

**COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 3rd February, 2022

Present:-

Councillor Dyke (Chair)

Councillors Blakemore
 Kelly

Councillors Fordham
 Kellman

Rachel Appleyard, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer
Neil Johnson, Service Director – Economic Growth +
Matthew Sorby, Head of Corporate Property and Technical Services ++

+ Attended for Minute No. 33

++ Attended for Minute No. 34

*Matters dealt with under the Delegation Scheme

**30 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.**

No declarations of interest were received.

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Collins and Borrell.

**32 CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH - LIGHTING
STRATEGY**

The Service Director for Economic Growth presented a report on the CBC Lighting Strategy which included details of the Invitation to Tender and Specification.

The CBC Town Centres Lighting Strategy Scope was being commissioned to support the continuing role that the Town Centres of Chesterfield and Staveley provide as an economic focus that serves the local populations. This included being a both a destination, and a gateway to other key local assets in the area. The vision was to use lighting to change the way people view and feel about a place, as it had the effect of improving perceptions of safety, more attractive in its offer, a more inviting place to visit and increase the time people stay and spend.

It was stated that once shops and offices close for the evening, levels of activity drop, however 50% of modern life takes place after dark. This commission would allow Chesterfield Borough Council to fully understand the value of its lighting beyond the functional and recognise the opportunity it provides to improve revenue and the quality of life for local people.

The Lighting Strategy would be developed to support the delivery of key regeneration projects that will see significant investment in our Town Centres. For example, the Revitalising the Heart of Chesterfield project to deliver improvements to the Market Square and in Staveley, improvements to the Town Centre are being prioritised as part of the delivery of the £25.2 million Town Deal. This meant there was a real opportunity to implement the measures contained in a Lighting Strategy, adding real value to the impact that the regeneration schemes were seeking to deliver.

The strategy scope needed to recognise and encourage lighting design, which is both innovative and authentic. It also needed to propose ways to enhance the functional and aesthetic qualities of light in all its forms, to support and develop both Chesterfield and Staveley's social, economic and sustainability targets.

The Council would like to improve lighting from a sustainability perspective, and have signed a Climate Change pledge so would be keen to explore how it can support this aim, balancing the social and economic benefits of light with the environmental consequences of working with sustainable materials and approaches

Members enquired about the costings of the strategy and were advised that there were different options which would all be costed accordingly. A question was also asked around climate change impact and the lack of inclusion of such in the tender criteria. The Service Director advised the criteria would be reviewed to incorporate a climate change element where appropriate.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be noted that the Committee may consider this as part of a future scrutiny project group.

33 CABINET MEMBER FOR TOWN CENTRES AND VISITOR ECONOMY - COMMERCIAL OCCUPANCY RATES

The Head of Corporate Property and Technical Services presented a report to update the committee on the occupancy levels of the Council's commercial estate.

It was noted that as of 14 January 2022 the Council's commercial estate was 92.20% let and that occupancy levels had held up well despite the COVID19 pandemic and they remained largely unchanged slipping from high 92% to low 92%.

The Council's Economic Development Unit, Asset Management and Legal Teams were working very closely and efficiently in turning leases round quickly.

The industrial portfolio was extremely well let with rental levels and demand remaining strong with waiting lists existing on some estates.

The office portfolio also remained well let despite relatively low actual office occupancy levels by tenants during the pandemic.

The retail portfolio continued to form the most part of vacancies long term and if it wasn't for vacancies at the Pavements shopping centre the occupancy level of the estate would be 97%. Small shops in the town centre remained well let.

A number of tenants were said to be in substantial arrears. Some from pre-COVID and some during the pandemic. Legal action was frozen by the government but action would re-commence from 1 April 2022. Work was to continue with tenants in arrears to look at options such as long term leases, one off payments and write offs.

It was recommended that the committee noted the comments in the report.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

34 SCRUTINY PROJECT GROUPS PROGRESS UPDATE - VISITOR ECONOMY STRATEGY

The Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer presented the final report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Project Group (SPG) on the Visitor Economy Strategy.

The SPG had met on 22 November to review the core proposition and the seven priorities in the strategy in order to agree a written response to the consultation by the beginning of December.

The written response was submitted to the key officers and Cabinet Member for consideration along with the responses from other stakeholders and the public.

The SPG had provided comments and recommendations throughout the strategy development process which had been taken on board by Team Tourism, CBC officers and the Cabinet Member. The SPG had two final recommendations.

- 1- That the findings of the scrutiny project group be considered by Cabinet alongside consideration of the visitor economy strategy and action plan.
- 2- That subject to the approval of the strategy and action plan by full council on 23 February, 2022, an update on the delivery of the action plan be reported to the CC&O Scrutiny Committee after the strategy has been in place for 12 months to allow scrutiny to review the progress made.

RESOLVED –

That the update be noted.

35 SCRUTINY MONITORING

The Committee considered the scrutiny recommendations implementation monitoring schedule.

RESOLVED –

That the scrutiny monitoring schedule be noted.

36 FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the Forward Plan for the period 1 February, 2022 to 31 May, 2022.

RESOLVED –

That the Forward Plan be noted.

37 WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE COMMUNITY, CUSTOMER AND ORGANISATIONAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the items on its work programme for 2021/22. Members discussed the item on crime and disorder scheduled for the meeting in March, 2022 and requested that the police be invited to send a representative to this meeting.

RESOLVED –

1. That the work programme be noted.
2. That the police be invited to send a representative to the meeting on 31 March, 2022.

38 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November, 2021 were presented.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes be approved as a correct record and by signed by the Chair.

