

Agenda

Meeting name	Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 12 November 2019
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH
Other information	This meeting is open to the public

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are summoned to the above meeting to consider the following items of business.

Edd de Coverly
Chief Executive

Membership

Councillors	P. Cumbers (Chair)	R. Bindloss (Vice-Chair)
	R. Browne	R. Child
	J. Douglas	C. Evans
	C. Fisher	E. Holmes
	R. Smedley	J. Wilkinson

Quorum: 5 Councillors

Meeting enquiries	Democratic Services
Email	democracy@melton.gov.uk
Agenda despatched	Monday, 4 November 2019

No.	Item	Page No.
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	MINUTES To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2019.	1 - 6
3.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST Members to declare any interest as appropriate in respect of items to be considered at this meeting.	7 - 8
4.	REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND THE FORWARD PLAN To consider the Forward Plan and identify any relevant items for inclusion in the Scrutiny work plan, or to request further information. Copies of the latest Forward Plan will be available at the meeting. It can be found on the website using the following link:- Forward Plan	9 - 18
5.	HOUSING VOIDS/TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION TASK & FINISH GROUP UPDATE The Chair to provide a verbal update on the work undertaken by the Housing Voids/Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group.	
	FOR SCRUTINY	
6.	QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE FINANCE AND RESOURCES (INCLUDING WORKFORCE STRATEGY) Presentation to be provided, setting out current performance, focus and challenges for the portfolio. This will include a presentation on the Workforce Strategy. To follow.	
7.	URGENT BUSINESS To consider any other items that the Chair considers urgent.	



Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 17 September 2019
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. Evans C. Fisher
 E. Holmes R. Smedley

Observers P. Chandler

Officers Director for Law and Governance
 Democratic Services Manager
 People Manager
 Democratic Services Officer (CR)

Minute No.	Minute
19	<p>Apologies for Absence Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wilkinson.</p>
20	<p>Minutes There minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2019 were approved and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.</p>
21	<p>Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.</p>
22	<p>Review of the Scrutiny Annual Work Plan and the Forward Plan Mrs. Taylor, Democratic Services Manager (Scrutiny Officer) provided a brief overview of the Work Plan, highlighting that it comprised of four parts:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Reviews • Forward Plan Items • One off Items • Portfolio Holder Updates <p>Mrs. Taylor encouraged Members to review the Work Plan, consider if the priorities were correct and share ideas. If Members agreed that certain items were not a priority for Scrutiny, they could be removed from the Work Plan.</p> <p>During discussion the following points were noted:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members suggested Planning Enforcement as a possible topic for Scrutiny and the Director for Law and Governance confirmed that Scrutiny could request a one off update or undertake a review of general Planning Enforcement (but not specific cases). • Members noted that the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources would provide this Committee with an update on implementation of the revised Debt Management Policy in March 2020, to allow sufficient time for its impact to be assessed. A proactive approach to debt management was vital and Members were eager to know what action was being taken. An interim update would be requested for the next meeting of this Committee. • The Council needed to inform and educate people in the Borough about Universal Credit, which had only been partly implemented. Members discussed undertaking a review of Universal Credit together with debt management but it was agreed that considering the two issues separately would be more beneficial. • Other issues identified for Scrutiny were the health profile of the Borough, with a focus on services provided in relation to health and physical activity

particularly for older people.

- A review of customer service standards and service levels was also highlighted as a possible future review topic.

A Member asked if non-Members of the Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group could attend meetings as observers and the Chair confirmed that this was not a public meeting but Councillors of the Scrutiny Committee could attend as observers if they wished.

The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the items suggested for Scrutiny would be discussed with the Chair and Vice-Chair of this Committee (and with relevant officers) and an updated version of the Work Plan would be circulated to Members.

Any further items for inclusion in the Work Plan should be submitted to the Chair or Vice-Chair for further consideration at the next meeting of this Committee (on 12 November 2019). Items should be in line with the Council's vision & priorities and enable Scrutiny to have maximum impact.

23	<p>Questions to Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement</p> <p>Members agreed to defer the presentation by the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement to a future meeting of this Committee (following approval of the Council's Corporate Strategy).</p>
24	<p>Community Grants Review - Presentation</p> <p>Mrs. Rahman, People Manager and Councillor Freer-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement</p> <p>(a) gave a presentation (a copy of which is attached), setting out the proposals to review the current policy for allocation of community grants;</p> <p>(b) asked Members to consider any areas not identified in the presentation;</p> <p>(c) advised that £44k would be available and asked Members to confirm their areas of priority to help focus the Review.</p> <p>Copies of the People Board Outcomes Framework, which formed part of the presentation, were circulated to Members.</p> <p>During discussion the following points were noted:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There should be an acknowledgement that the Council also allocates a significant amount of discretionary business rate relief over and above the Community Grants allocation. This was not included in the presentation but would be acknowledged in the final policy.• It was highlighted that though not in receipt of grant monies, Shopmobility received financial assistance toward utility bills.

- The People Manager would provide members with further information regarding any grants issued outside the Community Grants process.
- Members were keen to see recipients of grants being subject to agreed service level agreements.
- It was vital to direct focus onto Parish areas, as well as the Town. Councillor Freer-Jones reassured Members that grant monies and benefits were available to the whole Borough and all would have the opportunity to submit bids.
- Consideration should be given to subsidising public transport in rural communities.
- Community Groups had been consulted as part of the Review (via email). Effective community engagement was crucial in helping the Council achieve its aims and aspirations for the Borough. Inclusion and engagement was being considered in detail and Members were supportive of this. Mrs. Rahman would confirm if Parish Councils were consulted on the Review outside this meeting.
- Stakeholder mapping (who the Council should consult with) was being undertaken as a separate piece of work and members would be asked to contribute. Members highlighted the importance of reaching the elderly, young people, those living alone or in isolated areas and Parish Councils.
- Members also highlighted that helping to train and prepare people for work, facilitating good mental health and less substance misuse was important but this was not solely the Council's responsibility.
- The grant monies should not be targeted to areas which were subject to statutory help but consideration could be given regarding how to complement these services.
- In order to make funding more accessible, Members considered making it available every six months. However, it was agreed that areas of focus needed to be prioritised to ensure the monies had a significant impact and were not 'spread too thinly' amongst organisations. Councillor Freer-Jones confirmed that she would advise Cabinet that Members wanted to explore the possibility of setting aside a smaller funding pot to be available for smaller grants.
- Local schools could be encouraged to work with care homes by providing opportunities for volunteering which would in turn provide students with opportunity of gaining work experience. This would be good for both the young and the elderly.
- The cost incurred to the Council through its administration of the Community Lottery was raised and Mrs. Rahman confirmed that she would look into this and confirm the figure outside this meeting.

A Member commented that the Review work undertaken was good. Analysis of the needs in the Borough had been undertaken and the proposed action would benefit the community.

Councillor Freer-Jones advised Members that the points they had raised would be taken forward to Cabinet . She would continue to work with Mrs. Rahman on the

Review, which would be submitted to Cabinet in October and would work with the Director for Law and Governance on community engagement.

Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the presentation.

25

Update on Task and Finish Group - Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation

The Committee received a report on the Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group from the Chairman of Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Cumbers, Chair of Scrutiny Committee introduced the report and advised that the Task and Finish Group were progressing well. The Welfare, Housing and Safer Communities Manager had provided the Group with very useful background information and performance statistics at its preliminary scoping meeting. Members and officers were in agreement that empty dwellings (and the loss of rent) was unacceptable. Work had commenced on the Housing Improvement Plan and the Task and Finish Group was working towards creating an effective voids policy, amongst other areas of work which were identified in the scoping document. It had many ideas on how to consult with and help tenants and aimed to have a positive impact in this area.

The Task and Finish Group would provide regular updates on its work to the Committee. The final report would be provided to the Committee for Approval in January and would be accompanied by a schedule of evidence considered by the Group during the course of the review.

A Member commented that the update was positive and they were pleased to have this 'plan' in place.

RESOLVED

- 1) Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the update from the Task and Finish Group for Housing Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation;
- 2) Scrutiny Committee **NOTED** the Scoping Document and approved the timetable for completion of the review and the corresponding revisions to the Terms of Reference.

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Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at: 8.35 pm

Chair

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Advice on Members' Interests

PERSONAL AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

If the issue being discussed affects you, your family or a close associate more than other people in the area, you have a personal and non-pecuniary interest. You also have a personal interest if the issue relates to an interest you must register under paragraph 9 of the Members' Code of Conduct.

You must state that you have a personal and non-pecuniary interest and the nature of your interest. You may stay, take part and vote in the meeting.

PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS

If a member of the public, who knows all the relevant facts, would view your personal interest in the issue being discussed to be so great that it is likely to prejudice your judgement of the public interest and it affects your or the other person or bodies' financial position or relates to any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration then **you must state that you have a pecuniary interest, the nature of the interest and you must leave the room***. You must not seek improperly to influence a decision on that matter unless you have previously obtained a dispensation from the Authority's Audit and Standards Committee.

DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

If you are present at any meeting and you have a disclosable pecuniary interest in any matter to be considered or being considered at the meeting, if the interest is not already registered, you must disclose the interest to the meeting. You must not participate in the discussion or the vote and you must leave the room.

You may not attend a meeting or stay in the room as either an Observer Councillor or *Ward Councillor or as a member of the public if you have a pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interest*.

BIAS

If you have been involved in an issue in such a manner or to such an extent that the public are likely to perceive you to be biased in your judgement of the public interest (bias) then you should not take part in the decision-making process; you should leave the room. **You should state that your position in this matter prohibits you from taking part.** You may request permission of the Chair to address the meeting prior to leaving the room. The Chair will need to assess whether you have a useful contribution to make or whether complying with this request would prejudice the proceedings. A personal, pecuniary or disclosable pecuniary interest will take precedence over bias.

In each case above, you should make your declaration at the beginning of the meeting or as soon as you are aware of the issue being discussed.*

*There are some exceptions – please refer to paragraphs 13(2) and 13(3) of the Code of Conduct

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SCRUTINY REVIEWS

These are dealt with through a combination of specific evidence gathering meetings that will be arranged as and when required and other activities, such as visits. There should only be three reviews considered annually and review topics may be changed throughout the year as topical issues arise. Once considered, these issues will be subject to further development and scoping.

Should there not be sufficient capacity to cover items which are brought to the attention of Scrutiny they could instead be addressed through a “one-off” item at a scheduled meeting of the Committee.

Suggested Topics	Officer and Member Lead	Date	Notes
Housing Voids Management	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities Deputy Chief Executive (Director for People and Communities)	Task and Finish Group Commenced August 2019	To consider the Voids Process using a systems thinking methodology, which will review the process end to end To consider current performance To understand costs associated with void properties To understand the Councils duties to provide accommodation to those who present as homeless. To understand the cost of providing temporary homeless accommodation To consider whether the provision of temporary accommodation provides best value To understand the impact of the Homelessness Reduction Act

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<p>Temporary Accommodation and best value</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities</p> <p>Deputy Chief Executive (Director for People and Communities)</p>	<p>Task and Finish Group Commenced August 2019</p>	<p>To understand the Councils duties to provide accommodation to those who present as homeless.</p> <p>To understand the cost of providing temporary homeless accommodation</p> <p>To consider whether the provision of temporary accommodation provides best value</p> <p>Impact of Homelessness Reduction Act</p>
<p>Rent arrears and the link to universal credit and Me and My Learning.</p>	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities</p> <p>Director for People and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)</p>	<p>TBC</p>	<p>To understand how the Council collects income and the arrears management process.</p> <p>To understand internal signposting services.</p> <p>To understand how Universal Credit is explained to customers.</p> <p>To understand what methods of communication we use to engage with our customers.</p> <p>To understand what impact Universal Credit has on customers and colleagues</p> <p>To understand what support is available to our most vulnerable customers.</p>

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Empty Homes	<p>Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity</p> <p>Director for Growth and Regeneration</p>	TBC	<p>To understand the extent and impact of empty homes in Melton and raise awareness.</p> <p>To identify the Council's priority objectives for tackling empty properties in Melton and whether these have been met.</p> <p>To identify what resources and funding is available to tackle empty homes in Melton.</p> <p>To identify best practice used elsewhere in tackling empty homes which can be used in Melton</p>
Community Engagement including review of Community Forums	<p>Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement</p> <p>Deputy Chief Executive (Director for People and Communities)</p> <p>Director for Law and Governance</p>		<p>Access to local democracy</p> <p>To understand how Melton engages with its community</p> <p>Engaging with hard to reach residents- equalities considerations</p> <p>Voting and elections</p> <p>Tools for engagement, e.g.- consultation</p>
Housing Allocations- Application of Process and Procedure	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities</p> <p>Deputy Chief Executive (Director for People and Communities)</p>	TBC	<p>To understand the role and purpose of social housing in Melton</p> <p>To understand the current position on housing allocations</p> <p>To ensure the criteria for the allocation of housing is clear and easy to understand, including a consideration</p>

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			of different ways of offering choice To consider types of tenure
Health Profile (Raised at meeting 17/9)			To look at the Health Profile of the Borough with a focus on services provided in relation to health and physical activity particularly for older people.
Customer Service Standards (Raised at meeting 17/9)			
Climate Change			
<p>FORWARD PLAN ITEMS Items may be referred to Scrutiny by Cabinet for pre scrutiny or as a consultative body. Not all items will be considered by Scrutiny but it will be beneficial for some items to have Scrutiny involvement.</p>			
Corporate Debt and Income Maximisation Policy	Portfolio Holder for Growth & Regeneration Deputy Chief Executive (Director for People and Communities)	23 rd July 2019	In October 2019, Cabinet will consider the Corporate Debt and Income Maximisation Policy. Consultation will be undertaken prior to consideration. Scrutiny to provide comments as a consultative body to feed into decision making considerations by Cabinet.
Community Grants Review	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement Deputy Chief Executive and Director for People and Communities	17 th September 2019	Scrutiny to receive a presentation on the proposals to revise the policy on allocation of Community Grants in order to provide comments on feedback and to feed into decision making considerations by Cabinet.

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ONE OFF ITEMS

These are dealt with at scheduled meetings of the Committee. The following are suggestions for when particular items may be scheduled.

Implementation of Workforce Strategy	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources Director for Corporate Resources	12 th November 2019	Following approval by Council in March 2018, Scrutiny to receive an update on the implementation of the Policy and the impact it has had on the organisation.
Report of the Voids Management and Temporary Accommodation Task and Finish Group		January 2020 (Date TBC)	To receive the recommendations from the Task and Finish Group for approval and referral to Cabinet.
Budget Scrutiny		21 st January 2020	To play a full and active part in the development of the 2019-20 budget.
Debt Management Policy	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Resources Director for People and Communities	3 rd March 2020	Scrutiny to receive an update after 4 months as to how the Policy has been implemented and whether this is having an impact on debt management.
Crime and Disorder Scrutiny		3 rd March 2020	To consider actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the community safety partnership. To make reports or recommendations to the local authority with regard to those functions.

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			<p>To consider Councillor Calls for Action</p> <p>To consider actions undertaken by the responsible authorities on the partnership</p> <p>The role of the panel should be as a 'critical friend' of the partnership providing constructive challenge at a strategic rather than operational level.</p> <p>Draft CSP Strategy – Scrutiny Consultation</p>
Implementation of Intensive Housing Management Support	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities</p> <p>Director for People and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)</p>	TBC	Scrutiny to receive an update following a restructure in 2018.
Housing Repairs	<p>Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities</p> <p>Director for Growth and Regeneration</p>	TBC	A systems review has been commissioned and will be undertaken in the coming months. Scrutiny to receive an update on work being undertaken to improve performance.
Annual Report	<p>Scrutiny Officer</p> <p>Chairman of Scrutiny Committee</p>	3 rd March 2020	Report detailing the work of the Scrutiny Committee over the previous 12 months
Planning Enforcement (Raised at meeting 17/9)			

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PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATES			
Portfolio Holder Questions-Growth and Prosperity	Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity Director for Growth and Regeneration	23 rd July 2019	Portfolio Holders to update Scrutiny on their portfolios on an annual basis
Portfolio Holder Questions-Governance, Access and Customer Engagement	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement Director for Law and Governance	17 th September 2019 – DEFERRED	Portfolio Holders to update Scrutiny on their portfolios on an annual basis
Portfolio Holder Questions-Corporate Finance and Resources	Director for Growth and Regeneration	12 th November 2019	Portfolio Holders to update Scrutiny on their portfolios on an annual basis
Portfolio Holder Questions-Housing and Communities Leader of the Council	Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources Director for Corporate Resources Leader of the Council	3 rd March 2020	Portfolio Holders to update Scrutiny on their portfolios on an annual basis

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ADVICE ON WORKPLAN

What is a Work Plan?

The Scrutiny Work Plan outlines the areas of work which are expected to be scrutinised over the coming months/year by or on behalf of the Council's Scrutiny Committee and any Working Groups convened for review work.

Topics added to the work plan should have expected outcomes to add value to the services delivered by the Council and its partners and/or improve the quality of lives of Melton's residents.

It is recognised that there is a need for flexibility in the work plan so as to allow relevant issues to be dealt with as and when they arise.

Sources of Work Plan Ideas

Numerous sources of information can help to inform topic selection, including:

- Concerns that have been raised by the public relating to Council delivered services
- Issues of community concern – not necessarily services delivered by the Council
- Issues that have been flagged up by reviews, audits or inspections (past and present).
- Issues relating to Councils outcomes, objectives and priorities
- Consultations and interviews
- Underperformance
- "Stakeholders" concerns – raised by the Council's partners or the users of services
- Partnership objectives
- Cabinet Members, Chief Executive or Directors presentations about the pertinent issues that are emerging and any opportunities or threats on the horizon
- Central government priority changes
- Improvement Plans
- Forward Plan

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- Budgetary analysis.

Scrutiny is also encouraged to think about external Scrutiny and the monitoring of other public bodies, and how its activities will engage partner organisations, the media and the public.

Selecting a Work Plan Topic

The Scrutiny Committee should use effective processes to select topics that will contribute towards the best possible workplan for Scrutiny. This means looking at the sources of information that may help and using them to choose the right topics.

This involves:

- Drawing out and discussing what matters most to Councillors and to the community at large
- Finding out about any research that has been completed or that is planned
- Prioritising topics
- Considering what added value is expected as a result of Scrutiny involvement
- Considering whether the topic is already being reviewed elsewhere

It is also important to note that Scrutiny has limited time and resources and therefore workplans need to be manageable. It is not possible to include every topic suggested by Members, Directors or the Public in the workplan. In addition Officer capacity may be diverted from projects if a review is added to the workplan without considering the impact on Officer resource and this should be a consideration in adding to workplans.

Successful Scrutiny is about looking at the right topic in the right way and Members will need to be selective whilst also being able to demonstrate clear arguments in favour of including or excluding topics.

Risks

A common pitfall for Scrutiny can be the inclusion of topics on the work plan that are unmanageable, of limited interest to the community, purely for informational purposes, have few outcomes and fail to 'add value' to the work of the Council or the wellbeing

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of the community. As such the selection and prioritisation of topics is critical to the effectiveness of Scrutiny as such processes can ensure clearer focus, particularly in poor or weak areas of performance or major issues of concern to the wider community.