

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on THURSDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

Present: Councillor T Eynon (Chair)

Councillors A Barker, M French, J Geary (Substitute for Councillor D Bigby), S Lambeth, P Lees, E Parle and L Windram

In Attendance: Councillors J Legrys and P Moul

Portfolio Holders: Councillors A C Woodman

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Ms Z Davies, Ms K Hiller, Mr D Scruton, Mr B Walford, Mrs R Wallace and Mr P Wheatley

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Ball and K Horn.

10. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor T Eynon declared a registerable interest in item 7, Coalville Regeneration Framework, as the Chair of Snibston Heritage Trust and a member of the Coalville Heritage Society.

11. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None

12. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025.

It was moved by Councillor A Barker, seconded by Councillor M French and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2025 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

13. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY POST-IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

Councillor A Woodman, Portfolio Holder, presented the report and referred to the additional papers circulated at the meeting.

During discussion several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

In relation to the registration process, concerns were raised in the ease of use of the system as it was felt it was too complicated for some. Officers reassured Members of the ongoing support for applicants that struggled with the digital process and confirmed that 25 percent of applicants were assisted directly.

Further concerns were raised regarding the delays in housing repairs affecting housing allocations. The Portfolio Holder explained that a dedicated voids team was being

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assembled with the intention of reducing the current number of 90 void properties to 20 by the end of the year.

A discussion was had on the application banding, demand for properties and waiting list times. Officers acknowledged that they may not always be able to assist the low band applicants that have particular location needs, however encouragement was given for alternative options such as mutual exchange. Support was provided to help improve their offer. In relation to a question regarding addressing the issue, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the current focus was on void properties, but work was ongoing in increasing the housing supply.

Officers were thanked for the informative report.

The Committee were thanked for their comments.

14. MARLBOROUGH SQUARE PROJECT REVIEW

Councillor Woodman, Portfolio Holder, presented the report,

During discussion several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers. The following concerns were raised:

- The pedestrianised north side of the square was not being adhered to as cars used the road continuously. Members asked if this could be enforced. Officers acknowledged the issue and following several surveys conducted in the area, conversations were ongoing with Leicestershire County Council Highways to address the matter. Options included bollards which could be raised during pedestrian hours.
- To accommodate events in the square a costly and timely road closure from Leicestershire County Council was required which could be deterring event providers from using the space. Officers acknowledged the matter and confirmed that they were working on a programme of events which would make road closures more beneficial, as well as a guide to help with the application process.
- Without the roundabout on Belvoir Road, cars often travelled down the highway above the speed limit, which was dangerous, especially when the square was being used as an event space.
- Several issues were now apparent with the surface material and street furniture. Firstly, the contrast colour of the kerbs was not distinct enough and was a regular trip hazard. A request was made for an assessment to be carried out for visually impaired pedestrians. Secondly, during the winter months the surface water was not running off the square and becoming icy, which was a slip hazard. Finally, disappointment was shared on the choice of surface material, as other areas in the County with the same material was notoriously difficult to keep clean. Therefore, maintenance of the square was essential. Members felt there were lessons to be learnt and should be taken on board with the development of retail on Marlborough Square and Belvoir Road.

A discussion ensued on the matter of the surface material and contrast colour of the kerbs, during which officers confirmed that all specifications were signed off by Leicestershire County Council Highways prior to installation, plus a road safety audit undertaken. It was also acknowledged that Leicestershire County Council did record slips, trips and falls, so Councillors were encouraged to report incidents so they could be passed on.

Comments were made on the lessons learned as highlighted in the report and the approach regarding assessing budgets was discussed. Members requested to see the full commercial breakdown of the final costs when available. Officers agreed.

Members thanked officers for the report and acknowledged the quality of responses given by officers to questions regarding a difficult project.

At the conclusion of discussions, the Committee considered the comments made and agreed on the recommendations to Cabinet as set out below.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- 1) Negotiation be undertaken with Leicestershire County Council Highways regarding setting up a blanket road closure to remove the cost barrier to potential event providers.
- 2) The surface colours of the square be assessed in relation to the safety of visually impaired users, the committee suggested Vista for the assessment.
- 3) That checks are made with Leicestershire County Council Highways on the pedestrian and highway safety, in particular the number of slips, trips and falls reported in the square and any speeding traffic concerns.

RESOLVED THAT:

The Committee receive the final accounts from the project once the contractor account had been settled including a commercial breakdown and final outturn figures.

15. COALVILLE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK - 2025 UPDATE

Cllr A Woodman, Portfolio Holder, presented the report.

During discussions several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

In response to a discussion on the ongoing projects and funding streams, an explanation was given on how capital projects were funded. It was agreed that in future project reports, officers would provide a tabulated financial summary and timelines for all projects.

Members discussed the use of the New Market and enquired about the data available to review. Officers confirmed that there was some data, however an external organisation was currently compiling a more detailed data set which would be available in the coming months. It was suggested that this be something for the committee to review. Members went on to consider the current practice with the use and storage of trailers and stalls, and the issues this could cause with possible event providers. The Strategic Director of Place suggested that this discussion continue with the Scrutiny Work Programming Group so that an item could be scoped, if appropriate, and placed on the work programme for a future meeting.

Members spoke positively about the events held at both Snibston and Coalville, including the positive impact to the town of the mother and child statue. In relation to the Hermitage Recreation Ground, Members raised concerns regarding the use of electric scooters speeding around the lake which was spoiling the area for people walking. It was acknowledged that the police were aware that it was an ongoing problem. A discussion was had on the options available to prevent this from occurring and it was suggested that it be a possible topic for the Scrutiny Work Programming Group to consider.

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RESOLVED THAT:

The topics in relation to the New Market and use of electric scooters at Hermitage Recreation Ground be considered by the Scrutiny Work Programming Group to scope for possible future committee items.

16. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the future work programme.

Members were encouraged to submit scoping forms for future scrutiny topics.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.29 pm