

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
4TH APRIL 2022**

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

Councillor Morgan (Leader of the Council)

Chief Executive
Organisational Change Officer
Head of Strategic Support
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Popley and K. Harris

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.

115. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 7th March 2022 were approved.

116. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made

117. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

118. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

119. 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.

120. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

121. CORPORATE DELIVERY PLAN 2022-23

A Cabinet report of the Strategic Director: Environmental and Corporate Services to propose the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan for 2022-23 (item 7a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and the Organisational Change Officer assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was highlighted that the newly established Hamilton Lea parish could be more integrated into the council's work. Members felt that the parish could have a stronger identity within the borough.
- ii. The Council would support the independent Inspector undertaking the Local Plan examination by enabling open sessions and providing the information and evidence required. It was acknowledged that the word 'service' on page 26 of the agenda could be replaced with the word 'support' to clarify the actions of the council.
- iii. The Hope Bell project had commenced and was currently at the consultation and design stage. A significant amount of work remained and it was anticipated that the project would be completed within the next 13-14 months.
- iv. The council had introduced Place Indicators which were separate from Key Performance Indicators. The purpose of the Place Indicators was to inform the context in which the council operated in order to gain insight, and to facilitate future planning and service delivery. Key Performance Indicators remained in place.
- v. The recommendation to give delegated authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader to make amendments to the Corporate Delivery Plan would involve minor changes. Any significant changes would need to be agreed by the Cabinet. It was suggested that the word 'minor' be inserted into the recommendation in the report.
- vi. It was unlikely that further reductions in funding or income over the lifetime of the Corporate Delivery Plan may result in objectives not being delivered and impacting on customers. This was because the council's government funding was secure for the duration of the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-23.
- vii. The KIs 13-15 outlined in Appendix 2 to the report were statutory, with an annual target only.
- viii. The Council was working closely with partner organisations to address anti-social behaviour. Overcoming issues linked to anti-social behaviour was challenging and the partnership was bound by legal frameworks.
- ix. The council was working with the Football Foundation to deliver a football infrastructure across the borough. This would include assessing the needs and requirements in different areas to provide pitches. The facilities would not be restricted to specific demographic groups. It was agreed that more information on this could be provided to members following the meeting.

- x. The Bedford Square Gateway Project was being delivered through a revised timetable following the expansion of the project.
- xi. The council was working to manage air quality in the borough and would review air quality targets in line with the Environment Act 2021.
- xii. The targets associated with the collection of litter on large roads was within the relevant Service Delivery Plan and contract with the operator.
- xiii. The council aimed to meet the housing needs of households on the housing register by bringing 35 empty homes back into use. The council would be required to assess the needs of individuals on the housing register in order to identify the properties which would be suitable to include within this target.
- xiv. The opening of the Cemetery at Nanpantan Road was imminent. It was highlighted that the work undertaken had been praised by the community. The council would actively promote the opening of the Cemetery at the appropriate time.
- xv. The Discover Charnwood website was live and there was a possibility that printed material could be provided to promote the initiative. Research had suggested that website use was the preferred information source for tourists.
- xvi. Members thanked Officers for including the delivery of improved end of summer waste arrangements for students within the Corporate Delivery Plan 2022-23, as requested. It was highlighted that this would make a significant positive impact on the community.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Strategic Director: Environmental and Corporate Services.
2. That officers consider changing the word 'service' on page 26 of the agenda to 'support'.
3. That officers consider adding the word 'minor' to describe the changes made through the delegated authority of the Chief Executive as recommended.
4. That the Organisational Change Officer provides more information on the provision of football infrastructure through the Football Foundation.

Reasons

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

2. To improve clarity of the actions of the council in relation to the Local Plan inspection.
3. To improve clarity of the nature of delegated decisions made by the Chief Executive as outlined in the recommendation.
4. To ensure the Committee is informed on the provision of football infrastructure through the Football Association.

122. 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 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.

123. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to review the progression of scrutiny panels was submitted (item 9 on the agenda files with these minutes).

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

Reason

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

124. 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 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Commission review the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme and make any amendments the Commission feel necessary.

2. That the Scrutiny Commission 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&2 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.

125. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR KI 11 - % RENT LOSS FROM VOID PROPERTIES

A report of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee to provide further details to the Commission regarding the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee's consideration of Key Performance Indicator KI 11 - % rent loss from void properties prior to requesting the Commission schedules the topic for further scrutiny (item 11 on the agenda files with these minutes).

The Head of strategic Support assisted with the consideration of this item.

It was highlighted that there was an error in the report on page 64 of the agenda. The report stated that the Cabinet Lead Member for Housing had attended two meetings of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. The Cabinet Lead Member for Housing had attended three meetings of the Committee.

The Scrutiny Commission considered various options to address the concerns of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. It was agreed that the most appropriate action was to request a report from the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing to detail the following information;

- i. A break down of each void property that has been void for over 28 days, and properties in sheltered accommodation, including;
 - The reason for the property remaining void
 - The location of each property (by Ward)
 - The number of bedrooms in each property (example – 3 bedroom property in Southfields ward, void due to criminal damage)
 - A tabulated bar chart indicating the length of time the property has been void
 - An indication of the total rent lost during the time that each property has been void.
- ii. Further information on properties which are 'hard to let'. Reasons why they are hard to let. Is there a possibility that the council could sell any properties which are too difficult to let?
- iii. The impact of Covid-19 on the backlog of void properties.

The Commission felt that following the receipt of this information, they would be better able to decide on the most suitable action. The options for the Commission to consider would be to create a scrutiny panel to explore the issues identified by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee, or to progress the issue to Cabinet to consider.

RESOLVED

1. That the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing provide a report to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission outlining the information discussed during the consideration of this item.
2. That at the next meeting, having received the information in resolution (1), the Scrutiny Commission makes a decision on how to progress the issues identified by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.

Reason

1. To enable the Commission to receive additional information to assist with the decision on how to progress the issues identified by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee.
2. To ensure the Scrutiny Commission progress the issues identified by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee in the most appropriate way.

126. 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 Head of strategic Support and the Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

The Commission had agreed to add an item to the work programme as follows;

- Key Performance Indicator KI11 - % Rent Loss from Void Properties – 3rd May 2022.

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 an item on Key Performance Indicator KI11 - % Rent Loss from Void Properties be added to the work programme for the meeting on 3rd May 2022.

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 25th April 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.
3. The following officers and Lead Members listed as present attended the meeting virtually; The Leader of the Council, The Chief Executive and the Organisational Change Officer. The remaining officers listed were physically present in the meeting.