

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
6TH DECEMBER 2021**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Seaton)
Councillors Brookes, Hamilton, Parton, K. Harris,
Popley and Charles

Strategic Director; Commercial Development,
Assets and Leisure
Democratic Services Officer (SW) and Democratic
Services Manager

APOLOGIES: Councillor Ranson and Miah

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.

63. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 15th November 2021 were approved.

64. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

65. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

66. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

67. COMMERCIALISATION SCRUTINY PANEL - UPDATE

A report to enable the Commission to consider the implementation of the decisions taken by the Cabinet following its consideration of the report of the Commercialisation Scrutiny Panel and what, if any, further action may be required, was submitted (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director for Commercial Development, Assets and Leisure assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The 'Options for Change' referred to in the report was the process of identifying potential ways for the Council to generate income or to make savings for SLT to formally consider.
- ii. The tenancy agreements in place as part of the Council's commercialisation strategy had not been negatively impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic and there had been no issues with rent payments. The Council had carefully considered risks and had analysed the financial health of tenants in advance of the agreements.
- iii. The tenancy agreements in place were long term and the Council was prepared for any unbudgeted occurrences relating to tenancy issues. The Council would ensure that properties were not vacant for extended periods of time.
- iv. It was not possible for the Council to utilise properties within the Housing Revenue Account to generate income as this was governed by the Secretary of State.
- v. It was acknowledged that the report was informative and thorough, and the actions taken in response to the recommendations outlined were praised.
- vi. In response to recommendation 16 regarding street cleaning services, it was highlighted that the current process of outsourcing the service was a lower cost option than undertaking the service internally.
- vii. The funding for the Careers and Enterprise Hub which had recently opened in the town centre had been received as part of the Loughborough Town Deal. The property was a Charnwood Borough Council asset and occupation costs were being met by Loughborough College.
- viii. Officers regularly compared service fees and charges to those of neighbouring authorities and figures were generally consistent. Any changes to current service fees and charges arrangements would involve Cabinet making a policy decision.
- ix. The criteria outlined in the report had been used to increase revenue in existing services where possible.
- x. The Council had utilised external experts in order to ensure robust due diligence had been undertaken.
- xi. It was highlighted that a scrutiny panel on car parking charges had been completed at the Council a number of years ago. It was suggested that the recommendations and findings of this scrutiny panel be identified and reviewed. It was stated that SLT were in the process of car parks in the Borough and had provided a number of options to Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED

1. That the Commission considered the information provided in respect of the implementation of the decisions taken by the Cabinet following its consideration of the report of the Commercialisation Scrutiny Panel and agreed with the progress suggested within the report.
2. That the Democratic Services Manager identifies the recommendations and findings of the car parking charges scrutiny panel for the Scrutiny Commission to review.

Reasons

1. To enable the Commission to be satisfied that decisions taken following scrutiny recommendations are being implemented satisfactorily, take or recommend any further action that is necessary and ensure the effectiveness of the scrutiny function.
2. To provide the Scrutiny Commission with information on previous work completed to establish potential income generation or savings relating to car parking.

68. 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.

69. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

There were no items identified for pre-decision scrutiny from the Cabinet agenda.

70. 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.

71. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to review the progression of scrutiny panels was submitted (item 10 on the agenda files with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of this item. Following the publication of the agenda, a supplementary report containing the scoping document for the 'Combatting Loneliness' scrutiny panel for approval was circulated. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was highlighted that an amendment was required in the scoping document for the 'Combatting Loneliness' scrutiny panel. The section on 'Resource Requirements' stated that a Lead Officer and other officers with oversight of community and neighbourhood policy were required. However, the panel was informal and so there would be no resources of this nature available to the panel. The Lead Officer and other officers would act as witnesses only to support panel work. The scoping document for the panel would need to be amended to reflect this. The Commission approved the scoping document for the 'Combatting Loneliness' scrutiny panel, providing the amendment was made.
- ii. It was agreed that Councillor Hamilton become Chair of the 'Crime, ASB and Youth Crime' scrutiny panel.

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the progression of scrutiny panels.
2. That the scoping document for the 'Combatting Loneliness' scrutiny panel be amended, removing the Lead Officer and other officers from the 'Resource Requirements' section.

Reasons

- 1&2. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter/subject.
2. To enable panel work to commence.

72. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to enable the Commission to review and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme. This includes reviewing the changes made by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and adding items to their work programme (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

It was highlighted that the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Panel had discussed the annual Community Safety Partnership Review at their recent meeting. This item was already on the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee work programme and this was considered to be the most appropriate place for scrutinising this topic as it was performance related.

The Scrutiny Commission was due to consider the most appropriate place for scrutinising this topic at their meeting in either February or March 2022.

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme.
2. To agree that the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme be updated in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and any further decisions taken during this meeting.

Reasons

1. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter/subject.
2. To ensure that the information contained within the Work Programme is up to date.

73. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Commission to consider its work programme and forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny (item 12 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 their 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.

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.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 17th January 2022 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.