

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 22 December 2020
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	By remote video conference

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Cumbers (Chair)

Councillors

R. Bindloss (Vice-Chair)	R. Browne
R. Child	J. Douglas
C. Evans	C. Fisher
E. Holmes	R. Smith
J. Wilkinson	

Observer Councillor A. Freer-Jones
Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement

Officers

- Director for Corporate Services
- Director for Growth and Regeneration
- Assistant Director for Governance & Democratic Services
- Democratic Services Manager
- Democratic Services Officer (HA)

Minute No.	Minute
76	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no apologies for absence.</p>
77	<p>MINUTES The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2020 were approved and authorised to be signed by the Chair. Cllrs Smedley and Evans abstained as they were not present at the meeting.</p>
78	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no Declarations of Interest.</p>
79	<p>REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2020-21 AND THE ANNUAL FORWARD PLAN Councillor Cumbers introduced the Scrutiny Workplan and the Cabinet Forward Plan and reminded Members that it lists the key decisions due to be discussed at Cabinet over the next three months.</p> <p>During the discussion the following points were noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Democratic Services Manager advised members that the Scrutiny workshop indicates the format of the different reports brought to Scrutiny: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ a one off report is an initial report where members may just offer recommendations to Council and take no further action or may agree to investigate further and it would be included on the plan for a later date. ➤ Task and Finish Group reports are more in depth and could be short or long term items ➤ Scrutiny may ask to review and comment on Cabinet reports before they are presented to Cabinet ➤ The Report may be in the form of a presentation. • Councillor Cumbers advised that following Cabinet on 16 December 2020 approving the recommendations in respect to the Council Asset Development Programme, she would be proposing to add the Asset Development Programme to the Workplan to consider the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review of the options and what the committee feel is the best fit for Melton. This can include: do nothing; sell as it is or develop. ➤ From the capital receipts raised, after costs, what objectives would be recommended to Cabinet to fund? Such as the Housing Company. ➤ Review the social and economic benefits/impacts of any change (if there were any). • The Monitoring Officer advised Members that reports would be provided to Cabinet and Council by May 2021 appraising all the options including the

possible relocation of Me and My Learning, The Venue, Enterprise Cars and other tenants currently occupying Phoenix House. Members were at liberty to make comments through the process and were not restricted to wait until reports were presented. Each option would provide a full report of the logistics and would take into account grant funding conditions, costings, design of other locations and refurbishment costs. Should Council agree any of these options to be taken forward then Scrutiny would be presented with the reports and invited to provide feedback and comments.

- The Director for Growth and Regeneration would provide clarity to the staff at Phoenix House that there would be no relocation taking place during 2021.
- Members were invited to provide feedback for any valid suggestions to officers for consideration for including in the proposals. Members would be kept updated of the process.
- The Director for Growth and Regeneration advised members that redevelopment of the any site would be a long term process. The Council had approved the disposal of Cattle Market North in December 2020. She advised that there the business case for Phoenix House will evolve in following costed design options considered for reconfiguration of Parkside and the Cove to allow for relocation from Phoenix House. consultations would be taking place over the coming months and year regarding the same. The Council is yet to explore the options for the development of Phoenix House following vacant possession.

RESOLVED

The Committee **NOTED** the Annual Forward Plan and agreed to the addition of the Asset Development Programme to the Scrutiny Workplan.

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COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS - QUARTER 2 PERFORMANCE

The Director for Corporate Services introduced a report advising that having established a new Corporate Strategy in September 2020 the purpose of this report was to update Cabinet on progress in relation to delivery of the Council's Corporate priorities under the new Corporate strategy, providing both a set of Corporate Performance Measures alongside key project updates under each priority theme. The report provided details relating to the first and second quarters of the financial year 2020-21.

This was the first corporate performance report measuring performance against the new Corporate Strategy 2020-24 and included new and refreshed measures.

It is important the Council regularly receives and considers performance information to evaluate progress.

The Council's Corporate Performance Measures are used to focus on key priority services and projects as set out in the corporate plan and seek to help inform the Cabinet, Members and Officers with regard to the formation of policy and oversight of delivery.

In addition information on complaints had been incorporated so these could be

considered alongside performance data.

This information had been provided to the scrutiny committee for the committee to consider so that it could be used to inform the development of the scrutiny plan moving forward.

Note: The committee was not being asked to scrutinise the performance framework – this was an information report any questions about the performance indicators would be posed to the relevant Directors after the meeting.

Moving forward: The performance framework is being developed and would be made available in the New Year to members. This would set out the context for each of the elements that are being pulled together. In addition to the these performance indicators we are also looking to develop a “State of Melton” report which would also set out those indicators that the council does not directly control but give the context within which we are operating and would be used to develop policy eg. demographics, economy etc.

Indicators were also being developed, which may be useful to ward members relevant to their ward and the directors for Housing and Communities and Growth and Regeneration would be sending out some initial indicators in the new year which would be developed and expanded into further Ward level data where possible.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- The Monitoring Officer advised that corporate complaints had now been incorporated into the performance measures, this was also being fed back at service level. There had been a lot work done on service improvements which was overseen at Senior Leadership level and trends were being identified back to the root causes. Further information regarding these findings would be brought back to Scrutiny through these performance reports.
- The Monitoring Officer advised that customers were able to come to the website to provide positive feedback as well as make complaints. In addition, there was now an inbox compliments@melton.gov.uk which was monitored and recorded accordingly. Members agreed to promote this to the public.
- Cllr Browne asked for recognition to be passed to officers and teams for the excellent progress around housing benefit claims and the efficient way the claims are turned around assisting vulnerable people in the middle of a national crisis.
- The Director for Growth and Regeneration confirmed to members that a planning decision of 10 properties or more would be classed as a major planning decision.
- The Director for Corporate Services would contact the Director for Housing and Communities for an update on the backlog of undisputed invoices and would report back to Members.
- Members requested regular feedback regarding all phone calls made to customer services including the number of calls received, the length of time

taken before calls were answered and the nature of the call.

RESOLVED

The Committee **NOTED** the report.

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ESTABLISHMENT OF MELTON BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Director for Growth and Regeneration submitted a report to members in respect of establishing a Task and Finish Group to review the Melton Business Improvement District (BID) in advance of a report going to Council to showing how Melton Borough Council (MBC) can support the BID going forward and share a business plan for the next term of work.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- The aim of the Task & Finish Group would be to obtain information from other BID companies on how they operate and what works for them and to compare these findings with the Melton BID's business plan. A report would go to Cabinet to offer recommendations on suggested areas for improvement.
- The report would be presented to the Chair of BID following approval from Cabinet for consideration and comment.
- The aim of the report would be to work together collaboratively to make the town a better place for businesses and to increase footfall.
- Cllrs Cumbers, Child and Browne would be members of the Task and Finish Group for the review of the Melton BID.
- Members were invited to provide feedback and suggestions.

RESOLVED

- (1) The Committee **ESTABLISHED** a Task and Finish Group
- (2) The Committee **APPROVED** the Terms of Reference for the Task and Finish Group as at Appendix A
- (3) The Committee **NOTED** the Scoping Documents for the Task and Finish Group would be drafted by the Group at the first meeting and circulated to the Scrutiny Committee for information.

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CLIMATE ACCESS AND ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL PRESENTATION

The Portfolio Holder for Climate, Access and Engagement, Cllr Freer-Jones, provided the annual presentation to the Committee and provided updates to Priorities 1, 4 and 6.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- In the last 9 months the time spent on community projects had been affected due to the Covid 19 response as staff had been deployed to work supporting local businesses and the community where assistance was needed most.

- An update of the portfolio had last been sent to members at the end of October 2020 and there would be monthly updates provided to members going forward from 2021.
- There had been over 12,780 registered online accounts since June 2020 over half of which were created by people at home with 2,000 linked to the Council Tax page.
- All the forms that are used online by members of the public would be replaced during phase 2 of the implementation of the IEG4 system. Services would be working with customer services to identify and add forms to the platforms ahead of the system going live.
- The focus on complex people activities ie. anti-social behaviour and case management and the supporting people work had been put on hold due to the housing management restructure and this would resume when the new team was in place, work was underway to recruit new posts following approval from Council on 25 November 2020. Customer services were at the forefront of demand and work was underway to track and record the demands and how the demands were being dealt with.
- There would be a big focus ensuring that demands that were received by customer services were passed to the most effective service area possible as some complaints/demands could be covered by more than one service area.
- The new phone software tracked all calls to customer services, advised the customer their position in the queue and offered a call back facility. Customer services had a screen in their area which showed the number of calls waiting, the number of calls that had been answered and the length of time each call was waiting before being answered.
- Customer services had received 67,079 contacts from the public from all channels (face to face, telephone and emails) in the last 11 months with the top demands being council tax, repairs, housing options and waste. Since March 2020 there had been 4,300 demands in relation to Covid-19.
- Cllr Freer-Jones would provide Members with a report showing the breakdown of calls to customer services for the last 11 months.
- Members would be updated when further information was available regarding the possibility of a joint bid with other Councils for the funding for carbon neutral retro-fitting to our housing stock.
- Environmental Health Officers were out in the communities checking that establishments were following the current Covid-19 guidelines and were there in an advisory capacity not just prosecuting at the first offence.
- The current Audio Visual equipment in the council chambers needed to be updated to allow hybrid meetings to be held and broadcasting of meetings. This would enable a wider community to be more involved in being able to follow meetings as they were held.
- Any decisions that were to be made about changes to any committee or a specific part of the Council then the Chairs' of the Committees or the Members under impact would be consulted in advance.
- An email had been sent prior to the meeting providing the information of the Lottery regarding the number of players and how many tickets had been sold.
- There was a £1,000 marketing budget unspent of which £385 was for the

Lotteries Council and £692 was the Gambling Committee fee. The amount so far which had been raised for good causes was £10,857.

- The full list of the charities were sent out prior to the meeting but could be recirculated if any Member desired.
- The Lottery was one of the projects that had been paused due to the redeployment of staff.
- Members enquired as to why the Lottery had not been better advertised following Scrutiny's recommendations that for the Lottery to be viable there would need to be the sale of approximately 448 tickets but there had only been 55 sold. There had been a suggestion of flyers being included with the distribution of the council tax invoices to reach every household. Cllr Freer-Jones advised that she was not aware of the suggestion of flyers going in with the council tax invoices and would further investigate this and report back to Members. Cllr Freer-Jones would ask the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finances and Resources, Cllr de Burle, to provide further information to Members on the £30k staff support costs for the lottery and how this would be reallocated to other services.
- There would be a full report on the Lottery in June 2021 for Scrutiny to provide comments on. Should Scrutiny recommend to Cabinet the closure of the Lottery there would be reputational damage and some charities would not survive without the funding they get from it.
- The next round of the Community Grants would be looked at in January 2021 for those causes who had put forward an application for the Lottery. The Community Grant had a pot of £40k plus the £5k from the Lottery.
- The Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to date had a spend of £140k with approximately £84k committed so the current year end was £224k. The DFG came from Government.
- In response to a question regarding if there were any service areas within Cllr Freer-Jones' portfolio expected to have a budget overspend of £5k or more, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that within her portfolio it would be more of an income shortfall as the services included development control, building control, licensing and land charges and there was also an additional charge on the IEG4 project. She would provide extra information on this should Members require this.
- In response to a question asking what the plans were moving forward to hold Parish Council liaison meetings, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that this would be incorporated alongside the Melton Deal as the Parish Councils were one of the Council's stakeholders. Plans that were put in place to attend all the Parish Council meetings during 2020 did not occur due to Covid-19, but moving forward, there would be a work plan to include bi-annual Parish Council meetings starting in 2021.
- In response to a question if an update could be provided on the forthcoming court actions for recovery of debt, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that this did not come under her portfolio but would speak with Cllr de Burle and ask him to provide an update to Members.
- In response to a question if there had been any progress for the design of accessibility for disabled people in the town centre, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that following discussions with Cllr Cumbers, Cllr Lumley would be working on

this project and they would be setting up a meeting soon for discussions on taking this forward. Cllr Freer-Jones wished to look into accessibility for the wider community to include not only those with a physical disability but for those who are partially sighted.

- In response to a question regarding how the Council would encourage people to move to electric vehicles in 9 years' time and how would the Council promote this, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that this was something that the Climate Emergency Group would be including in their workplan. Members could feed into the Climate Emergency Group with any information that they had to share.
- In response to a question regarding the lack of cycle paths to and within the town centre, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that this was a highways authority function and not something that the Council had responsibility for. The Climate Emergency Group would have this on their workplan and would look into what the Council was doing in-house to promote cleaner travel amongst staff before taking recommendations out to the community.
- In response to a question around how the Council was engaging with residents not on the internet, Cllr Freer-Jones advised that the Council was still invested in making sure the telephone contact and face to face contact continue. There would be an increase in capacity for outreach and devolving services back into the community by using the community centres and Parkside was being investigated. The Melton Deal would work alongside this to recognise any service gaps and to understand the most effective way to get feedback from the community and stakeholders

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Councillor Holmes left the meeting at this point and did not return

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- Cllr Freer-Jones advised Members that there was positive publicity on the Council's website regarding fly tipping, providing information to the public about what information to request when paying a company to remove waste. The Monitoring Officer advised that the Enforcement Officers would only take a case to court for fly-tipping if it was in the public interest and that officers were extremely proactive in tracking down offenders.

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Councillor Evans left the meeting at this point and did not return

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83	URGENT BUSINESS There was no urgent business for discussion.
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The meeting closed at: 9.25 pm

Chair