

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

Held: WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 2017 at 5:30 pm

## PRESENT:

# Councillor Malik (Chair) Councillor Gugnani (Vice Chair)

Councillor Bajaj Councillor Cank Councillor Cutkelvin Councillor Fonseca

## Councillor Khote

## In Attendance

Councillor Master, Assistant City Mayor - Neighbourhood Services Councillor Sood, Assistant City Mayor - Communities & Equalities Councillor Waddington, Assistant City Mayor - Jobs & Skills

\* \* \* \* \* \* \* \*

## 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

## 3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

## AGREED:

that the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission held on 22 March 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### 4. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

In response to gueries raised, the meeting heard that:

- A Programme Manager for the Channel Shift Programme had not been appointed; instead they were investigating whether the project could move forward without that appointment being made.
- The 'Love Leicester App' would continue for a further year.

#### 5. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that Members were encouraged to attend a scrutiny training session being held on 24 July 2017.

#### 6. TERMS OF REFERENCE

AGREED:

that the Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission be noted.

## 7. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION 2017/18

AGREED:

that the membership of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission for 2017/18 be noted.

## 8. DATES OF COMMISSION MEETINGS 2017/18

AGREED:

that the dates of meetings of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission be noted.

## 9. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

## 10. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Chair agreed to accept the following two questions which had been submitted by Janet McKenna, Unison Assistant Branch Secretary. Under Scrutiny Procedure Rule Part 4E, Rule 10, the questions were not submitted to the Monitoring Officer in time for a detailed response to be given at the meeting. The Chair stated that a written response would be sent to the questioner and he asked for Commission Members to be copied into that response.

1. Will the Scrutiny Committee recommend that the council conducts a full assessment of the current need for advice services, in Leicester, as well as an assessment of the likely increased need due to changes such as

the full roll-out of Universal Credit and Brexit?

2. Will the Scrutiny Committee ask the Council to have full regard to the Care Act statutory guidance regarding the need to provide adequate information and advice services to residents?

#### AGREED:

for a written response to the above questions to be sent to the questioner and for Members of the Commission to be copied into that response.

Post-meeting note: the responses to the above questions are attached at the end of these minutes for information.

#### 11. PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW JULY 2017

Members of the Commission received a report that provided an overview of the different portfolios which fell within the scope of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission. Directors and Heads of Services presented a summary of their particular portfolio and during the ensuing discussion, officers responded to comments and queries raised by Members. Issues raised included the following:

- Members heard that as part of the channel shift programme, there would be an increase in the digitalisation of the customer services offer with more self-service machines. A Member questioned whether there were extra officers or resources to help those people who had poor English or who might not be able to use I.T. equipment. The Head of Revenues and Customer Support responded that they were aware of the needs of vulnerable people and were seeking additional funding to assist them. If people needed assistance, they often brought someone along with them; however there was a translation line in the Customer Service Centre for people with limited English and staff were present to provide some assistance where help was needed.
- Members heard that there was a new housing allocations policy which had reduced the banding system from five bands to three; this resulted in some applicants with no or very little housing need being removed from the register. A letter had been sent to over 4000 people on the housing register giving notice of their new band. Anyone who wished to appeal against the decision would need to do this online and officers explained that the online appeal form was very straightforward.
- A concern was raised that the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS)
  Programme would result in a loss of staff, and also that with the closure of
  some centres, people would have further to travel to access council
  services. The Head of Neighbourhood Services responded that the TNS
  Programme had been virtually completed in four areas of the city after a
  consultation had been carried out to hear the views of residents. People had
  been offered remodelled services which they could access. An
  organisational review had already been undertaken in 2015 as part of TNS.

Where staff were concentrated into fewer buildings, extended hours could often be offered there.

- A Member asked about out-of-hours accessibility to customer services and heard that there was an out-of-hours service on Saturday mornings.
- Concerns were raised about the communication difficulties faced by those residents who did not speak English. A Member added that in her ward, many of her constituents could not speak English and were not IT literate. A request was made for the new council contact cards to include some text in an Asian language advising people to telephone the council if they needed the information translating. Councillor Master, Assistant City Mayor, Neighbourhood Services explained that there were 16 primary languages in Leicester, which presented difficulties in any such exercise. At the request of a Member, it was agreed for a report on Language Services to be brought to a future meeting of the Commission.
- In response to a query about data relating to the use of IT services in libraries, the Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that there were differing levels of use around the city. There was about 250,000 hours of public library IT activity over the year and use was particularly busy in the city centre, Belgrave, Beaumont Leys and St Barnabas libraries.
- A Member expressed concern that there appeared to be a lack of support to help people from diverse communities to use IT in libraries. The Head of Neighbourhood Services responded that the council worked with the Adult Learning Service which provided basic skills training and more in-depth training depending on demand.
- The Commission heard that queries relating to the cutting of roadside grass should be referred to the Parks Service. Some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) were being compiled and would be posted on the Council's website to help people easily locate the relevant service to deal with their query.
- Concerns were expressed that people with queries were being advised to submit their query on-line which they could do at their library, but some didn't know how to use a computer and library staff were too busy to help. Views were expressed that there was insufficient help available to meet demand and it was queried whether funding could be given to the Adult Learning Service to could provide more sessions to teach basic IT. Councillor Waddington, Assistant City Mayor, Jobs and Skills commented that Members had identified a problem which warranted further investigation and it was concerning if people were missing out on the advice they needed. The Assistant City Mayor suggested that the Commission might wish to set up a Task Group to investigate this issue further.
- In relation to the Waste Management portfolio, Members questioned whether any action could be taken to educate communities to produce less waste including food waste. The Head of Waste Management responded that a composition analysis was carried out to analyse what was being thrown

away. This could be investigated further when the results were known. A reuse charity shop was located at the Gypsum Close site where unwanted items could be donated rather than tipped and bulky waste items could be donated to charities or the Council's Reuse Furniture Bank Scheme. There were also subsidised compost bins.

In response to a question regarding the waste contract; Members heard that in relation to the key performance indicators for recycling and composting; the target rate of 38.56 % had been exceeded as the actual rate achieved for 2015/16 was 41%.

- The Chair referred to private sector housing and heard that during the previous year there had been 140 notices to improve and 38 prohibition notices issued. The Head of Regulatory Services said he was not aware of any action taken against landlords in the event of tenants being mistreated, but he would check.
- A query was raised relating to fire safety in private sector housing and the Commission heard that the owners of the buildings were responsible for fire safety.
- A Member queried the length of time it took for a taxi driver to gain his licence. The Head of Regulatory Services responded that the drivers needed to pass a number of tests; however this was an issue he could look into further.
- Officers were asked whether there were plans to recruit more city wardens and give them additional powers. Members heard that there were plans to increase the number of wardens from 10 to 14 and also to streamline processes; however there was a need to ensure that all the legal processes were adhered to.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and thanked officers for attending.

## AGREED:

- 1) that the report be noted; and
- 2) that a report on the Council's Community Language Service be brought to a future meeting of the Commission.

## 12. REGULATION OF LEICESTER'S FOOD BUSINESS SECTOR

The Director of Local Services and Enforcement submitted a report that provided information on the food sector from a food regulatory perspective, proposed food law regulatory interventions for 2017/18, case studies and key issues in the development of the national framework. Members also received a power-point presentation a copy of which is attached to the back of these minutes.

During the ensuing discussion, officers responded to comments and queries raised by Members. Issues raised included the following:

- A Member said that she was pleased that the council were having conversations about obesity issues with Public Health. People were increasingly eating out or having take-away meals which were often highly calorific.
- It was noted that there had been a backlog of inspections and additional staff
  had been recruited and a Member questioned whether those staffing levels
  had been maintained. Officers acknowledged that there had been a
  significant backlog but permission to recruit had been given and the service
  was now well resourced.
- A comment was made that it would be useful for statistics in future reports to be shown as percentages as well as numbers.
- A member questioned whether tests were carried out on ice buckets and their contents and heard that while these had not specifically been tested, sampling was carried out on ice making machines. A recent case publicised in the media involving bacteria found in iced drinks, involved unclean hands going into the ice bucket.
- A suggestion was made for the council to charge for the advice given to the food sector. Members heard that the council were considering this, but there was a concern that if they ceased to offered free advice, people would be reluctant to pay which could lead to more problems in the future. Consideration was being given however to the recovery of costs incurred in re-inspections.
- In respect of allergens, officers explained that there were 14 main allergens, including gluten. Peanuts were the highest rated allergen and checks were currently being concentrated on that particular food.
- In response to a question, officers said that both inspections and reinspections were unannounced.
- Officers explained that they did not test food to verify whether it was vegetarian; there was no legal definition of vegetarian food.
- A Member expressed concerns relating to food businesses that had failed to register with the council. Officers responded that the Food Safety Officers knew their own area well and tended to notice if a new food outlet appeared. They were also becoming increasingly aware of food outlets that did not have a street presence; they might operate from a home address and therefore harder to identify.
- The Chair commented that he was very pleased to see an increase in the number of food outlets that had been awarded a four or five star food

hygiene rating. An officer explained that in addition to providing advice and support, there was a greater emphasis on compliance visits. If an establishment was non-compliant they would be given a report and an improvement would usually be evident when the food safety officers returned.

- It was noted that 1707 written warnings had been issued during 2016/17 and officers explained that these related to the number of written reports issued following compliance visits.
- In relation to a query regarding the channel shift programme, officers explained that many companies were happy with digitalisation and registered on-line. Many of the complaints relating to food hygiene issues were submitted on-line by the public. The service was also working to identify any vulnerable people for whom this might be problematic.
- In response to a query regarding food fraud and Halal food, the Commission heard that officers carried out desk top reviews into Halal food. Some businesses relied on their Halal certificate or accreditation and it was hoped to carry out some investigations into those accreditations. Any meat or poultry that had been Halal slaughtered should be traceable back to the Halal slaughter house. The Chair requested that a Halal desk top study be brought to a future meeting of the Commission.

The Chair drew the discussion to a close and asked the Commission to agree to congratulate and thank the department on their work in improving the food hygiene ratings. A further report was requested in 12 months-time and Members heard that there was a legal requirement to provide this report on an annual basis.

## AGREED:

- 1) that the report be noted;
- 2) that the Commission congratulate and thank the department for their work in improving the food hygiene ratings; and
- 3) that a halal desk top study be brought to a future meeting of the Commission.

# 13. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SPENDING REVIEW PROGRAMME - UPDATE

Members considered the Neighbourhood Services Spending Review Programme. Councillor Cutkelvin, the previous Chair of the Commission explained that the report had developed out of the Forward Plan of Key Decisions with the intention of developing a document that was more relevant for consideration at Scrutiny Commission meetings. Concerns were expressed that the document as presented was not self-explanatory and needed developing further. The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance confirmed that the document was a first draft rather than a

finalised version and could be amended.

#### 14. SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair invited comments from Members on the Scrutiny Commission work programme. A Member suggested that City Wardens (and their powers), should be added to the work programme and heard that a report had already been considered relating to City Wardens. Another suggestion was raised for the Commission to consider cold calling and doorstep loans. Members were invited to email further suggestions for topics for the work programme or for a task group review, to Jerry Connolly, the Scrutiny Policy Officer.

#### AGREED:

that Members email the Scrutiny Policy Officer with suggestions for the Commission's work programme for 2017/18

## 15. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

# Minute Item 10

Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission -12 July 2017

Responses to questions raised under agenda item 10 – Questions, Representations and Statements of Case.

1. Will the Scrutiny Committee recommend that the council conducts a full assessment of the current need for advice services, in Leicester, as well as an assessment of the likely increased need due to changes such as the full roll-out of Universal Credit and Brexit?

Response: Revenues and Customer Support Social Welfare Advice Service Lead.

The Scrutiny Committee thanks Unison for their question.

For your reference the Council has supplied a short background which is pertinent to the question.

The council remains committed to providing free Social Welfare Advice (SWA) in the city. In the current climate it is even more important to enable our residents to access, first time, the right advice and to do this the council needed to understand SWA need and demand. The council has commissioned a review of contracted Social Welfare Advice which started in 2016/17. The reviews remit was widen in June 2017 by the Executive to include the council's internal Welfare Rights Service and consult the public on a proposed model for SWA from 2018-23. The statements of aims of the review are:

- To ensure the continued provision of good quality, affordable and accessible advice across the City.
- 2. To explore and work with the City's social welfare advice sector to remove duplication and improve the efficiency, accessibility and quality of generalist and specialist social welfare advice. Ensuring the appropriate level of advice is given by a suitably qualified provider, in accessible locations.
- 3. To determine the location, frequency, opening hours and delivery method of social welfare advice.
- 4. To improve contract standards utilising the Tier 1/2/3 model of social welfare advice. Where:
  - a. Tier 1 provides assisted information and signposting;
  - b. Tier 2 provides general advice and general advice with casework; and,
  - c. Tier 3 provides specialist advice.
- 5. To ensure that all advice providers are suitably qualified and appropriate.
- 6. To ensure that referrals are made to the most appropriate social welfare advice provider, which is best placed to provide the required specialism or quality of advice, in accordance with an agreed referral framework.
- 7. To promote channel shift, wherever possible, at Tier 1, including self-help, in order to improve coordinated signposting and reduce face-to-face demand on advice services; whilst

recognising that face-to-face advice is still required for those customers who are most vulnerable and those unable to readily access these services.

- 8. To meet the multi-cultural needs of our diverse City by being responsive to existing and newly emerging communities; including managing language as a risk and defining at what level language should be provided within the scope of all contracts.
- 9. To review contracts in light of new or existing national Government schemes that may have replaced the need for local advice; or, consider implementing new local advice contracts where national schemes are withdrawn.
- 10. To ensure all contracts have Key Performance Indicators which are agreed in advance of contract, monitored and reviewed on a regular basis.

In order to predict or anticipate demand (to inform the proposed model) whether this is government-led legislative changes or local impacts, is a challenge. To do this the council has four key sources of research:

Firstly, we work in close partnership with the Advice Sector in the City through the Social Welfare Advice Partnership (SWAP). This partnership opportunity continues building and fostering relationships across the sector, sharing demand insight, knowledge, and, understanding the need of the client. SWAP has been invaluable in monitoring and sharing key advice demand indicators for the city such as Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Jobseeker's Allowance sanctions, and, DWP appeal monitoring. Their work has informed and influenced council policy.

Secondly, the council, in 2016 conducted a robust assessment of the current need for advice services in Leicester. Findings from this exercise have been fed back to the sector and the results have informed the Social Welfare Advice review, which is currently being conducted. The assessment included a questionnaire to all social Welfare Advice providers in the City exploring the demand and need in the City. In addition, we held a stakeholder engagement event on 1st August 2016 where the 21 organisations from the advice sector were consulted on what they saw as an ideal model of delivery, concluding that not one single organisation alone in Leicester could provide all the advice required. In addition the project manager visited all advice organisations in the City personally to understand the Advice offer available, gather client insight, and discover what good advice and outcomes look like.

Thirdly, we gathered and analysed relevant historical client data. As with all current contracts, contract management and service performance and monitoring takes place quarterly and trends in advice are monitored closely. These five contracts are with the following agencies: Age UK LeicesterShire & Rutland, Citizens Advice LeicesterShire, Mosaic Shaping Disability Services, Somali Development Services and The Race Equality Centre and the in-house council service is The Welfare Rights Service. This source data is incomplete across the 6 sources and therefore only partially informs the review's research.

Fourth, is research from professional bodies such as Citizens Advice (national organisation), Department for Work and Pensions own policy research and papers, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, LeicesterShire Diocese who have been monitoring impacts of welfare reform both nationally and locally and reporting upon their findings. The council continues to closely monitor updates in this research.

Our next step in the review, will be to consult with the public on the new proposed model of advice services from 31 July to 6 October 2017. Questions are posed to offer the opportunity for the public to comment on the proposed model and understand the demand for advice in the city from the perspective of those who may access it.

From this research position we will be able to make informed assumptions, based on current known demand, growth in demand year on year; plus any known/expected impacts informed by our four sources of research which will include anticipated demand from welfare reform and Brexit impacts.

2. Will the Scrutiny Committee ask the Council to have full regard to the Care Act statutory guidance regarding the need to provide adequate information and advice services to residents?

## Response from Adult Social Care - Director of Adult Social Care and Safeguarding

Adult Social Care (ASC) is clear that it complies with the Statutory Guidance for the Care Act 2014, ensuring that people have adequate access to advice and information. This is directly provided, provided via services that we commission and we also signpost people to appropriate sources of advice, from specialist providers.

A full review of our advice and information provision was completed as we prepared for the Care Act to be implemented from 2015.

#### Universal Services – available to all

Leicester City Council (LCC) has updated the ASC web pages to ensure that the Information, advice and guidance is relevant and succinct. Where possible LCC pages will link to nationally recognised / trusted resources such as NHS Choices and Age UK/Citizen Advice Bureau materials, to ensure consistency of advice for customers. We are in the process of carrying out a wider review so as to make more improvements based on page usage and structure, to improve customer journeys.

Recognising that independent financial advice is often required, LCC has a created a resource page that links to a range of providers to maximise choice for customers based on the area of financial requirement. Additionally, recognising that customers often require independent [and / or local] advice, the LCC pages include a page dedicated to "organisations that can help with information and advice" so as to maximise accessibility to quality information, advice and guidance across the city.

The ASC Customer Portal also acts as an entrance point to advice, as it directs customers to resources based on their needs [that they input], so as to maximise access to relevant information and advice. Likewise the online directory of services [Mychoice] is accessible for anyone looking to source local services and providers of care so as to maximise independence and support those that wish to self-help.

LCC also contract with niche providers (e.g. for the hard of hearing community) so as to ensure that advice is available as needed in accordance with the Accessible Information Standard.

Services provided to people who approach ASC in person

Many people contact ASC by telephone, to explore their needs, and the provision of information and advice is integral to both our telephone contacts and any follow up assessment outcomes.

All referrals received into our Contact and Response Service are provided with information, advice and guidance appropriate to the request. This can be provided over the telephone or in person, depending on the needs of the individual and we record the information and advice given, to inform any future requests. Support is given to individuals to make full use of the information to meet their needs as required."

# Minute Item 12



**REGULATION OF LEICESTER'S FOOD BUSINESS SECTOR** 

## **Present and Future Challenges**

12th July 2017





## **Purpose of the Presentation**

- Brief the Scrutiny Committee on what is happening in the Food Sector.
- Brief the Scrutiny Committee on the proposed Food Safety Team Service Plan
- > Present the City Council's approach to Food Regulation and continued service improvement.
- Inform the Scrutiny Committee on the Food Standards Agency Regulating Our Future program





## **About our Food Sector**

	A	В	С	D	E	Not yet rated	Total
Primary Producers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Manufacturers and Packers	6	13	28	26	12	8	93
Importers/Exporters	0	0	0	5	1	2	8
Distributors/Transporters	0	2	4	35	46	2	89
Retailers	2	8	89	367	310	15	791
Restaurants and Caterers	19	222	707	716	291	99	2054
Totale	07	245	000	1110	201	400	2025

- 27 'high risk' A's require 6 monthly interventions B's 12 months, C's 18 months, D's 24 months.
- E's low risk and subject to alternate intervention strategy 17 'Approved Establishments'







- c. 3,000 registered food businesses and of these
- Significant diversity in the range of food businesses
  - Significant number of NEW entrants into the Food Sector
- English is often not first or main language of communication
- Producing culturally specific foods, e.g. Paneer, Polish dumplings, Asian
- Key features of the Food Sector are:
- Long term increase in number of operators (2,494 on 1/4/2003)
- Further increase forecast in line with Economic Strategy (support for food tourism)
- Highly competitive market/low profit margins
- High turnover in 'restaurants and catering' sub-sector.





### **Food Regulation**

- As a Unitary Authority Leicester City Council regulates both Food Hygiene and Food Standards  $\,$
- Hygiene Regulation

- Ngletie Reguration: Inspection of Hygiene in food establishments Approval of certain food establishments Sampling of foods and hygiene swabs Production of Health Certificated for exports Use of Emergency Powers to close establishments presenting imminent risk Investigation of complaints

- Tressigation of complaints
   Standards Regulation
   Inspection of Standards in food premises labelling, food claims, nutritional declarations etc.
   Testing of food products
   Investigation of complaints

Enforcement follows a graduated approach

Regulation is supported by essential but non statutory advice and information to both establishments and the public







- Our aims are
- Prevent ill-health and death arising from food poisoning/contamination Ensure that manufacturers, retailers and caterers supply good quality
- Prevent and detect fraud in the production and description of food Assist Leicester's food businesses to comply with food law.
- In order to:
- Protect Public Health
- Protect Consumers Purse and Choice Protect Good Businesses from Unfair/Unlawful competition
- Protect our country's export markets
- In a way which promotes business growth and helps maintain a vibrant and safe food offering in the City



## **Our Food Safety Team**





- 1.5 FTE
- Oversight of inspection program, monitoring of standards, supervision of officers, support/review of enforcement actions
- Food Safety Team
  - . 10.2 FTE (1 officer currently on maternity leave) 'inspectors' with average length of experience of 9 years
  - inspections, investigations of complaints and food incidents
- Close working relationship with Internal services
- Trading StandardsCity Wardens

  - Licensing Public Safety Team
- Public Health
   Liaison with national and regional organisations
  - Food Standards Agency
     Trading Standards East Midlands

  - Public Health England

    National Food Crime Unit



## **Review of 2016/17**



#### Significant Incidents and events

- Withdrawal of Approval Eastern Catering
- Dutch Bangla prosecution for meat fraud
- Life With Taste Support for a growing business
- Prohibition of a Food Business Operator Boston Chicken & Pizza
- Seizure of illegally imported food Mega Oriental

#### FST Performance

- 1822 Food hygiene inspections
- 1273 Compliance checks
- 21 overdue inspections (carried to 2017/18)

#### Compliance

- Since the FSA Audit and the recommendations made we have seen a 12.5% rise in the level of broadly compliant food establishments (71.5% to 84%).
- Zero rated establishments has fallen by approximately 50%









## Service Plan 2017/18 - Priorities

- **▶** Completion of Planned Interventions
- Compliance Projects
  - Engage food businesses and service users through social/digital media
  - Explore the introduction of cost recovery for FHRS re-rating visit
  - Promotion of 5 Rated Establishments
  - Allergens
  - Sweet Marts
  - · Illicit Alcohol Bars/nightclubs
  - Review of Halal Certification assurance
  - GM Foods
- Advice and Support



- · Enhanced Registration
- Segmentation
- · Assurance and Standards

**Regulating Our Future** 

- Digital Technology and Data
- · Sustainable funding



## **Taking Stock**



- > To maintain a continuous improvement strategy with a focus on
- support for new establishments
- Timely and proportionate enforcement where there is non compliance
- Identification of food fraud
- Liaison with other regulators to improve the intelligence picture

#### > The National Challenge

- > To contribute to and support the Regulating Our Future program by
  - Providing feed back on Leicester experiences
- Being involved with FSA trials and discussions
- Ensuring the team are ready and working towards a changed regime
- Ensuring our food businesses are informed of change.







#### THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

**QUESTIONS?** 

