

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Monday, 6 June 2022
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor R. Child (Chair)

Councillors J. Wilkinson (Vice-Chair) S. Atherton
P. Chandler J. Douglas
C. Evans M. Glancy
E. Holmes

In Attendance Councillor R. Bindloss

Officers Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
Regeneration Manager
Senior Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer
Democratic Services Officer (SE)

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5	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Posnett and Webster.</p>
6	<p>MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2022 were approved.</p>
7	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST No declarations of interest were received.</p>
8	<p>DRAFT TOWN CENTRE VISION The Regeneration Manager, Lee Byrne, introduced the Draft Town Centre Vision to the Committee with a presentation. Through the presentation, Members were informed of the background, context, content of the Vision, timeline and next steps.</p> <p>Following several references, a discussion ensued regarding the use of consultants for feasibility studies for projects proposed within the Vision and, in response, it was explained that consultants would be procured using the correct procedure and would only be used where the Council does not have the appropriate skill set within the authority.</p> <p>Members questioned the funding source for the projects within the Vision and, in response, were informed that external funding would have to be sourced for the projects. In addition, it was explained that if there was no funding then the projects wouldn't proceed.</p> <p>At 6:55pm, the meeting was adjourned to allow the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity to attend the meeting.</p> <p>At 7:29pm, the meeting was reconvened with the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity in attendance.</p> <p>For the benefit of the Portfolio Holder for Growth and Prosperity, the query regarding the use of consultants was repeated. In response, the Portfolio Holder informed Members that feasibility studies are important and valuable for ascertaining whether a project is viable. In addition, the Portfolio Holder added that consultants are needed as the Council does not have the expertise required to carry out the work.</p> <p>In response to the question of funding, the Portfolio Holder stated that the funding source would depend on the project coming forward. Some projects would use the UK Shared Prosperity Fund funding, however other projects will receive funding from other sources. Members were informed that it is important to prioritise the projects because the Council can't complete all the projects at once.</p> <p>Following a query, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council are attempting to discuss with the owners of the Bell Centre to build on the site. Members were concerned that the owners had not been consulted prior to the project being included within the Vision document. It was explained that because the project had been identified through the stakeholder sessions, and highlighted as being located at a key town centre location, it was therefore included in the document. Members</p>

were reassured that Officers are actively attempting to contact the owners of the Bell Centre, however it was recognised that this should have been done prior to the projects inclusion in the Vision.

A Member commented that youth services should be considered more explicitly within the Vision, however it was explained that the Council had consulted with the students of Melton Brooksby College as a part of the consultation process and therefore the wishes of the youth had been considered.

The comment was made that that there had been two stakeholder meetings but not one meeting that had been attended by all stakeholders. In response, the Portfolio Holder stated that he had attended two of the stakeholder meetings and found that the answers in both were different, therefore meaning that scheduling more than one stakeholder event was justified.

A discussion ensued regarding the document and the comment was made that despite being a good document, it wasn't focused. In response, the Committee was informed that the Vision is the evidence document that will underpin the bids the Council decides to make in the future.

It was recognised that the Pera project could provide a benefit to Melton and a Member commented that it was pleasing to see the project included within the Vision. The Portfolio Holder informed the Committee that the Vision aimed to promote diversification within the town.

As parking was referenced within the Vision, a question was asked as to what the Council's car parking strategy is and whether there are proposed enhancements, e.g. lining and installation of electric charging points. In response, the Portfolio Holder informed the Committee that he is aware the Council needs a clearer car parking agenda. With regard to specific enhancements, the commitment was made to check the planned investment and then inform Members outside of the meeting.

A concern was raised that the Vision could be used to direct more funding towards the cattle market and thereby directing resources away from the regeneration of the town centre.

The comment was made that Melton Mowbray is talked up as the rural capital of food, however the food offer was limited and therefore it is correct that the Vision focusses on enhancing the food offer.

A Member commented that they were concerned with some of the language of the document, specifically the reference to the economy being low wage. It was felt that this had the potential to be a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The Committee questioned the short timeframe for considering the Vision and the associated Levelling Up fund and UK Shared Prosperity Fund bids, however it was explained by Officers that the window for the bids, as announced by central government, was short and there was a huge amount of work to do. The deadline for the Levelling Up bid was 6 July and the deadline for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund bid was 1 August. In addition, previously the limited resources of the team was diverted towards facilitating the covid business grants.

A discussion ensued regarding the purpose of the Vision and it was clarified that the Vision is the evidence base that will underpin future bids for funding.

	RESOLVED The Scrutiny Committee 1) Noted the draft Town Centre Vision consultation document, and 2) Provided comments for consideration by the Cabinet at their meeting on 16 June 2022.
9	URGENT BUSINESS There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at: 8.28 pm

Chair