

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 3 March 2020
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
J. Wilkinson	

In Attendance A. Pearson, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Communities

Officers

Deputy Chief Executive & Director for People & Communities
 Director for Governance and Regulatory Services
 Democratic Services Manager
 Housing and Communities Lead
 People Manager
 Housing and Neighbourhoods Manager
 Neighbourhood Support Officer (Community Safety)
 Democratic Services Officer (HA)

Inspector Audrey Danvers
 Mrs Ann Reader

Minute No.	Minute
47	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence received for this meeting.</p>
48	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2020 were approved and authorised to be signed by the Chair.</p>
49	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Pearson declared an interest in any items relating to Leicestershire County Council, due to his role as a County Councillor.</p> <p>Councillor Browne declared for transparency that his wife, Lucie Browne, is also in attendance at the meeting.</p>
50	<p>REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY ANNUAL WORK PLAN AND THE FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>During the discussion the following points were noted:</p> <p>The Chair introduced Mrs Ann Reader who will be delivering the Scrutiny Training on 12 March 2020. Mrs Reader has nearly 30 years of experience in local government as an elected member, member of the leadership and cabinet of a London borough, a local and national officer and a consultant supporting councillors' learning and development.</p> <p>Workplan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chair advised that there will be a Scrutiny Workshop held in early May 2020 to review the Workplan for 2020/21 and prioritise items which are currently listed at 'Pending'. Members will also be able to consider any additional items at this Workshop. • The Chair agreed that there are a lot of items still to be addressed by Scrutiny, however, as this is the last meeting of Scrutiny Committee before the Annual Meeting in May 2020 should Members have any particular concerns about any items on the Workplan they can start their own investigations and gather evidence ready for putting together the Workplan for 2020-21. This can be done individually or in groups. • Members agreed that it would be beneficial to have input from members of the public and organisations to understand what is required by the public. • The Chair advised herself, the Scrutiny Officer and Vice Chair will be working with Cabinet to establish the plan for 2020-21. <p>Forward Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Asset Disposal', is now showing as part exempt on the Forward Plan as this is

a standing item on the Plan, should there be assets for sale then the item would have to have 28 days notice. There are currently no assets for sale.

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QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES

Councillor A Pearson, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Communities provided a presentation setting out current performance, focus and challenges for the portfolio.

During the discussion of the presentation the following points were noted:

- Cllr Pearson thanked the Scrutiny Committee for their intervention into the voids process and the excellent results that have come from this in regard to health and safety of electrical, gas, water, asbestos and fire safety and in working with the Regulator the council has managed to solve these problems.
- 267 site visits to properties for health and safety checks have taken place out of 272 properties, though it is hoped that all properties will be checked by the end of March, unfortunately, some tenants will not allow the workmen access to their properties.
- All asbestos surveys are due to be completed by March 2020.
- Council properties no longer have coal fires, these were all removed about 15 years ago.
- The overall value of council housing stock is £68m.
- Mrs Rahman, People Manager handed out 3 case studies which showed the importance of the Me and My Learning service and how intervention can make such a difference with support for education, finances, employment, interaction. Concern was given to the closure of the Sure Start Centres and the impact it has had.
- Mrs Rahman advised of that there was currently in progress a 'Pre Tenancy Course' booklet which is being circulated to existing tenants, this covers everything that a tenant will need from responsibilities, home maintenance, rent, tax support, how to end a tenancy, how to claim recharges, compensation, cleaning, how to report and deal with Anti Social Behaviour, financial tips, debts, savings, UC, online services, direct debits, paying bills etc.
 - *This leaflet will be emailed to Scrutiny when it is finished.*
- Due to the slow turn around of void properties, the costs of B&Bs had increased.
- Councillor Pearson *agreed to email members* details on how many social properties were being made available to the council in the next 12 months including the number of supported units. Information was also requested about how the properties are going to be matched to peoples' needs, as a high

percentage of those people accepted as homeless have very complex needs/mental health issues.

- Councillor Pearson advised that the Director for Growth and Regeneration had a presentation about options to the development of Melton Mowbray and *he will request a copy of this be sent out to Scrutiny members.*
- Mention was made to the 'People Move Programme' which comprises of involvement with schools, GP referrals, park walks, coordinated walks, people with health issues follow a programme.
- It was clarified that 'active people' are classed as those who had more than 150 minutes of physical activity a week; inactive are those who undertook less than 30 minutes of activity a week.
- Students at Longfield Academy completed the Safer Melton Partnership Community Safety Consultation about concerns facing students of incidents in the neighbourhood, sadly drugs and knife crime were top of the list.

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UPDATE AND STATISTICS REGARDING CRIME AND DISORDER / COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Chair introduced Inspector Audrey Danvers who attended to provide information and answer questions regarding the Crime and Disorder/Community Safety presentation.

During the discussion of the presentation the following points were noted:

- Councillor Wilkinson asked for the minutes to show that Members were dissatisfied that the Police and Crime Commissioner was not formally invited to this meeting as was previously requested by Members at two separate Scrutiny Meetings.
- Inspector Danvers advised that knife crime in Melton was not excessive in comparison to national figures; by January 2020 there were just 7 incidents.
- Inspector Danvers advised the following burglary statistics:
 - residential 2017/18 – 183, 2018/19 175 2019/to date 116
 - business 2017/18 155, 2018/19 93, 2019/to date 79
- Inspector Danvers advised that following a fluctuation in theft from motor vehicles mainly power tools and catalytic convertors, the police are working with the scrap dealers to help target those believed to be committing these crimes.
- AW advised that the Council will only use its ASB powers as a last resort. The Partnership that was in place, depending on the vulnerability and priority of the case, will try to alleviate issues first with early intervention to persistent offenders to help them make better choices and to assist them to integrate into the community.
- AW advised that 80% of ASB involves Melton Borough Council tenants. Thus strengthening the view that there needs to be stronger tenancy management

process, where necessary action can be taken to identify the root cause of the ASB. There is a stronger community engagement in priority neighbourhoods and the schools are engaged at the earliest opportunity.

- Following the recent Community Safety Consultation which has taken place, the Partnership would like Members to feedback any concerns their constituents have to feed into the 5 year plan to move forward to solve community issues and address concerns.
- Councillor Pearson spoke of the importance of early intervention following information provided by the Governor of Leicester Prison where 90% of the inmates had significant issues at school and go on to reoffend.
- The Safer Melton Partnership meets quarterly to discuss issues. Members were advised they are welcome to attend, Members asked to be informed when the meetings are due to take place.
- Insp Danvers assured Members that there is adequate resources and additional support available for tackling drug crime and alcohol issues in Melton; there have been 3 warrants issued in the last month and more people are being stopped and searched and arrested.
- The Deputy Chief Executive provide the link to [Safer Communities Performance](#) which showed the comparison of crime in Melton to other authorities in Leicestershire this shows Melton has the 2nd lowest crime rates per 1000.

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SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Chair provided the following introduction to the report:

“The Scrutiny Annual Report is considered good practice and is an excellent opportunity to highlight the work of the Committee through the year and also report on outcomes and proposals for improvement for the coming Municipal Year.

I hope that you will agree that we have developed a sound foundation for the work of Scrutiny in our inaugural year; working collaboratively with Cabinet; challenging in an open and constructive way; developing relationships with officers; and maintaining an outcomes-based focus on improving delivery of services to our community.

There is still much to do, the report details some proposals for the coming year and we will also continue to self-evaluate and respond to feedback on how we can improve and develop.

I hope that you will support the recommendation to present the report to Council so that we can continue to highlight the work of our committee and increase the profile of Scrutiny across the Council and externally.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- It was agreed that a protocol for Scrutiny Members and Officers would be useful.
- Members agreed that officers needed to work more closely with Scrutiny and to provide the information that is requested from them.

- The Scrutiny officer will chase up any information requested from officers 2 weeks before agenda dispatch.
- An action list can follow each meeting.

Members all voted in favour of the Scrutiny Annual Report going to Cabinet.

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URGENT BUSINESS

The meeting closed at: 9.00 pm

Chair