

Minutes



| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Meeting name | Cabinet |
| Date | Wednesday, 17 June 2020 |
| Start time | 4.00 pm |
| Venue | This meeting will be held by remote access - details below |

Present:

Chair Councillor J. Orson (Chair)

Councillors L. Higgins (Vice-Chair) R. de Burle
A. Freer-Jones A. Pearson

Attendees R. Child P. Cumbers

Observers J. Douglas P. Posnett

Officers Chief Executive
Director for Housing and Communities
Director for Corporate Services
Director for Growth and Regeneration
Director for Governance and Regulatory Services and Monitoring Officer
Assistant Director for Planning and Delivery
Democratic Services Manager
Democratic Services Officer (CR)

| Minute No. | Minute |
|------------|---|
| 88 | <p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no apologies for absence.</p> |
| | <p>ANTI-RACISM STATEMENT The Leader of the Council gave a statement on anti-racism:</p> <p><i>‘These have been challenging times for our country. The Covid-19 pandemic has created an unprecedented health and economic crisis and the recent tragic death of George Floyd has sparked widespread protests and social unrest, as communities cry out for justice and equality for all. Melton has not been immune from this turmoil and I believe now more than ever Melton Borough Council needs to send out a clear and unambiguous message to all our communities that we will continue to champion equality and fairness and that we will not tolerate racism in any form, at any time.</i></p> <p><i>There is of course much more that we can do and I have already submitted a motion for Council in July and at our next meeting, I will ask all Councillors across the chamber to join me in reaffirming our commitments to tackle racism and to promote equality. I will also be setting out proposals for where I think we can do more in this area and I will look forward to discussing with all Members next month.’</i></p> |
| 89 | <p>MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2020 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chair.</p> |
| 90 | <p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Councillors Orson and Pearson each declared an interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council, due to their roles as a County Councillors.</p> |
| 91 | <p>MATTERS REFERRED FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES <u>Melton Community Lottery</u></p> <p>Councillor Pat Cumbers, Chair of Scrutiny Committee gave an overview of the report, the purpose of which was to provide feedback and recommendations to Cabinet, following a Committee meeting on 7 January, where Committee Members were provided with a breakdown of the costs associated with running the Melton Community Lottery.</p> <p>Referring to Appendix A of the report, which detailed Senior Leadership Team’s response to the Committee’s recommendations, Councillor Cumbers commented that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An up to date membership figure would have been helpful for this meeting. • The main problem faced by the Council in administration of the Community |

Lottery was successful retention of members (in 2019, there had been 82 new members but 187 members had left) and this problem had not been fully addressed.

- Indirect costs relating to administration of the Community Lottery should not be ignored. They were described in the official audited records as 'actual costs' and it was concerning that they were not accurate, indicating that other costs could be inaccurate as well. Taking into account the indirect costs, it appeared that costs to the public exceeded the contribution towards the community grants through the Community Lottery.
- Scrutiny's recommendations were fair and appropriate for consideration by Cabinet.

Councillor Robert Child, a Member on Scrutiny's review of the Melton Community Lottery highlighted that:

- The total expenditure on the Community Lottery for the last three financial years had been £143k. Income over those years had been £43k, leaving a balance of £100k payable by tax payers. Of this, an average of £30k represented support costs.
- Members had previously identified a lack of promotion on the Community Lottery but in addition, opportunities to promote had been missed (i.e. including promotional leaflets with council tax bills had been suggested but not actioned).
- The information provided to Scrutiny Committee on 7 January did not correlate and had to be taken on trust.
- Other councils were raising substantial amounts for good causes and this Council should be doing the same.
- The Committee's recommendation to achieve 448 members by December 2020, was reasonable.

The Director for Corporate Services advised that the indirect costs (support charges) were effectively an overhead such as finance and legal. Savings in this area would not be made by ending the Community Lottery because the charges would still be in place. It was accepted and that indirect costs may not always be as accurate as they could be but the calculation of these charges did not affect the ultimate cost to the tax payer. Moving forward, there were some changes in the way the Council accounted for these charges, reducing complexity and this may help with the clarity of the budgets and service areas in 2021/22.

[Councillor Higgins left the meeting]

Councillor Alison Freer-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement thanked Councillor Cumbers, the Scrutiny Committee and the People Manager for their work on this issue. She gave a summary of the objectives of the Community Lottery (the opportunity for community organisations to raise money to support their initiatives, the Council supporting the Community Grants Fund, protection for Council supported organisations if Council services needed to be reduced).

Councillor Free-Jones commented that there was a need to balance the benefit to the community against the cost for the Council to continue to resource the Community Lottery but it should not be ended as a result of membership figures or ticket sales.

Councillor Freer-Jones advised that while Members may consider that resources currently concentrated on the Community Lottery could be re-focused to other areas of the Council, this would likely result in an increased pressure on Council funds, as there would no longer be a contribution to the Community Grants budget. Although income had not been as high as anticipated, the Lottery benefited the community and further work could be done to increase its success.

[Councillor Higgins re-entered the meeting]

Councillor Freer-Jones proposed the following amendment to the recommendations of Scrutiny Committee:

'That efforts are made to increase participation within existing resources and that officers undertake a review proportionate with the level of investment in the service and report the findings to Cabinet after 12 months such that a decision can be made regarding the ongoing impact and value of the service'.

Councillor Orson thanked Councillors Freer-Jones, Cumbers and Child and members of Scrutiny Committee for their work on this issue.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- Efforts to increase engagement with the Community Lottery needed to be greatly improved. All feedback received to date highlighted that the Council had not given proper focus to marketing and promotion.
- Lack of promotion had been due to a shortage of suitable resources and possibly a small marketing budget would help with this. It was currently being promoted well via social media. Councillors, in their roles as community leaders should actively promote the community lottery, sharing it with the organisations they were connected to in order to benefit the community.
- There was concern over the inaccuracy of indirect costs (support charges) relating to the Community Lottery and whether other reported support charges could also be inaccurate.
- A Member commented that they did not feel that the information previously provided to Cabinet on Lottery expenditure enabled them to fully understand how money was being spent.
- The Community Lottery had helped good causes within the community but the costs were not adequately detailed. Members were hopeful that directing efforts to increasing income over the next year would improve its success.

Cabinet **AGREED** That efforts be made to increase participation within existing

resources and that officers undertake a review proportionate with the level of investment in the service and report the findings to Cabinet after 12 months, such that a decision can be made regarding the ongoing impact and value of the service.

92

PERFORMANCE REPORTING FOR Q4 2019/20

Dawn Garton, Director for Corporate Services introduced the report, which advised Members of the current state of performance against the defined performance reporting measures for the priority themes within the Council's Corporate Priorities for the fourth quarter of the financial year 2019-20.

Mrs. Garton highlighted that Appendix 1 provided in depth information and included historical data from the previous 2 years. In view of the COVID-19 crises, the Council would review its Corporate Strategy and would amend as necessary. Performance indicators would be considered as part of the review.

Councillor Orson commented that the information contained within this report was evidence of the effectiveness of the Council and there were several indicators of good performance and performance improvements (the number of major planning decisions taken; void property turnarounds increasing from 50 days in quarter 3 to 28 days in quarter 4 - additional focus was being given to this key area and further improvements were anticipated; requests for information responded to within statutory deadlines had remained good despite the COVID-19 crisis; a reduction in staff turnover over the past 3 years, as a result of the Council's Workforce Strategy, which had focussed on recruitment and retention etc.)

During discussion the following points were noted:

- Members noted the excellent work of officers, particularly in relation to the improved turnaround times on void properties and improvements on non-decent homes. Hidden homelessness was still a concern but the Council had effective processes in place to take swift action. It was anticipated that further improvements would be made in all areas.
- Members thanked Councillor Cumbers and Scrutiny Committee for the review work they had undertaken on void properties.
- The performance data enabled the Council to focus on specific areas and where to place additional resources. The information was useful to inform and support the Corporate Strategy.
- The next quarter would reveal how tenants, residents and Council services had been impacted by COVID-19 and what support would be required.
- It was important to recognise that the amount of unexpected and additional work undertaken by officers in response to the COVID-19 crisis would not be captured by performance indicators (i.e. delivery of food parcels and prescriptions, handing out hand sanitiser, checking on the well-being of vulnerable people etc.)
- Members expressed concern over the performance data on 'Revenues – the number of customers in arrears and in receipt of Universal Credit'. It should be noted that this has been a historic problem and that COVID-19 would only have impacted on the very end of the last quarter. Additional

information on changes over this period would have been useful to gage the real significance of COVID-19 in relation to this issue.

- Members noted that companies and businesses within Melton had reacted positively to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and as a result had helped the Borough's economy. Specific thanks were expressed to Biffa, who had continued its 3 services and had maintained collection rates.

Cabinet **NOTED** the contents of the report and **HIGHLIGHTED** observations and actions to relevant officers accordingly.

93

SOUTHERN SUSTAINABLE URBAN EXTENSION MASTERPLAN

Jim Worley Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Delivery introduced the report, which set out the proposed Masterplan for the Southern Sustainable Urban Extension. The document, required as part of the Melton Local Plan and developed after consultation with key stakeholders, would provide a framework for future sustainable development and would assist Leicestershire County Council in meeting the conditions required to accept the Housing Infrastructure Fund.

Mr. Worley highlighted paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4 of the report, which detailed the progress to date. Paragraph 5.5 summarised the main features of the Masterplan (detailed in full at Appendix A).

Mr. Worley drew Members attention to section 12 of the Masterplan, which detailed infrastructure costs, the framework of delivery of schools and other key items etc. The Council was committed to securing contributions towards infrastructure costs (examples of developments where this had already been achieved included those at the north side of Melton - 700 dwellings, Melton Spinney Road - 200 dwellings, Lake Terrace - 100 dwellings and a new development on Leicester Road).

Mr. Worley highlighted recommendation 2.4, advising Members that the Council had identified a small number of areas within the Masterplan, which required further elaboration under delegated authority should Members approve the recommendations (to include elaboration on the journey of the Masterplan, even further clarity on viability considerations etc.) and which respond to the ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders.

Mr. Worley advised that viability was a strong feature of the Masterplan but recognising the current challenging context, the Council could undertake further viability testing with Leicestershire County Council, developers and Homes England. He informed Members that the Council had been made aware that 1 developer has questioned viability, relating to the western section of the sustainable neighbourhood but they had not provided reasons or evidence for this; and the report set out a number of bases upon which viability assumptions had been built.

Councillor Orson thanked the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Delivery, his team and the officer from Blaby District Council, who had undertaken the peer review of this Masterplan. He commented that the Masterplan was comprehensive and added that the public recognised that the Melton Mowbray

distributor road was crucial for the town and the southern aspect would help to reduce traffic.

During discussion, the following points were noted:

- Members agreed that the Masterplan was a very good document and would support delivery of the homes and deliver the infrastructure the town needed.
- The independent examination through the peer review had been invaluable.
- Swift delivery of the southern section of the road would be economically beneficial for Leicestershire as well as Melton.
- Members thanked Councillors representing southern wards (Councillors Bindloss, Douglas, Fisher, Freer-Jones, Pearson and Cumbers, who championed recreational and green spaces, which form part of this Masterplan).

Cabinet:

- (1) **APPROVED** the Masterplan for the purposes of providing a framework to guide the consideration of future planning applications in the South Sustainable Neighbourhood area;
- (2) **NOTED** that its adoption would support the delivery of the southern section of the Melton Mowbray Distributor Road;
- (3) **INSTRUCTED** that it be presented to Leicestershire County Council (LCC) with correspondence explaining that it was the view of the Council that the Masterplan was a robust and credible document to guide the development of the South Sustainable Neighbourhood and as such, provided the assurances sought in order to enable LCC to accept the HIF award;
- (4) **DELEGATED** authority to the Director for Growth and Regeneration to make minor adjustments and corrections to the content of the Masterplan document.

The meeting closed at: 5.10 pm

Chair