

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
14TH NOVEMBER 2022**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Seaton)
The Vice Chair (Councillor Ranson)
Councillors Brookes, Hamilton, Parton and
K. Harris

Councillor Harper-Davies (Cabinet Lead Member
for Community Support)

Head of Contracts, Leisure, Waste and
Environment (Lead Officer)
Democratic Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Popley

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.

43. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 10th October 2022 were approved.

44. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

45. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

46. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

47. BULKY WASTE COLLECTION CHARGES REVIEW

Councillor Brookes joined the meeting at 6:10pm.

A report of the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment) to review the introduction of charges for bulky waste collections after 36 months, was submitted (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Community Support and Equalities and the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment) assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Members had been concerned when the bulky waste collection charges were first implemented due to the possibility of increased fly tipping and resident's inability to pay for the service. However, it was recognised that the issues raised at previous meetings with regards to the bulky waste collection charges had not had a significant impact on the borough and its residents. Research had suggested that there was no correlation between fly tipping and bulky waste collection charges nationally.
- ii. Charging for bulky waste collection was standard practice across the vast majority of councils.
- iii. Following a report of fly tipping, an investigation would be launched which could lead to prosecution and a fixed penalty notice if there was sufficient evidence against the individual. It was highlighted that it was the council's responsibility to undertake investigations of this nature, and that members of the public should not attempt to investigate fly tipping incidents.
- iv. Past service satisfaction ratings were not comparable with more recent satisfaction ratings due to the difference in data collection methods. Previously, service satisfaction surveys were undertaken via the telephone, whereas more recently online forms had been used. It was recognised that customers were less likely to complain about a service when speaking to someone on the telephone, as opposed to an online form. It was anticipated that customer satisfaction would be comparable over time as the use of online forms to collect data became the norm.
- v. When assessing hardship applications to waive bulky waste collection charges, the council used criteria in order to determine the customer's ability to pay the charge, whether the customer had alternative means of disposing of items and whether the customer had any disability. Charges were waived only if the customer genuinely could not afford the charges and had no other means of disposing items.
- vi. The existing Environmental Services contract was based on 12,000 collections per year, although it was highlighted that the number of collections had been significantly higher than this. The current contract was due to end in April 2024 and a new base rate for collections would be established.
- vii. It was expected that increased inflation would significantly affect the council's bulky waste collection service costs as the cost of fuel and human resources would increase.
- viii. Environmental standards were always increasing which meant that there were changes in the way the council were required to waste specific items.

- ix. Members felt that the report and the work undertaken was positive. They did not feel that a further update on bulky waste collection charges was required unless there was an issue with the service in the future.

RESOLVED that the Commission noted the information provided in the report of the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment).

Reason

To ensure the Scrutiny Commission were updated on the impact of the introduction of charges for bulky waste collections.

48. 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.

49. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

There were no Cabinet items selected for pre-decision scrutiny.

50. 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.

51. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources to review the progression of scrutiny panels was submitted (item 10 on the agenda files with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the progression of scrutiny panels.

Reasons

To ensure timely and effective scrutiny of the matter/subject.

52. WASTE MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY PANEL REPORT

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources to consider the report of the Waste Management Scrutiny Panel and the recommendations was submitted (item 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Community Support and Equalities and the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment) assisted with the consideration of this item.

- i. Members thanked the members of the panel and the officers involved for the work undertaken and felt that the panel was enthusiastic and had made good observations and recommendations.
- ii. It was recognised that the use of leaflets to encourage recycling was not always successful as they were easily overlooked. A more successful approach would be to use multiple methods of encouragement, such as persistent social media posts, bin stickers and other methods as outlined in the report of the Waste Management Scrutiny Panel, in addition to the leaflets. Leaflets were considered to be beneficial as residents were able to retain these, whereas social media posts were temporary reminders.
- iii. Any stickers used on bins to remind residents about recycling would be high quality, resilient and weatherproof.
- iv. Members highlighted that whilst recycling waste important, residents should also be encouraged to reuse and repair where possible in order to move away from the throwaway culture. Whilst recycling was vital, the process used resources and energy and so reusing and repairing would be beneficial in the first instance.
- v. Members praised the idea of a 'Waste Champion Challenge' and suggested that members could also get involved.
- vi. It was highlighted that Leicestershire County Council offered a 'real nappy' kit to enable residents to trial using reusable nappies.
- vii. It was suggested that brief symbols could be added to bin lids as opposed to braille.

RESOLVED that the Waste Management Scrutiny Panel report be submitted to the next available Cabinet meeting.

Reason

To enable Cabinet to decide if the recommendations of the Waste Management Scrutiny Panel should be implemented.

53. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources to enable the Commission to review and agree the Scrutiny Work Programme was submitted. This includes reviewing the changes made by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and adding items to their work programme (item 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Officer and the Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

It was raised that at the Audit Committee meeting held on 8th November 2022, a member of the committee asked that the underspends in the Capital Programme, excluding Enterprise Zone and regeneration be monitored. The commission did not feel that there was sufficient information or context available at the meeting, as the minutes of the Audit Committee had not been published. It was agreed that the commission would discuss this item at their next meeting, following the publication of the Audit Committee minutes.

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme and make any amendments the Commission feel necessary.
2. That the Scrutiny Commission agreed that the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Work Programme be updated in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and any further decisions taken during this meeting.
3. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the issue on the monitoring of underspends in the Capital Programme, excluding Enterprise Zone and regeneration at their next meeting, following the publication of the Audit Committee minutes.

Reasons

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

2.To ensure that the information contained within the Work Programme is up to date.

3.To ensure the Scrutiny Commission had sufficient information and context on the topic prior to assigning the work.

54. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Governance and Human Resources 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 13 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Officer and the Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

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.

Reasons

1. 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

55. FLY TIPPING IN CHARNWOOD

A report of the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment) to allow scrutiny of the levels of Fly Tipping with Charnwood Borough (item 14 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Community Support and Equalities and the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment) assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Animals found at the roadside and in roads were not considered to be fly tipping. Animals likely to be pets were scanned for micro chip identification. Charnwood Borough Council was responsible for collecting animals and Leicestershire County Council was responsible for disposing of animals.
- ii. Fridge disposal was harmful due to gases produced by the fridge, and so specialist treatment was required to dispose of items safely. The council collected fridges and delivered them to a disposal specialist.
- iii. It was recognised that some residents left items on the pavement for collection by scrap metal merchants. Enforcement action against these fly tippers was a last resort option. The council would attempt education in the first instance before escalating to enforcement action.
- iv. The council had recently purchased five portable cameras which would be used in the most high-risk areas of the borough to try to identify fly tippers. The priority locations for cameras would be areas with a high frequency of fly-tipping and locations where higher-risk items (chemicals and other hazardous materials) were fly tipped. The council was required to install signage at the camera sites. It was anticipated that cameras would be in operation following

the Christmas period, as this was a peak time for fly tipping. There was a significant amount of legislation associated with the installation of cameras and therefore it may not be feasible for Parish Councils to erect their own cameras.

- v. Members felt that the report was positive and were satisfied with the work undertaken to manage fly tipping in Charnwood. It was highlighted that performance indicators were monitored by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee and that any issues with fly tipping would be picked up there. Therefore the Scrutiny Commission agreed that there was not a need for a further update report on Fly Tipping in Charnwood.

RESOLVED that the commission noted the information provided in the report of the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment).

Reason

To ensure that the commission was kept updated on fly tipping in Charnwood.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 23rd January 2023 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.