

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
7TH MARCH 2023**

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

Councillors Morgan (Leader of the Council),
Barkley (Lead Member for Finance and Property
Services), Baines (Lead Member for Investment)
and Bailey (Lead Member for Planning)

Chief Executive (Lead Officer)
Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts
(S151)
Head of Transformation, Strategy and
Performance
Head of Planning and Growth
Transformation and Improvement Manager
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Popley

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.

91. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councillor Parton joined the meeting at 6:03pm.

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 6th February 2023 were approved.

92. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

93. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

94. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

95. 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.

96. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

97. CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN 2023-24

A Cabinet report of the Chief Executive to propose the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan for 2023-24, was submitted (item 7a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, the Head of Transformation, Strategy and Performance and the Transformation and Improvement Manager assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The section regarding Covid-19 had been removed from the Corporate Delivery Plan for 2023-24. This was due to the council resuming business as usual following the pandemic. There were mechanisms in place in the event that Covid-19 action plans would need to be reinstated, including linking in with the Leicestershire Resilience Forum and other local partnerships.
- ii. The action relating to the installation of six dual electric charging points in the Beehive Lane Car Park, and three in the Charnwood Borough Council car park was related to other strategies such as the Climate Action Plan and the further work of the Climate Action Board.
- iii. The previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy was to be reviewed and updated to reflect the requirements of the Borough in 2023-24.
- iv. The Housing Development, Acquisitions and Disposals of Stock Strategy would be developed following the recent Stock Conditions Survey. This would consider the best and worst performing stock and would look at opportunities to develop stock, dispose of stock and acquire stock.
- v. The development of a Garage Site Asset Management Strategy was planned following a recent review of garage sites. This would consider options for garage sites which were not utilised effectively .
- vi. The Council had recently purchased a number of overt CCTV cameras for use at fly-tipping hot spots. These were designed to deter fly-tipping and would be used to gather evidence in the event of fly-tipping incidents. There was also work ongoing across Leicestershire with District Councils which linked in with this initiative and it was anticipated that further targeted action would take place in the coming months.
- vii. There was a review of the Lightbulb Service across the partnership planned, which would include Leicestershire County Council and District Councils.

- Charnwood Borough Council would also undertake a separate review on the service to consider options for delivery.
- viii. A typo was highlighted on page 15 of the agenda, under the 'Sustainability' section of the report. The report stated that there was an object to 'take action to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2040' and it was confirmed that the date should read '2030'.
 - ix. It was highlighted the programme of acts at Loughborough Town Hall did include a variety of different types of performances, including commercial and cultural acts, and this was based upon the success of previous acts and the availability of acts to perform at the Loughborough Town Hall. The Chief Executive agreed to circulate the current programme to members in order to demonstrate the variety of acts.
 - x. Targets within the Corporate Delivery Plan were realistic and stretched, which meant that if a particular target was consistently achieved, there was potential to stretch this target further to achieve greater improvements. The Transformation and Improvement Manager agreed to share historical data on KI 4(a) 'Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting', to demonstrate the 50% stretch target.
 - xi. Planning applications determined to an agreed timescale referred to a timescale which had been agreed with the applicant. Further statutory consultation was required if an applicant sought to amend an application, and this would lead to a requirement of an extension of time. Data for January 2023 suggested that 100% major applications, 94% of minor applications and 67% other applications required an extension of time in that month.
 - xii. The targets for LS10(a) 'Leisure Centres – total number of visits' were based on previous years of data and it was anticipated that the spike in visits during Quarter 4 could be due to an increase in visits to leisure centres during the New Year period.
 - xiii. The 'Discover Charnwood' communications would be aimed at Charnwood residents as well as audiences from across the County and wider areas. Some attractions across Charnwood may not be familiar to some residents from within the Borough, and neighbouring districts.
 - xiv. The targets for KI6 'Percentage rent collected (including arrears brought forward)' was a cumulative target and it was expected that the increase over each quarter was due to the collections of rent that was owed for previous quarters. The Chief Executive agreed to confirm if this was the case following the meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Chief Executive.
2. That the Chief Executive circulated the current programme of acts at the Loughborough Town Hall.
3. That the Transformation and Improvement Manager shared historical data on KI 4(a) 'Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting'.
4. That the Chief Executive agreed to confirm whether the quarterly increase of KI 6 'Percentage rent collected (including arrears brought forward)' was due to the collection of rent that was owed for previous quarters.

Reasons

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendation set out.
2. To demonstrate the variety of commercial and cultural acts programmed to perform at the Loughborough Town Hall.
3. To demonstrate the 50% stretch target for KI 4(a) 'Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting'.
4. To ensure the Commission was advised correctly on KI 6 'Percentage of rent collected (including arrears brought forward)'.

98. CHARNWOOD ENTERPRISE ZONE - REQUEST FOR FORWARD FUNDING (BUILDING 28E)

Cabinet report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts to request approval for forward funding in respect of the Charnwood Campus site. The funding would enable the refurbishment of Building 28E on the site, was submitted (item 7b on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Finance and Property Services, the Leader of the Council and the Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Members felt that Enterprise Zone was beneficial to the Borough in that it provided significant employment opportunities and encouraged the retainment of University graduates in the area.
- ii. There was potential to utilise pre-existing business rates generated by the Charnwood Campus site to support the repayment of the loan if this was necessary. The Enterprise Zone would continue for the next 18 years and the loan repayment term was anticipated to be 15 years. It was projected that the loan would be repaid comfortably, during this time, although there was an

additional three years following the anticipated repayment term, which could be used to claim further payments if required.

- iii. It was expected that the revenue projections for the entire site would be £1.3m pa. The overarching business rates agreement was that 85% of the business rates collected would be collected by the LLEP (Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership). The loan and repayment scheme would allow the Council to withhold some of these business rates in order to facilitate repayment of the loan.
- iv. The building had been unoccupied for some time and required some refurbishment and upgrading of equipment.
- v. A Heads of Terms agreement had been signed by prospective tenants which suggested there was little risk in the building not being let.
- vi. Although the total amount of the loan was expected to be £4.6m, the corresponding figure in the report was £5m. This allowed for some headroom in negotiating the final amount. The Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts (S151) agreed to send a spreadsheet detailing the costings to Councillor Brookes.
- vii. The Council had lobbied for the establishment of the Enterprise Zone over a number of years, which was based over three locations in Leicester and Charnwood and had taken a significant amount of time and effort to progress.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts.
2. That the Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts send the spreadsheet detailing the costings of the loan arrangements to Councillor Brookes.

Reasons

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendation set out.
2. To enable a better understand of the costings of the loan arrangements.

99. CHARNWOOD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2023

A Cabinet report of the Head of Planning and Growth to seek approval of the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) so that the programme for the preparation of planning documents for Charnwood is agreed, was submitted (item 7c on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Planning and the Head of Planning and growth assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Late approval of the Local Development Scheme would mean that the existing programme would become out of date. The Local Plan Inspectors had asked that the Local Development Scheme be updated so it was clear when they made their report what the up to date forward programme for plan production was.
- ii. The timetable milestones for progressing new Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) were outlined on page 61 of the agenda. There was scope for members and community forums to participate in a consultation process during the development of the SPDs.
- iii. The council had a biodiversity policy document which provided guidance on securing biodiversity net gain on development sites and financial contributions towards off-site biodiversity net gain using S106 legal agreements.

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

Reason

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

100. 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, was submitted (item 8 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.

101. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

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

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

Reason

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

102. 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).

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.

103. 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, was submitted (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Officer assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

The Commission added the following items to their work programme;

- i. Pre-decision scrutiny - Shepshed Public Realm Project: Market Place (April 2023)
- ii. Pre-decision scrutiny – Extension of Environmental Services Contract (April 2023 – not yet programmed on Key Decisions Notice)
- iii. Pre-decision scrutiny – Extension of Management of Open Spaces Contract (April 2023 – not yet programmed on Key Decisions Notice)

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:
 - Pre-decision scrutiny - Shepshed Public Realm Project: Market Place (April 2023)
 - Pre-decision scrutiny – Extension of Environmental Services Contract (April 2023 – not yet programmed on Key Decisions Notice)
 - Pre-decision scrutiny – Extension of Management of Open Spaces Contract (April 2023 – not yet programmed on Key Decisions Notice)

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.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 19th June 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 members and officers attended the meeting virtually;

Councillors Morgan (Leader of the Council), Barkley (Lead Member for Finance and Property Services), Baines (Lead Member for Investment) and Bailey (Lead Member for Planning)

Director of Finance, Governance and Contracts (S151)
Head of Transformation, Strategy and Performance
Head of Planning and Growth
Transformation and Improvement Manager