

SCRUTINY COMMISSION
6TH APRIL 2021

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

Councillor Morgan (Leader of the Council), Bailey (Cabinet Lead Member for Planning) and Rattray (Cabinet Lead Member for Business Support)

Strategic Director; Community, Planning and Housing
Head of Leisure and Culture
Head of Planning and Regeneration
Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Head of Regulatory Services
Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager
Organisational Change Officer
Democratic Services Manager, Democratic Services Officer (LS) and Democratic Services Officer (SW)

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.

146. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 8th March 2021 were approved.

147. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

148. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

149. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

150. RECOVERY UPDATE

A report of the Strategic Director for Community, Planning and Housing to provide the Commission with an update on the work of the Community and Economic recovery cells (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Strategic Director for Community, Planning, Housing and Health, the Head of Regulatory Services, the Head of Planning and Regeneration, the Head of Leisure and Culture, the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces and the Organisational Change Officer attended the meeting and assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Leader acknowledged that the Covid-19 recovery efforts of the council had affected all areas of the organisation and that officers across the Council had dedicated substantial time and effort in order to overcome the challenges faced. The collaborative hard work of Officers was appreciated and contributed towards a positive lasting legacy.
- ii. The Council had supported local businesses as much as possible throughout the pandemic. A sum of £165k had been received through the Reopening Highstreet Safety Fund (RHSS), which would be used to support businesses and to ensure safety measures were in place such as posters, signage, effective communications, floor markings and ambassadors. It was anticipated that this funding would continue into 2021/22.
- iii. There was an enquiry regarding the progress of the sale of land in Sileby (Cemetery Road) which had been approved by Cabinet. More information would be communicated to the Commission following the meeting.

Post meeting note: The process of sale was ongoing.

- iv. The compliance and enforcement work which had been allocated £127k to facilitate the deployment of officers was intended to be used throughout the year. The Council was prepared for the requirement of further work and any localised outbreaks.
- v. Prohibition notices had been served where premises had been open against the Government guidelines.
- vi. The online visitor economy efforts had been successful and well received by the public.
- vii. The Council was working with John Storer House and Trustees in order to establish a social supermarket. This would continue the legacy created by Charnwood Community Action which supported residents throughout the pandemic. It was anticipated that the social supermarket would open in June 2021 and would supply heavily subsidised food to eligible residents of the Borough. Customers at the supermarket would also receive a personalised support plan designed to help improve circumstances.
- viii. Loughborough Against Corona had recruited over 1000 volunteers to support self-isolating residents. Following this, 50 volunteers had completed a DBS

check and had were formally supporting mutual aid organisations. Residents interested in volunteering should be encouraged to contact John Storer House for advice.

RESOLVED that the Commissioned noted the report.

Reason

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

151. DRAFT ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT 2019-21

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to consider the Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2019-21 with a view to it being recommended to Council for approval (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of this item.

It was recognised that a substantial amount of valuable scrutiny work had been undertaken by the Scrutiny Commission during the Covid-19 pandemic. This was evidence that the Council recognised the importance of scrutiny.

RESOLVED

1. That the Commission notes that the Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2019-20 be submitted with the Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2020-21.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Democratic Services Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-chair of the Scrutiny Commission, to format and amend the draft report to include reference to matters raised at the meeting;
3. That it be recommended to Council that the Annual Scrutiny Report 2019-21, including any amendments made following the meeting as per recommendation 1, above, be approved.

Reasons

1. To ensure the Commission considers the Draft Annual Scrutiny Report 2019-20 following its deferral as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. To ensure that additional and updated information be incorporated into the final Annual Report before its submission to Council, including amendments to the information in respect of the Scrutiny Commission if required.

1&3. To report annually, as required, on the operation and workings of Scrutiny.

152. AIR QUALITY REPORT 2019-21

A report of the Head of Regulatory Services to consider the update of the annual ASR and receive a summary of the monitoring of air quality across the Borough (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Business Support and the Head of Regulatory Services attended the meeting and assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The non-automatic diffusion tube monitoring of Nitrogen Dioxide was based at 48 locations across the Borough. The selected locations were considered the most relevant and could change depending on annual averages and concerns.
- ii. Air pollutants were decreasing in the Borough and this was considered to be the result of a decrease in traditional industry and increase in lower emission vehicles, such as electric and hybrid vehicles.
- iii. The Council was required to regularly review and assess air quality and make improvements with partners where compliance with the air quality standards are not met. These air quality management measures would include controlling certain industrial emissions through Environmental Permits, working with Highways Services for traffic control initiatives and the development of policies within the Council's Local Plan process.

RESOLVED that the Commission noted the report.

Reason

To ensure the Commission is kept updated on the Air Quality Annual Status Report.

153. AUDIT COMMITTEE UPDATE

A new independent Chair had been appointed to the Audit Committee.

The significance of scrutiny panels was highlighted and it was confirmed that detail on future scrutiny panels would be discussed at the Scrutiny Work Programme Workshop which was scheduled to take place on 24th May 2021.

154. 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.

155. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The following item was identified for pre-decision scrutiny from the Cabinet agenda for 8th April 2021.

156. CHARNWOOD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2021

A Cabinet report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration to seek approval of the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) so that the programme for the preparation of planning documents for Charnwood is agreed (item 11a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Planning, the Head of Planning and Regeneration, the Group Leader for Plans, Policy and Place Making and the Team Leader for Local Plans attended the meeting and assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The local plan was shown in the 2021 Local Development Scheme as running three-months behind the timescale set out in the 2020 Local Development Scheme. This revised timescale was to ensure that stakeholders had sufficient time to contribute to the council's understanding of the transport evidence, necessary to ensure a soundly based plan.
- ii. As a consequence of the slippage in programme, further work was required including a re-base of the plan to consider housing figures as of 1st April 2021. This would involve a survey on houses completed within the year and also liaison with Developers and Promoters to establish the intended housing figures in future years.
- iii. It was essential that the evidence upon which a local plan was developed was sound and robust and demonstrated an ability to support future growth. The document was substantial and required a significant amount of work.
- iv. It was acknowledged that delaying the local plan could increase the number of residential planning applications and approvals, although it was stated that many of these were likely to be included in the local plan as allocations anyway.

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

Reason

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

157. 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 12 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.

158. 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 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of this item.

The Commission did not add any items to the 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.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 26th April 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.