

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
7TH DECEMBER 2020**

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

Councillor Morgan (Leader of the Council), Mercer  
(Cabinet Lead Member for Private Housing) and  
Harper-Davies (Cabinet Lead Member for  
Community Support and Equalities)

Chief Executive  
Strategic Director; Community, Planning and  
Housing  
Strategic Director; Environmental and Corporate  
Services  
Head of Planning and Regeneration  
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing  
Head of Regulatory Services  
Head of Leisure and Culture  
Regeneration and Economic Development Officer  
Team Leader Regeneration and Economic  
Development  
Corporate Improvement and Policy Officer  
Communications Manager  
Democratic Services Officer (NC) and 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.

86. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 16th November 2020 were approved.

87. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

88. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

89. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

90. RECOVERY CELL UPDATE

A report of the Strategic Director for Community, Planning and Housing to provide the Commission with more detail on the approach to economic recovery (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director for Community, Planning and Housing, the Head of Leisure and Culture, the Head of Regulatory Services, the Communications Manager and the Team Leader for Regeneration and Economic Development attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The current footfall within the Town Centre was half of its usual figure at this time of year.
- ii. Members stated that residents had praised the Council for its quick responses to issues and enquiries made relating to local businesses.
- iii. It was acknowledged that the report contained considerable depth of information and that actions derived from the Work Programme had all been followed up in good time.
- iv. The Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council thanked Officers and Members for their hard work and stated that there was more work to do in order to facilitate recovery into 2021.

**RESOLVED** that the Commission noted the report.

Reason

To ensure the Commission was kept informed of the Council's Covid-19 recovery efforts.

91. AUDIT UPDATE

At the next meeting of the Audit Committee on 22nd December 2020, it was anticipated that Members would resolve to add a quarterly item to their Work programme, allowing them to monitor the acquisition of commercial properties.

92. 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.

93. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The following items were identified for pre-decision scrutiny from the Cabinet agenda for 10th December 2020.

94. DISCRETIONARY PRIVATE SECTOR LICENSING SCHEME

A report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing to approve the proposals for the introduction of an Additional Licensing Scheme across the Borough and Selective Licensing Scheme in Hastings and Lemyngton wards (item 9a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Private Housing and the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. It was highlighted that there had been an error within the report on page 7 under the 'Illegal evictions, homelessness and empty homes' risk. The corresponding risk management action planned should read 'enforcement action would be taken for illegal evictions'. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Additional Licensing scheme would focus on HMO properties that were not covered by the HMO Mandatory Scheme and the Selective Licensing Scheme, which would cover all rented properties within the specified areas of Hastings and Lemyngton wards, not included within the Mandatory or proposed Additional Licensing Scheme.
- ii. The Risk Register within the report had highlighted all the potential risks identified in implementing the proposed schemes. There were a number of high-risk categories and it was considered that implementing the proposed schemes would be beneficial to improve the standards and management of accommodation within the Borough and the specified areas.
- iii. The proposed consultation exercise had been developed ensuring that statutory guidance and recent case law implications had all been considered in the planning and consultation process.
- iv. The Discretionary Private Sector Licensing Schemes would be cost-neutral, and a staggered recruitment approach would be taken to ensure the resources available reflected the size of the scheme.
- v. In the future, it is possible that the Selective Scheme could be expanded to further wards within the Borough, providing there was sufficient evidence to demonstrate the need.
- vi. If approved, the scheme would be reviewed after five years, at which point further work would be required to justify the continuation of a scheme.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing.

Reason

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

95. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) STRATEGY 2020-2024

A report of the Strategic Director of Environmental and Corporate Services to set out, following a period of public consultation, Charnwood's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Strategy (2020-2024) for consideration and approval (item 9b on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Community Support and Equalities, the Strategic Director of Environmental and Corporate Services and the Corporate Improvement and Policy Officer attended the meeting and assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Consultation with residents had taken place in the form of the Residents' Survey in Autumn 2019, which informed development of the Corporate Strategy (2020-2024). This survey covered a range of questions, which included resident feedback on equalities and equalities monitoring questions. The responses received from this and other consultation exercises as part of Equality Impact Assessments across the Council had been used to identify the priority equality objectives and inform development of the EDI Strategy (2020-2024).
- ii. Due to no significant changes in the Equality Act 2010 (and associated Public Sector Equality Duty), the development of the EDI Strategy (2020-2024) had not included considerable modification to previous strategies, although a number of integral parts of the strategy had been strengthened to reflect recent legislation such as the gender pay gap and the Modern Slavery Act as well as external environment factors such as the Black Lives Matter movement and LGBT issues.
- iii. The Council regularly participated in the Leicestershire Equalities Forum. This provided the opportunity to ensure EDI Strategies and actions were aligned to those of neighbouring authorities, and also provided opportunities to monitor outcomes in a partnership setting.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services.

Reason

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

96. BEDFORD SQUARE GATEWAY PUBLIC REALM PROJECT

An exempt Cabinet report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was circulated to Members and was considered under item 14 of the agenda.

97. 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 10 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.

98. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to enable the Commission to review items from the paused Scrutiny Work Programme. This includes items for discussion highlighted by members of the Directorate-based Scrutiny Committees (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services and the Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

The Commission added the following item to their Work Programme:

- i. Bulky Waste Collection Charges Review (Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme) – 11th January 2021.

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Commission reviewed the Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes.
2. That the Commission reviewed the items previously selected from Scrutiny Committee Work Programmes.
3. That the Bulky Waste Collection Charges item selected from the Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be added to the agenda of the Scrutiny Commission for its meeting on 11th January 2021.

Reasons

1-3. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter/subject.

99. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support 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 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director for Environmental and Corporate Services assisted with the consideration of this item.

The Commission did not add any items to its Work Programme.

**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 work programme be updated in accordance with the items highlighted.

Reasons

- 1&3. 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.

100. 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.*

101. BEDFORD SQUARE GATEWAY PUBLIC REALM PROJECT

An exempt Cabinet report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration was considered for pre-decision scrutiny (exempt item 9c on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Regeneration and Economic Development Project Officer 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 101E. 2020/21).

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 18th January 2021 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.