



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 6 AUGUST 2020 at 4:00 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

Councillor Ali
Councillor Byrne

Councillor Joshi

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Govind

Also Present:

Assistant City Mayor Kirk Master

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52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Solanki.

53. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Joshi declared that, his wife worked in the reablement team.

54. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes from the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission on February 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

55. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

56. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring officer reported that none had been received.

57. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & COVID 19 IMPACTS, KEY ISSUES AND RECOVERY PLANS IN LEICESTER

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental services introduced the report on Covid19 impacts, key issues and the recovery plan in Leicester.

It was noted that the report reflected data from Leicester from 23 March to 29 July 2020.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services then introduced the report in his respective area.

During the discussions Members of the Committee discussed the reopening of child minder groups and whether a notice could be uploaded on the Councils website to keep members of the public informed. The Head of Neighbourhood Services was pleased to hear that members of the public were eager to get back to services running as normal and that the Councils website could be updated, but noted that the reopening of community centres would be a phased process as the main priority was the welfare and safety of the service users. It was further noted that a letter would be sent out to all valued customers and community groups who use the community spaces to keep them updated on the Councils position in reopening centres.

Members of the Commission thanked Officers for the report and presentations provided to the Commission. Members were pleased to hear that services were still ongoing although in a different format during these difficult times. Members shared the positive messages received from the general public in the North Evington ward and noted that members of the public were pleased to have Officers knocking door to door to help people who may not have English as their first language with information on testing. It was noted that Members were available to help provide local information to help Officers deliver their services.

Members of the Commission were pleased to hear that local libraries were reopening and thanked Officers for the detailed information they had received on opening hours and how the service would be run to maintain social distancing. It was also noted that the information that was provided to Members and then relayed to the public was reliable and easy for the public to understand.

The Chair raised his concerns with the number of fly tipping cases across the city as recycling centres had been closed during the early stage of the lockdown period. The director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services noted that he would provide the meeting with precise and up to date data.

The Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhoods, noted that the Neighbourhood Services Team had worked very hard and continued to provide services during the difficult times. It was noted that the service had to act in line with government guidance and the role that the service played was a crucial role in

the running of the city and thanked Officers for their delivery.

Members of the Commission raised their concerns with the worrying crowds gathering outside of restaurants during the Eat out, Help Out scheme. It was noted that Regulatory Services were engaging with those premises, but Members were requested to raise concerns with any particular premises where they observe over crowding and breaches of restrictions directly to the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services or to the c19 business account email address so that the Enforcement Teams could visit the premises.

The Chair suggested whether Officers could visit few of the restaurants to encourage premises to operate within the guidelines and those that fail to do so, would face enforcement actions. It was noted that any business that was open had to have a Covid19 risk assessment in place, good hygiene measures and social distancing in place and that Regulatory Services were supporting businesses in the city to operate in a safe manner. It was suggested that Members use the c19 business email account to report any concerns they wish to raise about particular businesses.

It was suggested that there were a large number of people still visiting hoses and what was in place for Members to report these incidents. It was noted that the local authority had limited powers and Members were encouraged to dial 101 to report these incidents directly to the police but Officers were still available to deal with concerns raised by Members.

58. DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE & COVID 19 IMPACTS IN LEICESTER

The Head of Community Safety and Protection and the Domestic and Sexual Violence Team Manager delivered the presentation on Domestic and Sexual Violence and the Impacts in Leicester during Covid19.

It was noted that the main aims were to support the victims, improve service performance and to promote awareness.

The Chair and Members of the Commission thanked Officers for their detailed presentation.

During the discussion Members of the Commission raised their concerns with individual cases not resulting in the outcomes hoped by the victims. It was noted that there is a support mechanism for victims suffering from domestic violence. Each case is dealt with individually and the team also offer their support in gathering evidence to help the victim's case.

Members of the Commission raised their concerns that the ward data did not include any information on the North Evington ward individually, as it had with other wards. Members of the Committee requested that this data be provided to Members of the Commission.

Members shared anecdotal information that suggested that there had been a

rise in domestic violence incidents where a relationship involved a partner recently who are recently arrived in the UK. Officers explained that in some cases no recourse to public funds (NRPF) could lead to issues of vulnerability, in situations where people had entered the UK on a spousal visa but then subsequently become victims of domestic abuse.

Members also raised incidents of reported issues not being addressed properly or where the victim had been passed from one specialist to another. It was noted that a communication strategy had been developed to focus efforts on those sections of the community identified through needs analysis, this included the BAME community.

It was noted that areas that had an increase in the number of cases had extra messaging mechanisms in place to keep victims aware of the support available to them. In addition, areas that had low number of reports also had additional communications as it could be a case of under reporting and to encourage victims to come forward.

Members of the Commission requested that Officers provide members with the contact details for the different specialist agencies working together, so that they could use them as a means of reference to support their constituents.

During the discussions, Members of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Commission, participating in the meeting raised their concerns with complaints from women who were victims of “cat calling” and abuse on the streets. Officers explained that these incidents would be classed as a hate incident rather than domestic violence (which usually occurs between members of the same household) and that there were ongoing developments in this particular area and in reporting hate incidents and crimes. It was further noted that sexual violence data was being monitored against domestic violence data and part of the ongoing developments.

The Chair thanked Officers for their detailed presentation and the work that had been carried out.

59. KNIFE CRIME AND SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY

The Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhoods introduced the presentation on the Knife Crime and Serious Violence Strategy.

The Head of Community Safety and Protection, the Technical Manager for Neighbourhoods and Chief Superintendent Shane O'Neill from Leicestershire Police delivered the presentation on the Knife Crime and Serious Violence Strategy.

Emphasis was made on this project being a community led project as previously policies and strategies to tackle the issues faced by communities had been developed by the authority.

Officers shared key demographics of the victims and perpetrators together with

information on how the knife crime strategy was being developed through Community Conversations. Members of the Commission suggested that an invitation to the community events would help keep Ward Councillors aware of what is going on locally and ensure that the views of the local people are included.

The Chair suggested that the sports teams could be utilised to kick start a campaign against knife crime in the city. It was noted that this could be part of the next stage of the strategy where all the suggestions, recommendations and feedback from holding the different events would be analysed to develop the next phase of work. Officers indicated that they would return to the Commission with a report on how some of this work could be delivered.

During the discussions Members of the Commission raised their concerns with incidents of public order offence that had resulted in offensive weapons being brandished. Members were asked to ensure that their constituents continue to report all incidents to the police so that incidents can be appropriately logged and followed up by the police. Members of the Commission shared their concerns with the rise in number of serious incidents. It was noted that the recent tragic events were a concern and that the police were open to suggestions from Members that could support their aim to tackle serious violent crimes.

Members of the Commission thanked the team for the presentation and the level of work that had been contributed. Members were concerned with the age of the victims of knife crime and felt that the figures of people involved in knife crime had to decrease. It was suggested that working collaboratively with all agencies could help bring the overall numbers down.

Members of the Committee suggested that more data in terms of backgrounds should be provided to help tackle the issue and develop long term solutions within the communities to resolve this issue.

It was suggested that over the years, resources had decreased, and it was evident that the future of young peoples was at the centre of concern. The opportunities had to be available for young people in all communities to develop them selves in preparation for their futures. It was recommended that resources be put back into youth services, so that the young people are better equipped for the future, secondly, schools needed to be more proactive in educating students in and around the dangers of knife crime and finally, employment opportunities where young people were given ample opportunities to go into some form of employment. Members also noted that they look forward to the upcoming report to the Commission as it time for communities to come together and resolve the issue of knife crime and make Leicester a safer city to live in.

60. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental services provided the Commission with up to date information on fly tipping across the city.

It was noted that there was a decrease in numbers during March 2020, whilst April and May seen an increase in fly tipping numbers of up to 48%. It was suggested that this was due to the closure of both the city's recycling centres.

Overall the numbers had flattened again in July 2020 with 720 reported incidents of fly tipping compared to 802 in July 2019.

It was also noted that breaches on Covid19 restrictions can be reported to 101 or on the Council website.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions to the Commission and closed the meeting at 7:23pm.