



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2013 at 5.30pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Cutkelvin (Chair)
Councillor Gugnani (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Bhatti
Councillor Cleaver
Councillor Corral

Councillor Desai
Councillor Naylor

Also present:

Councillor Russell – Assistant City Mayor (Neighbourhood Services)

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39. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Bhatti.

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Corral disclosed an Other Disclosable Interest in Minute 45 (Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau) as he was a friend of a person that worked for the Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau.

41. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission held on 4th July 2013, together with the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 20th August 2013, as previously circulated, be

agreed as a correct record.

42. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

i) 4th July

Minute 20 – Matters Arising from the Minutes

- City Mayor's Delivery Plan – Report to be referred to Overview Select Committee in October 2013 and an update on targets related to this Commission has been added to the Work Programme for the December meeting.

Minute 23 – New Household Waste Recycling Centre

- An update report to come back to this Scrutiny Commission in January 2014 on the re-use Pilot Scheme (Pass it on Scheme)

Minutes 27 – Work Programme

- A Site Visit for Members to visit the new Customer Service Centre in Granby Street to be arranged as soon as possible after the facility opens.

ii) 20th August

Minute 34 – Community Services Charging Scheme - Responses from Officers to the recommendations

Responses from the officers were tabled at the meeting, as set out below: -

“Recommendations:

- 1) *Officers consider a re-classification of those groups that currently use community facilities and have expressed concerns at the level of charges they are expected to pay.*

Response: Officers are working case by case on each group to verify that the community group is being correctly assigned to the charge scale of the new scheme. Each group that has requested this will be informed of the outcome of the verification process.

- 2) *Officers consider that where a Community Centre has a 'lounge type' or communal area, consideration be given for the group to use the space for free or at a discounted rate to reflect the non-exclusive nature of these areas/ rooms.*

Response: Officer have identified the specific areas in the centres that would be designated as “lounge” or drop in areas (areas outlined below for information) together with a criteria for use on a consistent basis.

1. African Caribbean Centre	Café
2. Brite	Library and Reception Area
3. Eyres Monsell	Lounge
4. Fosse	Library
5. Linwood Centre	Hall
6. Manor House	old lounge
7. St Matthews	Library
8. Stocking Farm	Healthy Living Centre Reception
9. Thurnby Lodge	Community Library
10. Tudor	Area behind reception and adjacent rooms

- 3) *Officers look to extend the same the transitional arrangements that have been offered to groups at the Rushey Mead Recreation Centre to similar groups across the City, where if the group have historically not been charged for the use of a room, transitional support is extended from 7 months to 2 years.*

Response: Officers have applied the 2 year transition payment scheme to those groups who are currently not paying for the room which do not qualify for "lounge" or drop in status. Each group will be informed of the outcome of the change.

- 4) *Officers look to find ways of reflecting within the fees and charging scheme the voluntary nature of work undertaken by certain groups who do not currently benefit from the discount or payback scheme offered to groups within a partnership agreement.*

Response: The new Fees and Charges provides a 65% discount on the standard rate to recognise community group activities are operated on a voluntary basis and their contribution to encourage community involvement.

- 5) *Officers to formalise ways of signposting community groups to appropriate sources of funding.*

Response: An information leaflet has been developed and a poster campaign will be launched by the end of September. Following the Community Services Organisational Review the new role of Community Engagement Officer will provide specific support to groups to make funding applications.

- 6) *Community groups who have taken the time to write a written response to the consultation on the proposed Charging Scheme need to be given a formal response to their feedback, and that they are kept informed of the implementation and operation of the new Scheme.*

Response: A letter has been devised and will be sent to all groups that have made a submission regarding their fees and charges by 6th September 2013.

- 7) *Following the recent problems experienced with the Charging Scheme*

consultation exercise, databases containing details of community groups using the centres be updated more regularly, and more consideration is given to the way we engage with these groups effectively.

Response: Officers are currently developing a database which will capture the accurate information to assist in the use and development of centre programmes; income collection; and knowledge and contact with community groups. This will also provide a monthly report to the Assistant Mayor and Service Director, Culture and Neighbourhoods.

8) *An impact assessment is completed covering the usage of community facilities and also the financial implications for the period immediately following the implementation of the new Charging Scheme. A report back to this Scrutiny Commission to be made in 6 months.*

Response: Officers are currently working on this to provide robust information for the Scrutiny Report to be presented in six month time.”

RESOLVED:

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| i) | that the commission would like a more detailed response to recommendation 2, as set out above, at a future meeting as it was noted that this is a key recommendation and the response is not fully developed yet. |
| ii) | that the information reported be noted and that an update and an impact assessment to come to the commission in 6 months time. |

43. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

44. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

45. LEICESTERSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Nicola Hobbs, Head of Contracts and Assurance Planning and Commissioning, (Care Services and Commissioning) and Helen Child, Operations Manager, Leicestershire Citizens Advice Bureau attended the meeting to update the Scrutiny Commission on the current provision of community legal advice across the City. The service commenced on 1st April 2013 for an initial period of three years to 31st March 2016, with the provision to extend for a further two years.

A brief presentation was given at the meeting that covered the following areas:

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- Service Overview
- Citizens Advice – Structure
- Citizens Advice – aims and principles
- About LeicesterShire CAB
- CAB in Leicester
- Who is using the service
- What do they need
- Volunteers
- A word from our volunteers
- Overview of our service delivery
- Tier 1 – Gateway Assessment
- Tier 2 – Generalist Advice
- Tier 3 – Specialist Advice
- Outreach/Outreach Timetable
- How to refer
- Quality
- Future development
- Accessing our service
- www.adviceguide.org.uk – 24hours a day online advice
- twitter.com/CitizensAdvice@LeicsShireCAB (Twitter Site)
- www.facebook.com/CitizensAdvice Leicestershire CAB (Facebook Site)
- youtube.com/CitizensAdvice – CAB films
- www.leicscab.org.uk (Local Site)

The Scrutiny Commission welcomed the presentation and took the opportunity to clarify several points.

Members questioned the provision of outreach sessions and it was stated that the outreach sessions reported had now started and that there were just two more that were due to be in place the following week. Regarding the provision of advice to Somali population, particularly in the Stoneygate area, it was agreed that Councillor Desai would meet with officers and Councillor Russell after the meeting.

Members questioned whether out of hours provision was being considered outside of the regular Monday-Friday provision, particularly as there were sometimes issues raised at Member surgeries held at weekends. Officers reported that in Year 2 of the current contract there was a requirement for out of hours service and this would be agreed with the provider in response to demand, and Councillor Russell suggested that in the interim she would inform Members that they could 'e' mail any issues to the CAB over the weekends, to be picked up on Mondays, this would help to assess the demand for an out of hours provision.

Officers reported that following an assessment and the inclusion of the

Immigration Advice Service it was realised that the existing CAB premises would not be sufficient for the new contract, following the inclusion of Immigration Advice service.

RESOLVED:

- i) that officers make available additional information to the Scrutiny Commission members on how the Council Wards were selected as being eligible for outreach sessions
- ii) that officers report back to the Scrutiny Commission in 6 months on progress with the provision of advice in Year 1 of the contract and to outline the Year 2 proposals.
- iii) that officers complete a needs analysis on who was accessing the service.

46. POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

The Strategic Director (City Development & Neighbourhoods) presented a report that updated members on the Police and Crime Plan 2013-2017 and that, following initial consultation with partners, the Plan was further reviewed and was due to be re-issued in September 2013. The re-issued Plan was currently out for consultation and copies were made available for Members at the meeting. Members were informed that once the Plan had been agreed it would then cover the direction for crime and policing for the period 2013-2017.

Peter Lewis and Suzanne Hoolihan, representing the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, attended the meeting and informed the Scrutiny Commission that the final report would be referred back to the Police and Crime Panel in October. Comments had been received so far on issues around safeguarding and Victims of Crimes and these would be addressed in the final version. Comments received from Leicester City Council were currently being looked at and some work was being done on the issues raised.

Peter stated that various measures were currently being looked at to try and address the required funding cuts imposed by Government, whilst maintaining policing levels.

Councillor Naylor made reference to Joint Action Group (JAG) Partnerships in place across the City and of the need to ensure consistency across all JAGs. In response Suzanne stated that feedback had been received around standardising JAGs, it was apparent that their role was important and there was a case to strengthen them and ensure that they were better used.

The Chair reminded Commission members to feedback through the Council's representatives on the Police and Crime Panel; Councillors Sarah Russell, Manjula Sood, Lynn Senior and Paul Westley. The Chair would also feedback through the Overview and Select Committee when they consider this item.

RESOLVED:

that the progress with the final version of the Local Police and Crime Plan 2013-17, as reported, be noted.

47. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Inspector Knopp, representing Leicestershire Police attended the meeting and spoke to the report that had been circulated regarding: -

- Opening hours of Local Policing Units (LPUs)
- Shift Patterns of Neighbourhood Officers
- Plans for closure of LPUs, their impact and other changes

Insp. Knopp stated that opening times of LPUs were available on the Leicestershire police website. Currently a review was underway on the provision of local facilities and how they were currently used.

Shift patterns in place were skewing the number of officers to meet peak demand during evenings/weekends, although a review was currently underway to assess whether the current balance was right.

Leicestershire Police were required to find £20m of savings and were looking at ways of implementing more cost effective measures to help meet the targets set. Draft proposals on how Leicestershire Police feel that they can better deliver services will be released for consultation in October 2013.

Councillor Russell stated that, the Transforming Neighbourhoods Programme was, looking at how City Council facilities could potentially house a Police presence to help the police achieve savings.

Members questioned how many local stations were to close and Insp. Knopp stated that 6 LPUs across the City would remain, although 2 offices were to be closed a local police presence would be retained. Regarding police presence at Community Meetings it was stated that Leicestershire Police were looking at how to maximise the use of officers and look to use PCSOs where Police officer presence was not required. Ward Councillors were asked to send their feedback to Insp. Knopp.

RESOLVED:

that the information be noted and that an update be brought back to the Scrutiny Commission in 6 months.

48. COMMUNITY SERVICES ORGANISATIONAL REVIEW

The Head of Community Services presented a report that set out the business case for change within the Community Services Section to reflect the changing requirements of the service in line with budget pressures and other

developments.

Members were informed that much of the process outlined had been led by residents as it had been realised that 'one size did not fit all'. Members attention was drawn to the staffing proposals that included the appointment of 11 Community Engagement Officers whose role would be to work across the City with community groups and establish activities. Crucial to the exercise was to achieve a budget reduction, whilst keeping facilities open and fully utilised. Different ways of working had been looked at and these were reported.

Members were generally supportive of the proposals outlined and looked forward to their implementation.

Councillor Russell made reference to a meeting that had recently been held with Ward Councillors representing Castle Ward, an area of the City with no City Council operated facilities within it. Following discussions it had been agreed that Community Engagement Officers would operate as a flexible resource and work with groups in City Council Wards, including Castle Ward, that lacked City Council operated facilities, to identify need and signpost groups to funding streams. Officers would be engaging with Ward Councillors from other City Council Wards in a similar position.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the information be noted and that the discussions to be held with Ward Councillors from City Council Wards lacking City Council operated facilities, as outlined, be welcomed.
- ii) that more information on the volunteering scheme and 'Getting involved' initiative comes to a future meeting of the commission.

49. TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES PROGRAMME

The Head of Libraries and Information Services and the Project Manager for Transforming Neighbourhood Services presented a report that outlined the lessons learned on the approach to successful community engagement from recent service change projects in the City, in particular the move of Aylestone Library into Aylestone Leisure Centre. The report also set out the progress with these projects. Members questioned what percentage of the previous users of Aylestone Library had continued to use the new facility and what proportion of the users were new users. Officers stated that although the Aylestone Library membership had multiplied since the move the precise demographics of the customer base had yet to be analysed but this would be undertaken and reported back.

Members were informed that the second aim would be to outline how these lessons learned would be used in the next stage of engagement required for the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) Programme that incorporates

Libraries, Community Services, Adult Skills & Learning, and Neighbourhood based customer services.

Appended to the report were details of the first cross city consultation on the programme, a communications plan for engagement in area South and a facility map of the South area.

Members were informed that the approach outlined had been introduced following examples set by several other Local Authorities across the country and also by learning lessons from other projects. Attention was drawn to Para. 3.3 of the report that set out proposals for the approach to be taken to Ward member and community engagement in each area of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme, members expressed the view that this was helpful.

Members enquired what action would be taken to transform those areas of the City that currently had no facilities. Officers responded by stating that the first step was the implementation of the Community Services review, discussed earlier in the meeting. The second stage would be to encourage people to use Council facilities and also assess where people access facilities at present and how they used them, and gain an understanding of what they actually want in future and where, in effect responding to local need. For those areas currently lacking facilities there might be an identified need to negotiate use of non-Council facilities for specified times.

Members generally welcomed the report and the proposals outlined but expressed the view that consultation with a wide range of groups was crucial and assurances were sought that the timescales referred to would also be met.

Councillor Russell stated the consultation process was about learning lessons from each stage and looking to adhere to the specified timescales whilst streamlining the consultation process as well.

RESOLVED:

- i) that the information reported be noted
- ii) that the Scrutiny Commission be kept involved with progress with the Programme, possibly by way of a Task Group
- iii) that an Impact Assessment be reported back around usage of Aylestone Library.

50. WARD COMMUNITY MEETINGS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

Following discussion at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission a request was made to receive

evaluation feedback from all Ward Councillors involved with the first phase of the project and to be provided with regular progress updates on the implementation arrangements for Phase 2. Feedback received was highlighted within the report.

Officers reported that Phase 1 of the project had generally gone well and progress was continuing to be monitored.

Members were informed of the proposals for Phase 2 of the project that would include changes to the application and evaluation process for Community Meeting funding in respect of pilot wards. It was planned to engage young people in the Community Meeting process and this was ongoing. Councillor Naylor expressed a wish to be involved in this process. New publicity was being trialled and various options were tabled. A comprehensive Councillor Guide was also being worked on.

Several suggestions were put forward from members and included: -

- Look to including input via Social Networks (although need to be cautious)
- Time Slot within meetings for submissions received
- Rolling pre-planned themes helpful
- Invite Youth Council members as appropriate
- Provision of more formal feedback at meetings
- More detailed information on attendance at meetings
- Report back on funding proposals, including feedback and advice given

In concluding officers thanked members for their comments and stated that their feedback on what works well around community meetings would be welcomed.

RESOLVED:

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| | i) | the Commission to consider a way forward with officers around the involvement of young people in ward meetings. |
| next | ii) | that the communications matrix be considered at the meeting |
| | iii) | That the report be noted and that regular feedback on Phase 2 of the Ward Community Meetings Improvement Project would be welcomed. |

51. WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Commission received the Draft Work Programme for 2013/14 for consideration and comment.

It was noted that suggestions made previously had been incorporated into the

current Work Programme. It was further noted that a Site Visit for members would be scheduled in during 2014 to visit the newly re-located Customer Service Centre.

RESOLVED:

that the Draft Work Programme 2013/14, as circulated be noted.

52. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

i) Chairing of Future Meetings

The Chair reported that, due to the forthcoming birth of her new child in October it was not likely that she would be chairing the October or the December meetings of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission, although she would still be in receipt of Committee papers during this period. In the interim Councillor Gugnani (Vice-Chair) would act as Chair and, following a discussion Councillor Corral had agreed to act as temporary Vice-Chair.

ii) Retirement – Mike Keen

The Chair announced that Mike, Democratic Services Officer, was to retire during October and that this would be the last meeting of Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission that he would be servicing.

Members wished Mike a happy retirement and thanked him for the support he had given.