESOLVED that recommendations be made as detailed in the exempt minute (Scrutiny Commission Minute 42E 2020/21).

Reason

As set out in the exempt minute (Scrutiny Commission Minute 42E 2020/21).

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 7th September 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 Scrutiny Commission.