

**OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP  
10TH DECEMBER 2018**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Ranson)  
Councillors Brookes, Gerrard, Fryer and Savage

Councillor Barkley  
Councillor Taylor

Chief Executive  
Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager  
Strategic Director of Corporate Services  
Head of Neighbourhood Services  
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Capleton, Bradshaw and Paling

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.

34. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 15th October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

35. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTEREST

No disclosures were made.

36. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

37. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

38. CHARNWOOD GRANTS - ROUND THREE - 2018/19 COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT GRANT APPLICATIONS

A report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services was considered (item 06A on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing, the Head of Neighbourhood Services and the Neighbourhoods and Partnerships Manager attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) The Group was happy to see new applicants applying for grants and a more diverse range of groups approaching the Council.
- (ii) There was some inconsistency in the report which the Panel had taken into consideration. The main focus of the Panel was regarding the type of organisation that was applying for funding and their service users, whether it was an organisation with a wide customer base or whether they had a specific group of users. This meant that there was a variation in the number of people benefitting from each grant.
- (iii) The Group was assured that there was a robust monitoring and evaluation procedure in place to ensure the money was spent within the Charnwood area. The terms and conditions of the grant made it clear to applicants how the money should be used and that it was to be used for projects within the borough.
- (iv) The Grants Panel were trying to develop the grants scheme by looking at repeat applications to see why they required the money and what it would be used for. They also considered whether the applicant could receive funding elsewhere.

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

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Lead Member for Communities, Safety and Wellbeing and the Head of Neighbourhood Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

39. WRITE OFF REPORT FOR BUSINESS RATE PROPERTIES

A report of the Head of Customer Experience was considered (item 06B on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Lead Member for Finance and Property Services and the Strategic Director of Corporate Services attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) There were provisions in place each year to cover the potential write offs that may be submitted. This was due to an assumption that there would always be irrecoverable debts despite the Council's best efforts to recover them.
- (ii) The County Council and the fire authority were informed as to the amount of write offs throughout the year but there was no requirement for them to separately authorise write-offs.
- (iii) A range of actions had been undertaken by the Council to recover the debts. Some of the actions had been ongoing for a period of time and as soon as any arrears appeared on the account action was taken to try and resolve it.
- (iv) The Group was assured that it was not in the Council's interest to see businesses fail in the Borough but the debts do have to be addressed as it was not appropriate to keep bad debts on the Council's asset list.

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

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Lead Member for Finance and Property Services and the Strategic Director of Corporate Services on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for the Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

40. OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - CABINET RESPONSE

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Group on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

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

Reason

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

41. WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Group 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 and to provide an opportunity for members of the Group to raise suggestions on issues for scrutiny (in addition to pre-decision scrutiny) which fell within the Group's remit, for scheduling by Scrutiny Management Board (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

**RESOLVED** that the Group's current work programme be noted and updated following this meeting, in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and at this meeting and any items of pre-decision scrutiny that require changing due to their reprogramming by the Cabinet.

Reason

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.

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 21st January 2019 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 Overview Scrutiny Group.