

**SCRUTINY COMMISSION
9TH DECEMBER 2019**

PRESENT: The Vice Chair (Councillor Draycott)
Councillors Bailey, Baines, Bolton, Hadji-Nikolaou,
Parsons and Gerrard

Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing
Democratic Services Manager and Democratic
Services Officer (SW)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Rattray

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.

74. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters arising from the previous minutes:

Minute 64 (item iv) (Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities) was referred to. The Democratic Services Manager provided an update about "Following the Council Pound". It was noted that the Procurement Manager had advised an element of proportionality be applied with regards to the involvement of the Scrutiny Commission in external contract procurement. A clause could be introduced into contracts to allow suppliers to attend the Commission when the contract was considered to have a significant impact on finances and communities and could be incorporated into the procurement toolkit template documents. Noting that any clause of this nature would require clearing from Legal Services.

With regards to existing contracts it was considered that incumbent suppliers would agree to any reasonable request to attend Commission meetings without having a contractual obligation to do so, providing that they were made aware of the questions that would be put to them as set out in the Scrutiny Witness Charter. The Commission welcomed the response and asked the Democratic Services Manager to liaise with the Procurement Manager to update procurement documentation as appropriate.

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 11th November 2019 were then approved.

Councillor Baines arrived at the meeting at 6:04pm.

75. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

76. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

77. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions were submitted.

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

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

79. CABINET ITEMS FOR PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY

80. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPERS STRATEGY

A Cabinet report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing was considered to present the proposed Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Reduction Strategy 2019-2022 and Action Plan for pre-decision scrutiny (item 7a on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing attended the meeting to assist with the consideration of this item. It was noted that there had been a typographical error in the title of the report, which should read 'Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy 2019-2022.' In addition, it was stated that there were ten performance indicators rather than nine as indicated in the text in the performance section of the Strategy.

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing gave the following responses to questions raised;

- i. There was an out of hours number to prevent rough sleeping, details of the out of hours service procedure were on the Council's website. An on-call Housing Officer was available via telephone to provide advice and where applicable enable access to emergency accommodation where possible.
- ii. The Council had consulted on the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Reduction Strategy through the Homeless Strategy Steering Group and the Registered Providers Benefit and Liaison Group. There had not been significant updates within the relevant aspects of the strategy and so there had not been any resident involvement at this stage. Customer surveys would be utilised to develop an understanding of resident satisfaction.
- iii. The recommendations in the report included references to financial implications although specific budget details were not included within the report. It was felt that without specific financial figures it was difficult to comprehensively scrutinise the strategy. The Commission felt that reports selected for pre-decision scrutiny should include additional financial information when any financial implications were referred to in the recommendations.

- iv. Private Sector Landlords had to follow a legal procedure and provide evidence and satisfactory reasoning for serving a Notice to evict tenants, take court action and obtain a bailiff's warrant were applicable.
- v. Nationally, the most common reasons for homelessness included family breakdown and ending Assured Shorthold Tenancies in the private rented sector. Legislation required the Council to assist residents in obtaining six-month tenancies. However, the Council aimed to assist residents in obtaining 12-month tenancies when trying to prevent and relieve homelessness.

RESOLVED

1. that the Cabinet be informed that the Commission supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing.
2. that the information on the number of children in homeless households be raised as a concern with Cabinet.
3. that reports selected for pre-decision scrutiny should include additional financial information, such as relevant sections of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, when any financial implications were referred to in the recommendations.

Reasons

1. The Commission, having carefully considered the report felt the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.
2. To ensure transparency in the number of children in homeless households in the Borough.
3. To enable the Commission to effectively scrutinise reports selected for pre-decision scrutiny.

81. 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 8 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.

82. PROGRESS WITH PANEL WORK

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was received to review progress with Scrutiny Panels and to approve the content of the Scoping Document for the 'How the Council can Generate Commercial Income' panel (item 9 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager attended to assist in the consideration of this item. The following summarises the discussion:

- i. Digitisation and Transformation of Services Panel - the scoping document would be received following information from the Cabinet on the Forward Programme. This would allow the panel to align their work on digitisation and transformation within the existing forthcoming workstreams. It was agreed that the scoping document should be received following the receipt of further information.
- ii. The Future of Local Government in Leicestershire Panel - as Leicestershire County Council would be considering options in late February 2020 it was considered sensible to postpone this Panel to a later date. It was noted that Cabinet would consider the proposals of Leicestershire County Council as a policy issue.
- iii. Waste Services and Waste Management Panel – North West Leicestershire District Council were undertaking a trial regarding Waste Management which had similar objectives to the panel established. It was suggested that Councillor Rattray, Chair of the panel investigate this further.
- iv. Scoping documents for proposed panels should be approved by the Scrutiny Commission prior to the commencement of the Panel. Panel Chairs should ensure a scoping document was submitted to the Commission before the commencement date.
- v. Parking Enforcement and Enhancement Panel - Councillor Howe, as Chair, to be consulted by Councillor Baines on the purpose of the Panel so a scoping document can be produced.

RESOLVED

1. that the Commission approve the content of the Scoping Document for the 'How the Council can Generate Commercial Income' Panel as set out in appendix 2.
2. That the following changes be made to the Scrutiny Panels:
 - Digitisation and Transformation of Services Panel – start date pending following receipt of additional information.

- The Future of Local Government in Leicestershire Panel – postponed until a later date.
- Waste Services and Waste Management Panel – Councillor Rattray as Chair investigate the trial regarding Waste Management being undertaken at North West Leicestershire County Council.

Reasons

1. to ensure timely and effective scrutiny, noting on this occasion that the panel had commences its work in the interests of expediency.
2. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny.

83. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support enabling the Commission to review and agree the scrutiny work programme (item 10 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of the item.

It was noted that in addition to the changes listed in the report, the Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee removed the Charnwood Grants – Strategic Partners (2020/21 – 2012/22) item at their meeting on 26th November 2019.

The Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were due to consider a report on the Children and Families Wellbeing Service, including consultation with external partners, at their meeting on 10th March 2020. The Scrutiny Commission had agreed a panel on Children’s Centres and consultation with external partners to commence in Spring 2020. It was acknowledged that this could create duplication of work and it was agreed by the Commission that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee continue to undertake this review and provide an update to the Commission.

RESOLVED

1. that following the review of the Scrutiny Work Programme set out in the Appendix to the report, and scheduled scrutiny of those matters, be noted, and that the Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee should review the Children and Families Wellbeing Service as proposed and that an update be received by the Scrutiny Commission. The Children’s Centres scrutiny panel would not be required following the receipt of this report.
2. that the Commission agreed the Scrutiny Work Programme be updated in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item.

Reasons

1. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny. The Commission considered that it would be beneficial for the Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny

Committee to review the Children and Families Wellbeing Service as proposed and to avoid duplication of work, the Children's Centres scrutiny panel should be removed.

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

84. 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 11 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Democratic Services Manager assisted with the consideration of this item and gave the following responses:

- i. The Draft Local Plan was due to be considered by the Commission in January 2020. It was noted that the Commission wished to receive the Planning Services' responses to the consultation prior to Cabinet. The Democratic Services Manager agreed to liaise with the Planning Service about this matter.
- ii. The Air Quality Review and Assessment Report 2019 was due to be received by the Commission in January 2020. However, it was anticipated that the report would be postponed due to a delay in information from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). It was agreed by the Commission that the report be deferred and received at its meeting on 9th March 2020.

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, and that further items be scheduled for scrutiny as follows:
 - Insurance Arrangements – 13th February 2020
2. that the Commission'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. Changes made by the Commission to its Work Programme are as follows;
 - *Air Quality Review and Assessment Report 2019 – From 13th January 2020 to 9th March 2020.*
3. that the Democratic Services Manager liaise with the Planning Service in order for the Commission to receive responses to the consultation prior to Cabinet.

Reasons

1. To ensure timely and effective scrutiny.
2. To ensure timely and effective 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.
3. To ensure that the Commission has sufficient time to scrutinise responses as the Local Plan is a significant document.

The meeting ended at 6.46pm

NOTES:

1. No reference may be made to these minutes at the Council meeting on 20th January 2020 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.