

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
6TH FEBRUARY 2023**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Seaton)
Councillors Brookes, Hamilton, Ranson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Parton and K. Harris

Councillor Morgan (Leader of the Council) and
Poland (Cabinet Lead Member for Public Housing)

Director Housing and Wellbeing
Head of Economic Development and
Regeneration
Business Relations and Economic Growth Officer
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Popley

The Vice-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.

79. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 9th January 2023 were approved.

80. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS, AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

The following disclosures were made:

- i. Councillor Seaton - In respect of item 7b (Review of Sheltered Accommodation – St Michael's Court, Thurmaston) a non-registrable interest as a ward Councillor for Thurmaston. Councillor Seaton stated that she came to the meeting with an open mind.
- ii. Councillor Brookes - In respect of item 7b (Review of Sheltered Accommodation – St Michael's Court, Thurmaston) a non-registrable interest as a ward Councillor for Thurmaston. Councillor Brookes stated that he came to the meeting with an open mind.

81. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

82. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

83. 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.

84. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

There were no pre-decision scrutiny items at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

85. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 'FUTURE CHARNWOOD INVESTMENT PLAN': PROGRAMME OF DELIVERY

Councillor Brookes arrived at the meeting at 6:04pm.

A Cabinet report of the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration to provide a summary of progress on UKSPF since Cabinet met on 9th June 2022. To present a Delivery Plan for the implementation of the Future Charnwood Investment Plan. To seek delegated authority for the spend of UKSPF funding, was submitted (item 7a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration and the Business Relations and Economic Growth Officer assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation offered local flexibility and freedom in terms of expenditure. The Investment Plan had been approved and therefore the Council needed to move forward to the delivery phase. As the delivery of the plan was rolled out, if there were to be any significant underspends, that money could potentially be directed towards other projects that were not within the top ten highest ranked projects in order to increase the impact and scope of UKSPF locally.
- ii. There had been 53 funding expressions of interest from across the Borough and the ten projects selected for funding had been chosen on a ranked basis after assessment against the criteria. The Head of Economic Development and Regeneration agreed that the complete list of the names of projects and the proposing organisations that had put forward project ideas for consideration at the interest expression stage could be shared following the meeting. Details of the submissions were submitted in commercial confidence.
- iii. The criteria used to assess projects was formed using both DLUHC guidance and local priorities, as the government wanted spending to reflect local circumstances and needs. Local Authorities were required to use three thematic areas as part of the selection process; Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business and People and Skills. With these themes in mind,

- the project team were then able to apply criteria which reflected the local needs in the Borough, with a focus on opportunities, challenges, deliverability, supporting levelling-up and legacy impact.
- iv. It was highlighted that the proposed Delivery Plan would be managed carefully and that resource implications would be considered on an ongoing basis. There was a degree of flexibility which enabled changes to projects where required in order to manage costs effectively and deliver projects within the allocated budget.
 - v. The Council issued a call for projects in May 2022. A proactive publicity campaign was launched involving social media, videos, emails, briefing sessions, press releases and liaison with stakeholders and community and voluntary groups. All Borough Councillors had received information about UKSPF and all Parish and Town Clerks had been sent information asking for project ideas.
 - vi. It was not possible to exceed the end of programme delivery at the end of March 2025 as this date was confirmed by DLUHC. However, it was considered that governments were likely to be realistic about project delivery and would allow projects nearing completion at the end date to continue.
 - vii. To ensure effective delivery within budget and time scales, all successful projects had been instructed to complete Full Business Cases designed in-line with the HM Treasury 5 Case Model. Upon completion, technical appraisal of projects would take place, including scrutiny of expenditure and project level approach to risk management and the development of contingency planning in the event that external cost pressures exceeded the allocated budget for a given project.
 - viii. The Future Charnwood Group would act as an advisory panel for the delivery of the Investment Plan. The membership of this group would include local MPs, the Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive of the Council, the Director of Commercial and Economic Development and the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration.
2. That the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration shared the complete list of projects that had put forward for consideration at the interest expression stage.

Reasons

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.
2. To provide members with information relating to the 53 expressions of interest received in the UKSPF allocation process.

86. REVIEW OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION - ST MICHAEL'S COURT, THURMASTON

A Cabinet report of the Director of Housing and Wellbeing to seek Cabinet approval for the redevelopment of St Michael's Court in Thurmaston, constructing several new bungalows at the location, the commencement of procurement exercises, including that for a main contractor, and allocation of budget to deliver the new scheme, which will be subject to the necessary planning permissions, was submitted (item 7b on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Public Housing and the Director of Housing and Wellbeing assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Members expressed concerns over the proposals and believed that the loss of the sheltered accommodation at St. Michael's Court would be detrimental to the community. Members stated that they felt there was a need for bungalows in the area, but that there was also a need for sheltered accommodation.
- ii. It was anticipated that the approved Thorpebury Park development would include an Extra-Care Scheme, providing support to a significant number of older and disabled residents. It was raised that the proposed development was distanced from the central Thurmaston area and would not include a bus route, making it difficult for older and disabled residents to access services and facilities in Thurmaston and the wider area. It was acknowledged that shops and services would be included within the Thorpebury Park development, and that this would lead to a new community being formed. It was likely that the older and disabled residents living in the Thorpebury Park development would no longer be part of the Thurmaston community.
- iii. There were a number of void spaces within St. Michael's Court. It was raised that eight of the void spaces were vacated following discussions about the redevelopment of the area.
- iv. St. Michael's Court was considered to be unattractive due to the lack of bathing facilities in dwellings as bathrooms were shared.
- v. There were 164 expressions of interest for properties in Thurmaston, 19 of which were from residents aged 60+. It was raised that the proposed development would take a number of years to complete and that there were residents waiting for available properties now.
- vi. There were approximately 60 sheltered accommodation properties ready to let across the Borough. The Director of Housing and Wellbeing agreed to circulate

- information on these properties, specifically the number of bedsits and self-contained properties.
- vii. It was highlighted that nationally there was a significant shortage of sheltered accommodation properties and that the demand was not being met. However, Charnwood did meet the need for the demand of sheltered accommodation.
 - viii. The initial intention was for replacement multi-story sheltered accommodation to be developed on the site of St. Michael's Court. However, this was compromised due to the presence of the listed church next door.
 - ix. Members felt that the proposed development would not allow for sufficient parking in the area. It was highlighted that each property would include a double bedroom, but only one parking space. There was no on-street parking available and it was suggested that older or disabled residents may require regular visits from carers. It was confirmed that discussions with the Architects were ongoing and that parking was a consideration.
 - x. It was confirmed that pre-application advice had been received from the Planning Department at the Council prior to the development of the proposals. There had been ongoing discussions with the Planning Department and Architects appointed to plan the works. Any proposals would be subject to planning permission.
 - xi. There had been some remodelling of some sheltered schemes over time, although the technical complexities of refurbishing the site in full were not viable.

Post meeting note: It was requested by the Director of Housing and Wellbeing that the paragraph reads "There had been some remodelling of some sheltered schemes over time, although the technical complexities of refurbishing the site in full meant it was not viable."

- xii. There would be no return on investment for between 46-52 years, although it was highlighted that the purpose of the development was to meet a social need, in addition to being a financial investment.
- xiii. The land at St. Michael's Court could achieve approximately £400k on the open market.
- xiv. Some members felt that alternative options from those set out in the report should be identified and considered. It was also suggested that the other options with the report be further considered.
- xv. The Lead Member thanked the Scrutiny Commission for their scrutiny on the subject and stated that there were a number of valuable comments and issues for consideration raised.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission did not support the recommendations as set out in the report of the Director of Housing and Wellbeing.
2. The Director of Housing and Wellbeing agreed to circulate information on the ready to let sheltered accommodation properties available in Charnwood, specifically the number of bedsits and self-contained properties.

Reasons

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report, did not feel the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.
2. To enable the Commission to better understand the specifications of the ready to let sheltered accommodation properties in Charnwood.

87. SCRUTINY COMMISSION PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CABINET RESPONSE

There were no pre-decision scrutiny items at the last meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.

88. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources to review the progression of scrutiny panels was submitted (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the progression of scrutiny panels.

Reason

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

89. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources 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 was submitted (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme and make any amendments the Commission feel necessary.

Reason

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

90. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources 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 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Officer and the Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

- i. Members asked for a report on the progress of the Selective Licensing Scheme. It was agreed that this item be scheduled for July/August 2023.
- ii. It was highlighted that the Commission's meeting scheduled for June 2023 had a significant number of items programmed. It was agreed that the following items be rescheduled for July 2023:
 - Update on Anti-Social Behaviour Review
 - Waste Management Scrutiny Panel - Update

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 following items be added to the Scrutiny Commission's work programme:
 - Selective Licensing Scheme Update (July/August 2023)
4. That the following items be rescheduled for July 2023:
 - Update on Anti-Social Behaviour Review
 - Waste Management Scrutiny Panel - Update

Reasons

1-4 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 27th February 2023 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.
3. The following Lead Members and officers attended the meeting virtually: The Leader of the Council, the Head of Economic Development and Regeneration and the Business Relations and Economic Growth Officer.