



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2019 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Khote (Chair)
Councillor Thalukdar (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Govind

Councillor Joshi
Councillor Solanki

In Attendance:

Councillor Clarke – Deputy City Mayor (Environment and Transportation)
Councillor Russell – Deputy City Mayor (Social Care and Anti-Poverty)

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23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for late arrival at the meeting was received in advance of the meeting from Councillor Solanki.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Master, (Assistant City Mayor with responsibility for Neighbourhoods), as although not a member of the Commission he usually attended its meetings in his capacity of Assistant City Mayor.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission held on 4 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

26. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

27. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

28. FUTURE DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE SERVICES IN LEICESTER

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report and presentation on a proposed future model for a jointly commissioned Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse service for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland.

Councillor Russell (Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Social Care and Anti-Poverty) explained that it was proposed that the services would be commissioned for three years on a fixed budget. This made it one of the few Council service areas not to be subject to a reduction in budget, reflecting the importance attached to these services.

The following points were made during discussion on this:

- Consultation on the proposed new service model would run until 24 November 2019. This would include a series of face-to-face events, as well as an opportunity to respond on-line. The cost of providing the information in community languages was being investigated, but some of the workshops would be held in community languages;
- Not all of the face-to-face events being planned would be open to the public to attend, due to the nature of the issues to be discussed. However, officers would welcome the opportunity to visit specific groups if requested as part of the consultation process;
- Since 2015 these services had been provided across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland and there was a commitment to continue to share knowledge and services on a cross-border basis where it was effective to do so. However, it was recognised that each area had very different needs and resources;
- Account had been taken of national expectations in the development of the proposed service model, along with data on who was using the services and who was not;
- A high volume of demand for services had led to some delays in receiving support under the current model;

- The new service system model included separate provision for domestic abuse and sexual violence, which previously had been offered as a combined service;
- Safe accommodation was often the first step towards someone feeling safe, but this needed to be flexible, due to differing needs;
- Although there was no local authority-funded counselling provision, the Police and Crime Commissioner would continue to fund some;
- Current services were provided through four specialist contracts by three specialist providers, who sub-contracted counselling work to other specialist providers;
- The Council funded services related to support, not legal processes. However, the current provider worked alongside solicitors to find people help with legal processes. This included clinics operated in conjunction with local law firms, which provided advice and access to services;
- Locally, approximately 20 – 25% of victims going to the Police were male, which was in line with national figures and was reflected in the structure of services provided;
- Over 70% of people contacting the service provider UAVA (United Against Violence and Abuse) were separated from their partner and were experiencing post-separation abuse;
- The diversity of the community in Leicester made it inappropriate to have one generic definition of black and minority ethnic service users. Care was being taken to ensure that there was no disparity between groups and/or communities and to identify if any group and/or community needed specific provision. This was reflected in the Equality Impact Assessment prepared as part of the service redesign process;
- Information on the diversity of service users and the wards they were from was available and could be provided to the Commission if wished; and
- It was hoped that people who had used the services and those who had received abuse would respond to the consultation, to advise on whether the services proposed were the right ones and would be accessible, as this would help the Council assess whether the proposed new service model was the right one.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be received and welcomed;
- 2) That the Head of Community Safety and Protection be asked to send a reminder to all Councillors about the consultation on future domestic and sexual violence and abuse services in

Leicester and an invitation to respond to the survey at <https://consultations.leicester.gov.uk/>; and

- 3) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to present a report to the Commission at an appropriate time on the diversity of users of domestic and sexual violence and abuse services in Leicester, including the wards and/or areas of the city service users are from and, if possible, information on identified barriers to accessing the services.

Councillor Solanki arrived at the meeting during consideration of this item

29. WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICES OVERVIEW

The Chair took this item and agenda item 7, “Recycling Bring Banks”, in the opposite order to that set out on the agenda, to help Members’ awareness of the services being provided.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report and a presentation giving an overview of the Waste Management service. These were introduced by Councillor Clarke (Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Environment and Transportation).

The following points were made during discussion on these:

- The Council had a duty to collect and dispose of waste. This was fulfilled through a 25-year Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with Biffa that ran from 2003 to 2028;
- Under this contract, 13 million waste collections were made each year, with 99.6% of bins being emptied each week on average. This Council was one of the few waste collection authorities that still provided weekly collections;
- A bulky waste collection service was provided, allowing for the free collection of up to five large items every two months and up to 15 bags/bundles of garden waste every two months. Despite this, items were still fly-tipped on streets;
- The waste collection contract did not include the removal of fly tipping, which was undertaken by the Council’s Cleansing Services, but education was undertaken where possible, including at Ward Community Meetings and via the Council’s City Wardens. “Hot spots” often occurred and it could be difficult to identify the perpetrators, but over the last four years fly tipping in the city had gone down by nearly 15%, in contrast to the national situation, where it had increased by 40% over the last five years. The allocation of City Wardens within wards was being re-profiled to ensure that all wards received appropriate coverage;
- The Council’s Housing services provided resources for collecting fly tipped items from Council housing estates. They were very active in doing this,

but it could be difficult to break established patterns of behaviour. Discussions were ongoing with the Director of Housing on how this could be further improved;

- Assisted collections were available for people who had problems moving household waste to its collection point;
- The Gypsum Close Household Waste Recycling Centre opened in 2015 for household waste and recycling, and trade waste;
- The reuse shop at the Gypsum Close Household Waste Recycling Centre was very successful and provided a source of income for the Council, through rental income and a profit share. The latter was triggered when profits reached an agreed level;
- The trade waste site at Gypsum Close accepted some different materials to those accepted from householders, due to the nature of the waste disposed of by businesses;
- Two education campaigns a year were targeted at university students. The 'move in' campaign, which also was targeted at landlords and letting agents, explained what could be recycled. For the 'move out' campaign, the Council worked with the British Heart Foundation to encourage donations of unwanted items, rather than just throwing them away. Final data was awaited on the results of the 2019 'move out' campaign, but it was thought that over 23 tonnes of donations had been made;
- Schools could use a waste collection provider of their choice. Biffa offered them a comprehensive service and currently approximately 100 schools used those services. A Service Development Officer worked to promote recycling in the community, as well as schools. Waste management carried out 20 education sessions with schools in 2018/19;
- Industry funding had been obtained for the foil recycling campaign, so there had been no cost to the Council for this. The campaign had ended recently and was being evaluated;
- The contractor (Biffa) was required to achieve an agreed percentage rate of recycling in the city. Penalties were applied if this was not achieved. Promotions sometimes were carried out to encourage recycling and a new communications plan was being developed in consultation with Biffa;
- The number of residents in flats participating in recycling had increased, but more work was needed on improving the quality of what was collected:
- Social media had been used to greatly improve communication on how waste disposal services operated in the city. The 2018 Christmas recycling videos had been particularly well received;

- The forthcoming city-wide “Metal Matters” campaign would be part-funded by industry;
- Destinations for the plastic waste collected in the city changed depending on market conditions and could vary between different grades of plastic;
- A PFI Board considered performance indicators included in the contract. A relatively low number of complaints about the service was received;
- A dedicated complaints system had been established for the service. If a trend was identified, a specific area could be targeted, or a specific crew highlighted. In the case of orange bags, customers sometimes stated they had not received their orange bags from the contractor, but this could be due to a range of issues;
- Scrutiny of recycling collections was not done at a level that would identify individuals who did or did not recycle on an everyday basis, but participation was monitored for specific campaigns to identify whether communications interventions had been successful. For example, the number of properties participating in the recycling service before a campaign could be compared to that after the campaign had ended;
- Detailed waste composition analysis had been undertaken in the past, to identify what people were putting in to general waste and what they were recycling. Consent was obtained from people for this to be done; and
- The Council had responded to all four consultations on the government’s proposals for its Resources and Waste Strategy. Further consultation on this was expected.

The Commission congratulated all concerned on the success of the Clean Air Day at Catherine Junior School and expressed the hope that other such days could be held.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be received and welcomed; and
- 2) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to consider how engagement with schools in relation to waste management can be improved.

30. RECYCLING BRING BANKS

The Chair took this item and agenda item 8, “Waste Management Services Overview”, in the opposite order to that set out on the agenda, to help Members’ awareness of the services being provided.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report outlining proposals to rationalise the Bring Bank network.

The Commission noted that only 300 tonnes of paper, glass and card were received per annum from recycling bring banks in the city, in contrast to 300 tonnes per week received through the kerbside recycling bag scheme. Bring banks also could encourage fly tipping, with items being left next to the bins. In addition, some of the bring bank bins needed refreshing. The opportunity therefore was being taken to consider how the service could be rationalised. Textile collection bins at bring banks were not included in this, as currently the Council did not offer a kerbside collection of textiles.

Some concern was expressed that, although 73% of respondents to the consultation exercise supported the introduction of mixed recycling bins, the number of respondents appeared to be low. However, it was noted that the response received was considered to be good for this type of consultation and matched the information obtained by the Council through its own monitoring of bring bank sites. Members were assured that responses received during the consultation, including information on which sites respondents used, were taken in to consideration in preparing the proposals being made for the rationalisation of the service.

Members suggested that promoting bring banks through local radio stations could be beneficial. Councillor Clarke (Deputy City Mayor with responsibility for Environment and Transportation) welcomed this suggestion, noting that some local radio stations had a very high number of listeners.

Members also expressed concern that some textile bins were very full and suggested that it could be beneficial to change bins currently used for the collection of other materials at bring bank sites to textile bins. It was noted that the contract required textile bins to be emptied as needed, so not all bins would be emptied with the same frequency. Officers advised that they were not aware of over-full textile banks, but the Head of Waste Services undertook to conduct a full survey of how often textile bins were being emptied and ask the Council's contractor (Biffa) to raise the matter with its sub-contractor (the Salvation Army).

In response to Members' enquiries, it was noted that it was proposed to remove the bins currently at The Triangle Public House on Coleman Road, as they were being used for a lot of trade waste. To stop the contamination of materials left in recycling bins in the future, the new bins would have a lock on either side of the lid and would have restricted openings on the top, to restrict what could be put in them.

Emptying of the bins remaining following rationalisation of the bring bank sites would be incorporated in to the collection rounds of kerbside recycling bags, but the frequency would vary by site and would be tailored as appropriate.

The Commission was advised that all of the proposed sites for the new recycling bins had been measured and could accommodate the new style. Non-Council landowners had been contacted for permission to use additional areas of land where needed and this already had been granted for most sites, should it be determined that the remodelling of the service would proceed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to circulate details of the proposed changes to bring bank sites to all Councillors once the changes have been confirmed;
- 2) That the Head of Waste Services be asked to undertake a full survey of textile bins at bring bank sites, to ensure that they are being emptied at appropriate frequencies; and
- 3) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to consider how recycling services can be further promoted, for example through the use of advertising on local radio stations.

31. WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission noted that the first meeting of the Task Group undertaking a review of the viability of a community lottery had been held and had been attended by lead officers, who had provided evidence for this review. The Task Group also would be contacting other local authorities and key stakeholders for their views.

All members of the Commission were invited to suggest items for consideration at its next meeting.

AGREED:

- 1) That the Chair of the Task Group be asked to report to the next meeting of this Commission on progress with the review "The Viability of a Community Lottery";
- 2) That Members of the Commission pass any suggestions for items to be considered at its next meeting to the Chair or the Scrutiny Policy Officer;
- 3) That the Scrutiny Policy Officer be asked to determine whether any matters relating to the forthcoming draft Local Plan are to be scheduled for consideration at the next meeting of this Commission; and
- 4) That the Scrutiny Policy Officer be asked to update the Commission's work programme as appropriate in response to matters arising from points 1) – 3) above.

32. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 7.44 pm