

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 20 April 2021
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Cumbers (Chair)

Councillors R. Bindloss (Vice-Chair) R. Browne
R. Child J. Douglas
C. Fisher D. Pritchett
R. Smith J. Wilkinson

Observers Councillor L. Higgins

Officers Director for Growth and Regeneration
Planning Officer (LP)
Democratic Services Manager
Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer

Minute No.	Minute
102	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE There were no apologies received for this meeting.</p>
103	<p>MINUTES The Chair requested the following three amendments to the Minutes:</p> <p>Minute Number 99 – Delete the sentence ‘the council has begun working to provide a greater resilience on health and well-being and have delivered fitness programmes on Zoom’.</p> <p>Minute Number 99 – To add the words ‘in order to better understand resident’s issues’ to the sentence ‘the council had engaged with the NHS and local health leads across the county’.</p> <p>Minute Number 100 – Delete the paragraph ‘the presentation showed the committee what the CSP had touched on in the last 12 months. Having been heavily impacted with the effects of covid-19 it complimented the work the Scrutiny Task and Finish groups had done with regard to anti-social behaviour and the impact made on communities’.</p> <p>Subject to the amendments, the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 March 2021 were approved and authorised to be signed by the Chair.</p>
104	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of interest.</p>
105	<p>REVIEW OF SCRUTINY WORKPLAN 2020/21 AND THE ANNUAL FORWARD PLAN The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Workplan and the Cabinet Forward Plan. It was highlighted to the Committee that the 2020/21 Municipal Year is coming to an end and that consideration should be given for topics to be included on to the 2021/22 Scrutiny Workplan. In addition, the Chair stated that no topics would be formally added until the Scrutiny Workplan workshop with the Senior Leadership Team is held on an evening (date to be confirmed) in June 2021, however the Committee had already previously agreed to a task and finish group on asset management.</p> <p>The Committee had no comments regarding the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/21 or the Cabinet Forward Plan, however in regards to potential topics for 2021/22 Scrutiny Workplan the following was suggested:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Green waste management in rural villages ➤ Recycling rates ➤ Climate change ➤ Delivery of affordable housing ➤ Rural recovery ➤ Update on Council housing services

- E-scooter schemes
- Waste Management – with a focus on reducing fly tipping in the Borough.
- Communication by the Council

A concern was expressed that some of the topics fall under the remit of Leicestershire County Council, however it was explained that all the topics affect residents of Melton Borough and that there are a number of ways to scrutinise an issue. The most effective way would be selected at the workshop.

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PLANNING SERVICE REVIEW

The Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, Cllr Higgins, and the Director for Growth and Regeneration, Ms Parikh, introduced the report. The Committee were informed that the priorities identified within the report were contained within the Planning Service Review Implementation Plan which was approved by Cabinet in October 2020.

In addition to the report, Ms Parikh informed the Committee that a soft launch of the new planning application system would commence in May and that there will be a workshop for Members and Parish Councillors on understanding and using the system.

The Committee welcomed the report, the proposed initiatives, the progress that has already occurred and the new planning application launch. It was particularly noted that the number of deferrals at Planning Committee meetings have decreased, which was deemed a positive development by the Committee. Members asked to be kept updated on the Planning Service Review as progress is made.

In response to a question on how the Council would benefit from updated IT systems, the Committee was informed that the new IT systems would introduce a more self-service element which would allow the customer to find answers without the need to contact a Council Officer. From the Officer perspective, an improved IT system would remove wastage and therefore improve efficiency. It was also noted that the system would be programmed to provide timely and accurate information, which would improve the governance of the service. Planning Officer, Ms Parker, added that the system would allow for any Planning Officer to track the progress of any planning application and inform the customer of the application’s status, whereas currently that does not occur.

A discussion ensued regarding the weekly planning lists to Members, which are currently dispatched monthly. It was noted that, whilst the lists are dispatched monthly, the information is not always timely. The Committee was informed that it is difficult getting a balance in providing a list which allows Members to view planning applications by Ward but allows Officers or the Planning Committee Chair to highlight planning applications which are strategic and all Members should be aware of. Ms Parikh stated that this issue would be discussed by the Planning Reference Group at their next meeting.

In response to a question on whether the site visit document template was in response to the removal of the site visit bus, as a result of Covid restrictions, or

	<p>whether the site visit bus would be permanently removed, the Committee was reassured that, once restrictions allow, the resumption of the site visit bus would be considered by Officers. It was recognised that the document is useful and allows Members to undertake site visits individually, consequently allowing Members to schedule those site visits around their home and working lives.</p> <p>At the conclusion of the item, the Committee thanked Ms Parikh and Ms Parker for the report and the work that has been concluded thus far.</p>
107	<p>SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21</p> <p>The Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 was presented to the Committee. In introducing the report, the Chair thanked Democratic Services for the support provided to Scrutiny and for the work on the annual report.</p> <p>Members commented that they thought the report was very good and it was useful to see a summary of work Scrutiny has carried out over the course of the year. It was particularly noted that the Covid recovery task and finish groups have been interesting and worthwhile.</p> <p>It was stated that an area for improvement for next year's report could be that the 'Outcome' column, on the table listing the summary of items considered, could be more detailed.</p> <p>Another comment made was that Scrutiny could receive more Portfolio Holder presentations in the next Municipal Year.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Committee APPROVED the Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21. 2. The Committee RECOMMENDED the report is presented to Council.
108	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There was no urgent business for discussion.</p>

The meeting closed at: 7.56 pm

Chair