

Communities Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Work Programme Review 2024/2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Commission have continued to scrutinise areas of council services and those services delivered by partners within its remit during the municipal year including Neighbourhoods & Housing; Community Safety & Community Cohesion; Integrated Offender Management; Streetscene; Public Protection; Customer Services, and Leisure Services & Libraries.
- 1.2. During the year the Commission have undertaken a total of four informal workshop sessions (detailed below), one workshop session was combined with a formal meeting and three sessions were standalone workshops outside of the meeting schedule.

2. Directorate Updates

- 2.1. The Assistant Directors (Neighbourhoods & Housing; Streetscene, and Citysafe), and the Head of Customer Services and Head of Public Protection continue to provide updates to the Commission allowing for most recent and up to date information being shared with a particular focus on improvement activity and a snapshot of current initiatives. This provides an opportunity for the Commission to raise any issues of concern/queries with the Assistant Directors/Head of Service on all aspects of service delivery and strategic direction. Requests for further in-depth reports/informal sessions are often a result of these briefings which in turn form some of the areas of focus as described below.

3. Portfolio Holder Priorities

- 3.1. The Commission received reports on the priorities of the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Leisure; the Portfolio Holder for Environment; the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Housing and the Portfolio Holder for Communications and Communities, and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.
- 3.2. The Portfolio Holder for Culture & Leisure priorities included: Libraries (increasing footfall and electronic engagement); Engaging people of Hull in physical activity; Leisure Facilities, and Diversity.
- 3.3. The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Housing priorities included: Focus on addressing issues of self-referral to the Social Housing Regulator; oversee a new and more cost-effective way to provide temporary housing; build more council houses, and lobby for more appropriate government funding settlement for social housing.
- 3.4. The Portfolio Holder for Environment priorities included: Greener neighbourhoods; cleaner neighbourhoods; improving recycling in Hull and tackling illicit tobacco in Hull.
- 3.5. The Portfolio Holder for Communications and Communities priorities included: making Area Committees a good strategic decision making body; supporting the

implementation of community schemes; tackling the challenges within communities; reducing call centre waiting times; development of a community based face to face provision; increasing the partnership working with the third sector and understand local needs; supporting the Legacy victims and the city's response; to protect income for registration and bereavement services, and promotion of more choice for bereaved residents.

- 3.6. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety priorities included: Domestic Abuse; Anti-social behaviour; organised crime; hate crime and encouraging use of the Crime Prevention Fund.
- 3.7. The Commission's Work programme has linked closely to the priorities of the Portfolio Holders with many of the priorities featuring within the Commissions work programme.

4. Topic Areas

Budget Monitoring

- 4.1. The Commission continues to receive regular budget updates for Legal Services & Partnerships General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account as part of the Council's wider budget monitoring framework.

Performance Monitoring

- 4.2. Performance Monitoring is included within the Assistant Director/Head of Service updates.
- The Neighbourhoods and Housing updates were delivered quarterly and detail was themed around: Progress against the Business Plan and compliance; focussing on customer experience; putting residents first and meeting their needs; addressing the challenges of safety, sustainability and climate change; the role in strengthening Hull's neighbourhoods and communities; investing in modernisation and organisational development; regulatory compliance; preparedness for forthcoming legislative changes; overall financial health, and management of strategic risks.
 - The Streetscene annual update included: the Streetscene Management Structure from February 2025 onwards, and strategic direction in terms of the Department for Environment and Rural Affairs; the Department for Transport and the Community Plan and Council Plan.
 - Customer Service annual update included: Contact Centre performance; digital inclusion; delivering advice in the community through the Community Hubs and other advice initiatives. An update on bereavement services was covered within a separate paper (see paragraph 4.9).
 - Public Protection annual update included key achievements covering each of the regulatory areas being Licensing' Environmental Regulation, Food and Health and Safety, and Trading Standards.

Food Service Plan

- 4.3. The Annual Food Service Plan was presented to the Commission as part of the requirements as set out by the Foods Standards Agency. The report covered key achievements against the targets for food safety. The Commission recognised the positive work being undertaken within the service and focused their discussions on work being undertaken to address capacity.

Hull Culture & Leisure (HCAL) Annual Report.

- 4.4. The Commission received the HCAL Annual Report which provided details of the range of services provided by HCAL during 2023/2024. The breadth of services provided were appreciated by members with promotion of services and activities being the focus of discussions.

Construction Hours & Noise Nuisance

- 4.5. A briefing in relation to construction hours and noise nuisance was requested by the Commission due to concerns raised in relation to noise nuisance from construction works during unsociable hours. The report set out current practice in relation to construction control and potential next steps. The Commission referred the issue to the Planning Committee for further consideration with a view to implementing a standard 8am start time.
- 4.6. As a result, the Planning Committee subsequently agreed the following:

That the standard condition for Construction Management Plans is amended in line with Option 4 detailed in the report, so that it reads:

“No development shall commence until a Construction Management Plan giving details of demolition and construction methods (including the methods and hours of piling), and measures to minimise the emission of noise, vibration and dust from the site have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and shall be carried out in accordance with those approved details. Demolition/Construction works that are audible at the boundary of the site shall not take place outside [(a) 07.30 (b) 08.00] to 19.30 hours on Monday to Fridays, 08.00 to 12.30 hours on Saturdays nor at any time on Sundays or Bank and National Holidays, unless agreed in advance by the LPA in writing. No open burning of any waste material shall be permitted within the site, except for the burning solely for the control of dry rot, for which prior permission from the Environmental Regulation department is required. A precommencement condition is required in the interests of amenity and to comply with Local Plan policies 47 and 49.”

Neighbourhood Policing

- 4.7. Superintendent Andrews of Humberside Police provided an update to members in relation to Neighbourhood Policing covering the four geographical areas in the city. Discussions were focused on the increase in Police Community Support Officers; activity to encourage

members of the community to report crimes/anti-social behaviour and the recent disorder in the city centre.

Violent Crime

- 4.8. Superintendent Weeks of Humberside Police provided an update on Violence Crime in the city, accompanied by the Violence Prevention Officer. Statistics in relation to violent crime were shared with the Commission with reductions noted. Resulting discussions focused on the Pubwatch and the Ask4Angela scheme and how businesses were encouraged to sign up and the work being undertaken in relation to street drinkers/beggars.

Private Housing Enforcement Activity and Support Provided to Private Tenants

- 4.9. A specific update was requested by the Commission in relation to private housing enforcement activity. The Commission focused discussions on support provided to refugees and asylum seekers and students living in private rented accommodation. There was also a focus on the potential reinvigoration of the Landlords Accreditation Scheme. The Commission agreed to receive a further update at a future meeting.

Bereavement Services

- 4.10. This standalone update was requested by the Commission considering the budget pressures related to bereavement services. Members discussed potential income generating measures such as green and pet cremations and a cafeteria space at the crematorium. There would also be an increased marketing campaign for bereavement services.

Modern Slavery (Adults)

- 4.11. The Commission receive an annual update in relation to Modern Slavery which provided details of the multi-agency work being undertaken, the National Referral Mechanism and the Humber Strategy. Members would be consulted on the Modern Slavery Statement currently being developed.

Probation Service Update and MAPPA (Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements) Annual Report

- 4.12. The Head of Probation Service provided the Commission with the MAPPA Annual Report and a general update on the Probation Service. The Commission focused their discussions on concerns in relation to accommodation provision for those being released from prison.

Allotments (provision within the city and any future development)

- 4.13. An update on allotment provision was specifically requested by the Commission. The update included details of the locations of allotments in the city, and ward location and numbers of the waiting lists. The Commission also heard that a new allotment provision

was being developed for Kingswood. The allotment tenancy agreement was also being revised, and the Commission supported the restrictions being placed on plots for 2 x ½ plots per person which would help to alleviate excess demand.

Open Space Strategy

- 4.14. Progress in terms of implantation of the Open Space Strategy was provided to the Commission which was now progressing through to Cabinet for endorsement following consultation with Area Committees. Additions in relation to the Council's Right to Grow Scheme and the ecological assessments for key open space within the city centre to meet biodiversity net gain requirements were also discussed.

Purchase of Affordable Rented Homes & Housing Growth Plan

- 4.15. A review item was placed on the agenda in relation to the purchase of affordable homes through the provision of delegations as a result of approval of the Housing Growth Plan following a request from members. The Commission received assurances that the purchases offered value for money. Members also considered policies in terms of right to buy and allocations for these newly acquired properties.

Humberside Fire & Rescue Service - Community Risk Management Plan

- 4.16. The Commission will hear from the Humberside Fire & Rescue Service for the first time at their meeting in April to report on the Community Risk Management Plan.

5. Pre-Decision Scrutiny

- 5.1. The Commission has carried out pre-decision scrutiny on the following executive decisions, formulating comments and recommendations for consideration as part of the decision-making process.
- Tenancy Policy for Larger Properties
 - Office of Product Safety and Standards Grant
 - Housing Strategy
 - Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions Programme
 - Beverley Road Calders Stock Appraisal: Consultation Results and Next Steps
 - Cumulative Impact Assessment
 - Procurement of Cloud Software as a Service Solution for the Council's Planning, Development and Building Control, Property Gazeteer and Land Charges Requirements
 - Boiler, Servicing and Maintenance Repairs - High Rise Blocks
 - Controlled Entry Maintenance & Repairs - High Rise Blocks
 - Thornton Court Concierge
 - Housing Growth Plan
 - Warm Homes: Local Grant and procurement of energy efficiency retrofit works to private sector properties
 - Contaminated Land Policy

- Community Navigation and Citizens Advice Generalist Advice Services
- Public Spaces Protection Order - North/South/West
- Appointment of Supplier for Visual Stock Condition Surveys
- Rossett House Properties Proposals
- Waste Collection Options
- Temporary Accommodation Purchase

6. Informal Workshop Sessions

6.1. There has been a total of four informal workshop sessions held as follows:

- Work Programme Development
- Housing Strategy/Performance Monitoring
- Domestic Abuse
- Community Safety

7. Stakeholder Engagement

7.1. Meetings of the Commission are attended by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Tenants' Forum to update the Commission on a quarterly basis in terms of the work of the Tenants' Forum and wider involvement. The reporting process also provides an opportunity for the Tenants' Forum to highlight any areas of concern which the Commission may wish to consider further as part of their future work programme.

8. Future Work Programme

8.1. The Commission will start to shape and develop its work programme for 2025/26 focusing on priority areas.