

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION  
11TH OCTOBER 2021**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Seaton)  
The Vice Chair (Councillor Ranson)  
Councillors Brookes, Hamilton, Parton, Miah and  
Murphy

Councillor Poland (Cabinet Lead Member for  
Public Housing)

Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces  
Head of Landlord Services  
Head of Leisure and Culture  
Landlord Services Manager  
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Popley and Bolton

The Chair stated that the meeting would be recorded and the sound recording subsequently made available via the Council's website. She also advised that, under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, other people may film, record, tweet or blog from this meeting, and the use of any such images or sound recordings was not under the Council's control.

36. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 13th September 2021 were approved.

37. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

38. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

39. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

40. AUDIT UPDATE

It was highlighted that the purpose of the Scrutiny and Audit Chair's and Vice-Chair's liaison group was to avoid duplication of work during the initial stages of the pandemic, as advised by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny.

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Commission and the Audit Committee had not met in some time and it was agreed by the Commission that the meetings were no longer required.

**RESOLVED** that the standard 'Audit Update' item be removed from the Scrutiny Commission agenda for future meetings.

#### Reason

The Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Scrutiny Commission and the Audit Committee had not met and it was considered that the liaison meetings were no longer required.

41. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF ANY SPECIFIC FINANCIAL MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY CABINET

There were no items of this nature on the Cabinet agenda for the Commission to consider.

42. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

The following items were identified for pre-decision scrutiny from the Cabinet agenda for 14th October 2021.

43. MOTION ON NOTICE - GLYPHOSATE-BASED HERBICIDES IN OPEN SPACES, PLAYGROUNDS AND PARKS

A Cabinet report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces to consider a motion concerning Glyphosate-based herbicides in open spaces, playgrounds and parks, which was referred by Council to Cabinet on 26th April 2021 (item 8a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. At present there was no solution which was considered to be a viable alternative to Glyphosate-based herbicides as they were less effective. The Council was committed to managing the risks associated with the use of Glyphosate. The Council ensured that proper procedures were followed, and that Glyphosate was used correctly. The operatives using Glyphosate were specially trained and had certification which allowed them to use the substance.
- ii. There had been considerable scientific research which had suggested that Glyphosate use was not dangerous when managed and applied correctly, according to manufacturers' guidelines.
- iii. It was highlighted that some other local authorities had stopped using glyphosate-based products and were using alternatives. However, it was also highlighted that many others had continued use of glyphosate at this time.

- iv. The Council would review the use of Glyphosate in 2022 in order to properly identify the most effective alternative solutions. The review would include comparing the chemical balancing and dilution requirements of potential alternatives, as well as cost and value for money, and potential coverage. There was no desire to use Glyphosate if an alternative solution was identified.
- v. It was suggested that following the Glyphosate review in 2022, the Scrutiny Commission received an update on the outcomes.
- vi. Levels of detritus in the Borough were low in comparison to other areas.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces.
2. That the Scrutiny Commission received an update including the outcomes of the Glyphosate use review at their meeting in October 2022.

### Reason

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.
2. To provide the Scrutiny Commission with an update on Glyphosate use and any potential alternatives identified by the Council following the review.

#### 44. PETS POLICY 2021-2025

A Cabinet report of the Head of Landlord Services to seek Cabinet approval for a new Pets Policy to cover the period 2021-2025 (item 8b on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Public Housing, the Head of Landlord Services and the Landlord Services Manager attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The Housing Management Advisory Board had reviewed the proposed policy and had suggested changes regarding the types of pet included within the guidance. The changes suggested were implemented into the policy for approval by Cabinet.
- ii. Members praised the proposed policy and stated that it would be beneficial for many residents. The elderly and vulnerable specifically would benefit from the scheme as pet companionship was often important and highly valued to these residents.
- iii. The guide limit to the number of pets in the proposed policy would not work retrospectively, meaning that existing tenants would not be affected.

- iv. Reported cases involving nuisance pets were managed through legislative powers. In the event that the ownership of nuisance pets breached tenancy conditions then enforcement action was taken.
- v. The Pets Policy 2021-2025 would be communicated to all residents following Cabinet approval.
- vi. The Council had undertaken benchmarking exercises during the development of the Pets Policy 2021-2015, including the practices of other local authorities and Housing Associations.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Landlord Services.

#### Reason

The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.

#### 45. LOUGHBOROUGH BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) THIRD TERM

A Cabinet report of the Head of Leisure and Culture to outline the advantages of a third term of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Loughborough Town Centre. The report also seeks to confirm the Council's position on the BID renewal ballot for a third term and to seek Cabinet approval for the Council to vote in favour of a third term of the BID. (item 8c on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Leisure and Culture attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The BID process included a survey of local businesses in order to develop an understanding of factors which were considered to be most important. The responses of the survey would determine the content of the business plan.
- ii. Feedback from local businesses engaged with the Loughborough BID suggests that the scheme was highly successful compared to other BIDs nationwide.
- iii. The BID was operated by a not-for-profit BID company with a Board of Directors drawn from the local businesses within the scheme.
- iv. Each separate property owned by a business rate payer attracted a vote regardless of its size.
- v. The sum of the BID Levy income was approximately £1.2m and this had been used to fund the scheme over the past five-year term.
- vi. It was recognised that the Loughborough BID had been fundamental in supporting businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic and that the work had been invaluable during this period.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Leisure and Culture.

Reason

The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.

46. SCRUTINY COMMISSION PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CABINET RESPONSE

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Commission on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet's responses to the Commission's recommendations be noted.

Reason

The Commission was satisfied that it added value where appropriate and welcomed the Cabinet's consideration of the Commission's views and recommendations as part of its decision making process.

47. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to review the progression of scrutiny panels (item 10 on the agenda files with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic Support and the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. It was acknowledged that the proposed membership of the Waste Management and Recycling Scrutiny Panel was only three members, and this was not considered to be sufficient. The Chair suggested that members of the Commission encourage fellow members to participate in scrutiny panels.
- ii. Councillor Parton volunteered to participate in the Waste Management and Recycling Scrutiny Panel.
- iii. The Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces highlighted that it was a critical time for waste management services and that participation in the Waste Management and Recycling Scrutiny Panel would be an opportunity to provide positive changes to services.
- iv. It was requested that the Digitisation and Transformation of Services Scrutiny Panel be deferred. The Chair had met with the Head of Customer Experience and there were a number of objectives within the scoping document which did not align to the objectives of the service. The Chair and the Head of Service agreed that further exploration was required in order to ensure that the outcomes of the scrutiny panel were valuable to the service and to the Council.

It was anticipated that the scoping document for this panel would be reviewed by the Scrutiny Commission in January 2022.

- v. It was requested that the Promoting Tourism in Charnwood Scrutiny Panel be deferred. This was due to a lack of officer resources available to support and advise the panel. It was anticipated that the scoping document for this panel would be reviewed by the Scrutiny Commission in January 2022.
- vi. The development of the scoping document for the Combatting Loneliness Scrutiny Panel was ongoing. The scoping document had been drafted, although officers had not yet met with the Chair to discuss the ideas set out.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the progression of scrutiny panels.
2. That the scoping document for the Waste Management and Recycling Scrutiny Panel be approved.
3. That membership opportunities of the Waste Management and Recycling Scrutiny Panel be promoted to members.
4. That Councillor Parton be appointed to the Waste Management and Recycling Scrutiny Panel.
5. That the Digitisation and Transformation of Services Scrutiny Panel be deferred until January 2022.
6. That the Promoting Tourism in Charnwood Scrutiny Panel be deferred until January 2022.

### Reasons

1-6.To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter and subject.

## 48. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support to enable the Commission to review and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme. This includes reviewing the changes made by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and adding items to their work programme (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic Support assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion.

Members considered whether the Community Safety Partnership Review should be scrutinised at the Scrutiny Commission, as opposed to the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. It was advised that the Community Safety Partnership Review had been added to the work programme for the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee as it was performed-related, and this had been agreed at Full Council and constituted. It was suggested that this be considered further prior to the annual

Constitution review as members would have an opportunity to make changes at this point.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme.
2. That the Scrutiny Commission consider the most appropriate committee for the Community Safety Partnership Review prior to the annual Constitution review and that an item be placed onto the Scrutiny Commission work programme to this effect.

### Reasons

1&2. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter and subject.

## 49. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Commission to consider its work programme and forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic Support assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion.

The Scrutiny Commission chose the following item from the forward programme for pre-decision scrutiny;

- Residential Mobile Home Site Licence Conditions – 15th November 2021.

## **RESOLVED**

1. That forthcoming Executive Key Decisions or decisions to be taken in private by the Executive, set out in Appendix 2 to the report, and scheduled scrutiny of those matters, be noted.
2. That the Commission's current work programme be noted.
3. That the work programme be updated as follows;
  - The Residential Mobile Home Site Licence Conditions be submitted for pre-decision scrutiny to the meeting of the Scrutiny Commission on 15th November 2021.

### Reasons

1&3 To ensure effective and timely scrutiny, either to provide Cabinet with advice prior to it taking a decision or to ensure that the Council and external public

service providers and partners were operating effectively for the benefit of the Borough.

2. To ensure effective and timely scrutiny.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 8th November 2021 unless notice to that effect is given to the Democratic Services Manager by five members of the Council by noon on the fifth working day following publication of these minutes.
2. These minutes are subject to confirmation as a correct record at the next meeting of the Scrutiny Commission.