

## LOUGHBOROUGH AREA COMMITTEE – 16TH JUNE 2021

### Report of the Heads of Financial Services, Cleansing & Open Spaces, Planning and Regeneration and Neighbourhood Services

#### Part A

#### ITEM 7 LOUGHBOROUGH ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT 2021/22

##### Purpose of Report

To provide information and updates on significant matters relating to the town of Loughborough.

##### Recommendation

That the report be noted.

##### Reason

To ensure that members of the Committee are kept up to date on significant matters relating to the town of Loughborough.

##### Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

At its meeting on 22nd January 2018, Full Council approved the establishment of the Loughborough Area Committee and its terms of reference, to establish a more formal role for those Borough Councillors representing wards within Loughborough in key matters relating to the town.

As part of those terms of reference the Committee receives an annual review of significant matters relating to the Loughborough town area.

##### Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

##### *Financial Implications*

There are none.

##### *Risk Management*

There are no specific risks associated with this decision.

Background Papers:

None

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## Part B

### Outturn for the Loughborough Special Expense Area for 2020/21(Head of Financial Services)

1. The Loughborough Special Expense Outturn for 2020/21, as summarised in Appendix 1, shows Original Budget of £1,291k against Actuals £1,289k producing a favourable variance of £2.2k (0.17% of the Original Budget).
2. The main underspends being:
  - a. **Loughborough Cemetery** £10k, mainly as a result of additional burial fees £7k, and an underspend on consultant fees £3k, which were not required this year for the new cemetery project.
  - b. **Mario Tinenti Centre, Altogether Place, Community Hubs** £14k, This is mainly due to a saving on the Hub co-ordinator costs due to the current covid19 restrictions as well as the continued delay in progressing the lease negotiations regarding the development of the Thorpe Acre Community Hub £6.5K, which will now not be progressing further.
  - c. **Sports Grounds** £15k, delays in Building Repair and Maintenance and Electrical works not carried out due to covid19 restrictions.
  - d. **Town Centre Management** £17K, no major events took place in 2020 due to Covid 19 restrictions therefore loss of income £23.8k, the net saving £37.5k being a 6 month vacant post of Assistant Operations officer, event costs, equipment purchase etc and £3k less direct time spent on Town Centre events.
3. The main overspends being:
  - a. **Fair** £51k, Due to Covid19 restriction the Fair did not take place in 2020/21 which resulted in a loss of income £94.7K, part offset by some savings in running costs of £44.7k.
4. Overall the net underspends of £2k are detailed in Appendix 1. The overall total underspend of £2k will be carried forward within the Loughborough Special Expense Account and reflected in future year's Loughborough Special Levy.
5. Appendix 2 shows the 2020/21 original budget and outturn for each area of the budget. Explanations are given for all major variances.

### Loughborough Town Centre Masterplan (Head of Planning and Regeneration)

6. The implementation of the town centre masterplan continues to be monitored by the Town Team stakeholder group meeting quarterly. At its last meeting in March 2021 the group welcomed progress in the delivery of identified opportunity sites at Aumbery Gap for a student housing project and the "Generator" building to provide space for start up creative businesses.

The group also welcomed the commencement of the Bedford Square Gateway project and noted steps made towards the design of public realm improvements at Nottingham Road, The Lanes and High Street / Jubilee Way, while recognising the financial pressures attached to the wider ambitions for the delivery of public realm enhancements. The group also called for greater priority to be given to the improvement in the pedestrian and cycle routes linking the university to the town centre.

#### Loughborough and Leicester Science and Innovation Enterprise Zone (Head of Planning and Regeneration)

7. Significant progress has been made in the progression of the two enterprise zone sites within Loughborough with the conclusion of an agreement relating to the apportionment of the uplift in business rates between the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP) and the rate collecting authorities. Having resolved that issue an initial grant has been awarded to Charnwood Campus Limited to fund the repurposing of a redundant building as a Medicinal and Synthetic Chemical Research Centre to attract additional tenants to complement those already represented on the site: Almac, 3M and Kindeva.
8. Loughborough University has now acquired some 90% of the land allocated for the expansion of the Science and Enterprise Park and witnessed the completion of the first unit within the designated enterprise zone for The Access Group. Work is to commence on securing a planning permission over the remainder of the allocation from August 2021.
9. £313k in the accrued business rates has been allocated to support a growth accelerator programme. “Restocking the Business Base” is designed to equip talented people and emerging graduates disadvantaged by the economic fall out from the global pandemic with the knowledge and skills to establish and grow new businesses better able to thrive in the post Covid era. The programme is to be delivered in partnership with Loughborough University and will utilise existing expertise and assets on campus as well as the new Careers and Enterprise Hub in the town centre.

#### Loughborough Town Deal (Head of Planning and Regeneration)

10. The Loughborough Town Deal Board submitted a revised Town Investment Plan to the Government at the end of February 2021. The Plan proposed £25 million should be invested in Loughborough to help with the ‘levelling-up’ agenda and to stimulate renewal and recovery in the town’s economy. Projects included within the Plan are led by a range of organisations and include initiatives which will revitalise both the place and people’s lives. The projects, if funded, would alleviate flood risk, provide new cycling and walking ways, improve public realm in areas such as the canal and the town’s many lanes, facilitate the staging of more events, create a digital skills hub, provide employability initiatives for younger people, improve some of the town’s key tourist attractions and support business innovation.  
One project has already secured early Town Deal funding of £750,000. The new Careers and Enterprise Hub opened in Market Place this Spring. It gives the College and University a presence in the heart of the town centre and is a good example of the Investment Plan’s objective of bringing different aspects of town life together, making sure that people and place are better connected.

11. The Borough Council will play a crucial role as the legally required Accountable Body for a Loughborough Town Deal and will work closely with the Town Deal Board in overseeing the successful delivery of the Town Deal. An announcement by the Government of the level of funding to be allocated to Loughborough was expected towards the end of May 2021. Officers will update members verbally if an announcement has been made after the time of writing of this report but before this Area Committee meets.

#### Bedford Square Gateway Project (Head of Planning and Regeneration)

12. The Bedford Square Gateway Project will deliver improvements to the public realm within Bedford Square, Wards End, Devonshire Square and Devonshire Lane. The project has been driven by meeting local business concerns and priorities. The improvements planned will make the area more attractive for visitors and residents. It will create a distinct, characterful and pleasant shopping-friendly destination. The project represents an investment of £2.6 million in the town centre and will serve to boost trade.
13. The Council's appointed contractors, Fitzgerald Contractors Limited, commenced construction works in February 2021. Shortly afterwards and with limited prior notification, Severn Trent Water commenced a large water main diversion in Devonshire Square and Ward's End, which took six weeks to complete. This resulted in delays in construction works due to the fact Fitzgerald were unable to access part of the site while Severn Trent completed its works. As it currently stands, the construction programme will now be completed at the beginning of December. Contingency planning is taking place to minimise any impact on the annual fair.
14. Work has progressed steadily since the completion of the Severn Trent works. For example, the laying of granite paving in Devonshire Square has started. The Council is working hard with local businesses and residents to minimise the temporary disruption that will inevitable be caused and is maintaining communication with the local businesses and residents. A Zoom meeting was held on the evening of 19 May 2021 to provide an update on project progress to local businesses and residents. A further Zoom meeting is being planned.
15. A number of unexpected issues have been found on site, which would have required lengthy road closures to both Ward's End and Devonshire Square. In an attempt to avoid lengthy road closures, work has commenced recently on preparing an alternative design solution, which will be submitted to the County Highway Authority for formal approval. In order to minimise any impact on the overall construction programme, a decision was taken to bring forward work on Bedford Square North car park, which was originally intended to start in September. This work will necessitate the closure of the Bedford Square North car park. In response, the Council has agreed to offer free parking for up to one hour in Beehive Lane car park (two-hour the same price etc) for a period of time while this work is undertaken.

## Update on People Zone (Head of Neighbourhood Services)

16. Charnwood Borough Council, in collaboration with the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), implemented the People Zone in January 2019. The concept is centred upon a focused multiagency team working in partnership with local residents, with the intention of creating a safer and stronger community within a designated location. There were three People Zones established at that time – New Parks, Coalville and Loughborough.
17. The designated location for the Charnwood People Zone was identified as the Bell Foundry Estate in the east of Loughborough. This location was chosen based upon extensive analysis of all available data sets, including Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Crime, ASB and statutory partners demand profile.
18. Following extensive consultation with statutory, non-statutory and the local community, the Partnership has created an integrated neighbourhood management team that will deliver an action plan within the locality of the Bell Foundry Estate. The operating model that has been created has been built around two delivery groups, one focused upon the theme of 'People' the other theme being 'Place'. Each of the two groups have now met regularly since January 2019 and are making progress in terms of delivering outcomes under our strategic aim of delivering 'a Safer and Stronger' community within the estate.
19. The 'People' group, which is a 'closed' meeting, have identified a number of persistent and prolific offenders whose criminal behaviour is being tackled via means of both criminal and civil powers. The group also has a focus on early identification of adults and youths at risk of exploitation and once identified, necessary referrals are made. The aim of the People group is to work at creating a 'Safer' environment in keeping with our strategic goal.
20. The 'Place' group is an open meeting made up of multi-agency practitioners, local ward councillors and community members. The focus of this group is to create the 'Stronger' element of our strategic aim, with a view to enhancing the resilience of both individuals and groups within the Bell Foundry estate. In the meetings to date, there has been a focus on the identification of issues the community are concerned about, with discussions as to what actions are required to address those concerns. Early successes in this arena have include the re-sighting of a CCTV camera, preventative measures to address concerns re an increase in sex workers, collaborative work with local drug support services to address the issue of substance misuse within the estate.
21. A reoccurring theme from the Place group has been the significant impact of sustained drug misuse both on the community and individuals. To address this concern, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) implemented a Drugs Strategy (April 2109) and in partnership with local drug support services – The Falcon Centre and Exaireo. Officers are working closely to ensure that enforcement action taken by partners such as the Police, is followed up with preventative workstreams aimed at supporting recovery and rehabilitation.

22. The OPCC has commissioned Loughborough University to develop an evaluation model of the People Zone and the proposed success criteria has currently been set under three themes: 'Safety', 'Skills & Resources for Resilience', 'Wellbeing'. The evaluators are benchmarking data sets under the three themes so that quantitative assessments can be made in due time. They are also creating a qualitative assessment in the guise of a Community Perception Survey so that the views of the local community are captured. This will be particularly important in terms of assessing community confidence.
23. The delivery of activity has been considerably impacted in the past 15 months as a consequence of Covid-19. Some of the key actions implemented prior to Covid-19 and since the introduction of the People Zone are outlined below:
  - Health awareness sessions delivered within the locality in partnership with Public Health
  - Increased hours allocated to the opening of the Marios Tinenti Centre to enhance community engagement
  - Multi-agency workshop to enhance practitioner skills in terms of effective neighbourhood management
  - Stakeholder network event highlighting referral pathway opportunities for service users
  - Multi-agency patch walk undertaken to assess community needs
  - Community social events (BBQ) aimed at increasing community resilience
  - Positive action taken against persistent offenders including premises closures following successful drug enforcement
  - Implementation of a Drugs Strategy in partnership with local drug support services
  - Creation of self-support groups eg Fishing group, running, and walking club promoting social inclusion
24. In March 2021 to further develop and continue the good work that has already been done in relation to People Zones, the OPCC announced that they would be providing funding for the People Zones initiative, which will result in the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) receiving £25,000 for 2021/22 and a further £25,000 for 2022/23 for the Bell Foundry PZ. People Zones continues to be an initiative that focuses on strengthening communities and building resilience for improved health and wellbeing.
25. CSPs are being encouraged to spend the funding on activities and provision relevant and appropriate to their specific People Zone area. Moreover, to ensure that People Zones continue to develop, build community resilience, and ensure long term sustainability, the following three key fundamental principles need to be adhered to as part of the funding requirement:
  - **Delivery Plan** - produce a PZ delivery plan that is embedded into the overall CSP annual plans
  - **Outcomes** – to be agreed and selected locally with partners and community members

- **Quarterly reporting** – provide progress update reports to OPCC / Community Development Officer
26. Work is taking place to start the first draft of the delivery plan which will be looking at the first 6 months as we support the community coming out of recovery. The last year has had a significant impact on the residents in the People Zone area and it will be a priority to engage and identify their concerns and needs as we start to open up more face to face services and increased local presence.
  27. Partners who attend the Place meeting will contribute to the delivery plan with their own areas of focus and delivery supported by statistics and anecdotal evidence. Local Councillors, community leaders and residents will play an important role in the development of the plan and its implementation.
  28. Through the CSP we will look to re-engage partners to ensure that all appropriate organisations are in attendance. The original People Zone meetings of Place and People will be arranged with an opportunity to review and refresh to ensure they remain fit for purpose and that partners are fully engaged and providing their much-needed community intelligence and information. We will look to shape the delivery plan around identified needs to see where the funding is best spent.
  29. Key areas of focus for delivery in the coming weeks will be a number of community events including Estate Walks and outside coffee mornings. Whilst restrictions remain the MTC hub will continue to operate on an appointment basis providing support to those that need it.

Update on Charnwood Community Action Community Hub (Head of Neighborhood Services)

30. An update on the work of the Community Hub was presented to Scrutiny Commission on the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 as part of the Community and Economic Recovery post Covid-19 Recovery Report – the information contained within the report can be found at :  
<https://charnwood.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=161&MId=620&Ver=4>
31. The main updates since the report to Scrutiny on the 6<sup>th</sup> April are as follows:
  - Branding has been agreed for the social supermarket which is called Your Store
  - Building work continues to get the shop ready
  - Work is taking place to agree the referral pathways and assessment criteria for the membership
  - Meetings are being set up with partners and organisations that will be able to identify the support and services that can be offered to Your Store members as part of their personal plan

- Successful meetings are taking place with food suppliers as part of the additional aim of Your Store to reduce food waste
- CCA Hub continues to deliver over 350 food parcels a week across the borough. Charnwood Food Poverty Group members are also supporting residents with food parcels in their locations
- Befriending calls and neighbourly support requests are still coming in and volunteers are providing the support. Approximately 40 calls being made per week.

### Loughborough Cemetery (Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces)

32. The existing burial capacity in Loughborough is quite limited and the cemetery at Leicester Rd, Loughborough is running out of space. Planning permission for a new cemetery in Nanpantan was awarded in August 2020 and construction is expected to start within the next few weeks. The work is expected to be completed at the end of the calendar year. Phase one of the cemetery will provide approximately 5,000 burial plots which should be sufficient for around 100 years of burials at the current rate. The new cemetery will offer natural burial spaces in addition to the more traditional plots that we currently have.





The Outwoods Visitor Centre (Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces)

33. Officers have been working on a proposal to convert the redundant Rangers Cottage at the Outwoods into a Visitor Centre Café for some time. Planning permission to convert the cottage was awarded in February 2020 and construction work has been ongoing since March 2021. The construction phase is now nearing completion. A tendering exercise is currently underway to select a café operator to run the site. It is expected that the funds raised by converting the cottage will make a significant contribution towards the upkeep of the Outwoods going forwards. It is hoped that the facility will be open for people to enjoy by the end of the school holidays.

Open Spaces Projects (Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces)

34. Improvements have been made to the play facilities at the Bell Foundry Estate and a new Multi Use Games Area has been installed at Farnham Road.

Appendix 1            Loughborough Special Expenses Outturn 2020/21

Appendix 2            Loughborough Special Expenses Variance Report Actuals 2020/21 compared to Original Budget 2020/21