

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
10TH OCTOBER 2022**

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

Councillor Morgan (Leader of the Council), Rattray
(Cabinet Lead Member for Business Support) and
Bokor (Cabinet Lead Member for Loughborough)

Director Commercial and Economic Development
Director Housing and Wellbeing
Head of Contracts, Leisure, Waste and
Environment
Head of Transformation, Strategy and
Performance
Head of Regulatory and Community Safety
Enviro-Crime and Dog Control Manager
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.

29. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 5th July 2022 were approved.

30. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTRABLE AND
NON-REGISTRABLE INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

31. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

32. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

33. GLYPHOSATE-BASED HERBICIDES IN OPEN SPACES, PLAYGROUNDS AND
PARKS

Councillor Brookes arrived at the meeting at 6:05pm.

Councillor Popley joined the meeting virtually at 6:09pm.

A report of the Head of Contracts (Leisure, Waste and Environment) to provide the Scrutiny Commission with an update on Glyphosate use and any potential alternatives identified by the Council following the review (October 2021), was submitted (item 6 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

- i. The downward trend in glyphosate use was not related to Covid-19 as there was little service disruption during that period. The downward trend was due to Glyphosate being used sparingly by contractors.
- ii. Since the Scrutiny Commission last reviewed the use of Glyphosate, there had been an investigation into potential alternatives. It was considered that there was currently no viable alternative. Alternatives were damaging to the environment, expensive or not in line with carbon reduction aims.
- iii. Developments in the management of open spaces were anticipated and it was possible that newer alternatives may become available. In addition, there may be changes in cost to some of the alternatives already considered. The use of Glyphosate and alternative methods would remain under review and the Council would identify viable alternative methods when they became available.
- iv. It was highlighted that there were a range of varying views on the use of Glyphosate across the industry. However, Glyphosate use was regulated and considered safe to use in the UK. It was therefore considered to be suitable and safe for use, but not the ideal solution.
- v. Contractors and staff using Glyphosate had appropriate PPE and extensive training of the safety of use. The use of Glyphosate was heavily regulated and was considered safe to use by the Health and Safety Executive.

RESOLVED that the Commission noted the report.

Reason

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To ensure the Commission was kept informed on the use of Glyphosate-based herbicides in open spaces, playgrounds and parks.

34. 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.

35. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

36. COST OF LIVING - SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES

A Cabinet report of the Chief Executive to outline the support the Council has put in place regarding the Cost of Living crisis and to request financial resources to provide enhanced support to residents and businesses (item 8a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council, the Director of Housing and Wellbeing and the Head of Transformation, Strategy and Performance assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The maximum £180k of funding from the Reinvestment Reserve would be used to directly support communities and businesses. Council resources such as officer time were part of the running costs of the Council and would not be drawn from this sum.
- ii. The Council had identified a number of themes and options which outlined the work that may be undertaken using the £180k in funding.
- iii. The Council had considered providing printed materials for distribution to target groups, in addition to the information which would be made available online. It was suggested by the Scrutiny Commission that the Council includes a wide range of noticeboards, libraries and Parish and Town Councils across the Borough to promote the support available to communities.
- iv. It was suggested that the wording in the report be changed where a 'pot of funding' was referred to. Alternative phrases to incorporate into the report were 'accounts' or 'funding schemes'.
- v. Members were encouraged to suggest initiatives and schemes offering support to communities and businesses through the Community Development Team at the Council.

- vi. The Big Switch programme was not available at this time. However, when the programme became available again the Council would look to reinstate this form of support.
- vii. There was support available to homeowners, such as the Council Tax rebate scheme and the ECO4 scheme outlined in the report.

RESOLVED

1. That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Chief Executive.
2. That it be suggested to the Cabinet that they consider the expansion of printed materials for distribution to include promotion of the support available on a wide range of noticeboards, libraries and Parish and Town Councils across the Borough.
3. That the officers consider changing the wording used in the report where a 'pot of funding' was referred to.

Reasons

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report, felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendation set out.
2. To increase the promotion of support available and to ensure members of the community that are considered to be digitally excluded have the opportunity to utilise the support available.
3. To improve the wording used within the report.

Councillor Robin Popley, attending the meeting virtually, confirmed that he would have supported the recommendations in the report of the Chief Executive if he was present in the room and able to do so.

37. FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR CARBON REDUCTION

A Cabinet report of the Director of Commercial and Economic Development requesting that the budget initially agreed for Solar Feasibility be expanded in its scope to include feasibility work for any measure to reduce or offset carbon (item 8b on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Leader of the Council and the Director of Commercial and Economic Development assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The £150k funding referred to in the report was intended for direct use on any measure to reduce or offset carbon. This did not include any Council resource costs such as officer time as this was part of the Council's running costs.
- ii. The Council had actively looked to reduce carbon in ways such as fleet upgrades and the potential of a new, lower carbon Council office.
- iii. Councils within Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland were working to coordinate climate change efforts and the Council was taking others' strategies into account in forming a new climate change strategy.
- iv. The Council would take a prudent approach with regards to the spending of the £150k referred to in the report, ensuring due diligence throughout the process.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Director of Commercial and Economic Development.

Reason

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

Councillor Robin Popley, attending the meeting virtually, confirmed that he would have supported the recommendations in the report of the Director of Commercial and Economic Development if he was present in the room and able to do so.

38. CHARNWOOD DOG CONTROL PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER 2022

A Cabinet report of the Head of Regulatory and Community Safety to seek approval of the Notice of Intention and upon expiry of the 28-day notice period to approve the Public Spaces Protection Order (Charnwood Borough Council) Control of Dogs 2023 under the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 (item 8c on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Business Support, the Head of Regulatory and Community Safety and the Enviro-Crime and Dog Control Manager assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The enforcement of the PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) would rely on complaints for targeted enforcement in problem locations, as the Orders apply across the whole of the Borough and staff resources would be limited.

- ii. There had been only one report, which met the threshold of anti-social behaviour , at Stonebow Washlands within the yellow zone highlighted on the map included within the report.
- iii. Members expressed that they were grateful for the introduction of the 'dogs on leads' enforcement in the blue zone highlighted on the map included within the report, demonstrating the area of Stonebow Washlands, as this had had a positive impact on the area.
- iv. Members felt that with regards to recommendation 1, option 1 was the most appropriate course of action, as it was considered that applying the restriction to dogs on leads on the playing fields indicated on the map was not required.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Regulatory and Community Safety.

Reason

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

Councillor Robin Popley, attending the meeting virtually, confirmed that he would have supported the recommendations in the report of the Head of Regulatory and Community Safety if he was present in the room and able to do so. He also stated that he would support option 1, as part of recommendation 1.

39. 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.

40. 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).

The Lead Officer and the Democratic Services Officer assisted with the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. The paused informal scrutiny panel 'Combatting Loneliness' was discussed. There had not been sufficient member engagement and so the panel was not able to commence at this time.
- ii. The paused informal scrutiny panel 'Promoting Tourism in Charnwood' was discussed. Following the implementation of the new leadership structure at the Council, Officers were organising workloads and it was suggested that the panel was revisited in January 2023.
- iii. The 'Crime, Youth Crime and ASB' scrutiny panel was discussed. Following discussions between the proposed Chair of the panel and the Community Safety Partnership team, it was suggested that the panel did not progress. This was due to duplication of work, as there had recently been an ASB review undertaken at the Council. In addition, the Community Safety Partnership was scrutinised on an annual basis by the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Committee. Therefore, it was felt that there was not a need to undertake a panel at this time. However, the Commission felt that there would be a benefit in scrutinising the outcome of the ASB review at the Council. The Scrutiny Commission requested a presentation and a report as soon as possible on the outcome of the ASB review, including information on results and what has been changed.
- iv. The Scrutiny Commission approved a Budget Scrutiny Panel for the year 2022/23, with Councillor Mark Charles nominated as Chair, and Councillor Robin Popley nominated as Vice-Chair.
- v. The Commission discussed the potential for a scrutiny panel on the Cost of Living. However, it was agreed that it would be more appropriate to provide the Commission with an update on the action plan associated with the work undertaken by the Council regarding the Cost of Living.

RESOLVED

1. That the Scrutiny Commission reviewed the progression of scrutiny panels.
2. That a Budget Scrutiny Panel for the Council year 2022/23 was approved and that Councillor Mark Charles be appointed Chair and Councillor Robin Popley be appointed Vice-Chair of the panel.
3. That the Scrutiny Commission receive a presentation and a report as soon as possible on the outcome of the ASB review, including information on results and what has been changed.
4. That the Scrutiny Commission receive an update on the Cost of Living Action Plan when appropriate.

Reasons

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

- 2 To enable panel work to commence.
- 3 To ensure the recent ASB Review at the Council was properly scrutinised.
- 4 To ensure the Scrutiny Commission was kept updated on the Cost of Living Action Plan.

Councillor Robin Popley, attending virtually, confirmed that he would have supported the resolutions had he been present in the room and able to do so.

41. 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. 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 Lead Officer assisted with the consideration of this item.

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.

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.

Councillor Robin Popley, attending virtually, confirmed that he would have supported the resolutions had he been present in the room and able to do so.

42. 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 12 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

The Scrutiny Commission added the following items to their work programme:

- i. ASB Review Update – to include a presentation and a report outlining the outcomes of the review and the changes that have been made as a result (as soon as possible).
- ii. Cost of Living Action Plan Update – a report to include progress against the Cost of Living action plan.

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 following items be added to the Scrutiny Commission's work programme for pre-decision scrutiny:
 - ASB Review Update
 - Cost of Living Action Plan Update

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.

Councillor Robin Popley, attending the meeting virtually, confirmed that he would have supported the resolutions had he been present in the room and able to do so.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 7th November 2022 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.
3. Councillor Robin Popley attended the meeting virtually. Votes were taken only from members of the committee physically present in the room.
4. The following Lead Members and Officers attended the meeting virtually: Councillors Morgan, Rattray and Bokor, Director of Housing and Wellbeing, Director of Commercial and Economic Development, Head of Regulatory and Community Safety and Enviro-Crime and Dog Control Manager.