



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 11 MARCH 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)

Councillor Ali  
Councillor Govind  
Councillor Solanki

Councillor Aqbany  
Councillor Joshi

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**87. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The Chair led on introductions and it was noted that there were no apologies for absence.

**88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**89. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission from 28 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

**90. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

**91. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer noted that none had been received.

**92. COVID 19 UPDATE**

The Director for Neighbourhood and Environmental Services provided the meeting with current updates. It was noted that:

- Waste Management continued to deliver and had received great support from Biffa. It was suggested that the re-use shop would re-open soon at Gypsum Close
- Green waste and cleaning services had also re-commenced.
- Libraries were operating on an order and collection basis whilst community centres remained closed as advised by public health (some community centres remained open where testing centres had been set up).
- Allotments remained open.
- Community Safety Teams and Regulatory Services were delivering certain elements of their service.

As part of the discussions it was noted that any retailer who was required to close as part of the lockdown rules but was now operating as a food business would require being registered with the Food Safety Team.

The Deputy Director of Finance provided an update. It was noted that:

- The Revenue and Customer Services team continued to operate, with most staff working from home and some at City Hall. Members of the public were asked to use the online services.
- The Test and Trace team which had dealt with 9500 cases since December 2020 at a 90% success rate continued to deliver their service.
- The Service continued on administering the grant schemes that were available. 21,000 grants had been delivered to 5,400 businesses and charities, some of whom were repeat payments. It was suggested that the last grants would be made available in April.

As part of the discussions it was noted that information around energy efficiency grants would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting from the Deputy Director of Finance.

Financial Hardship grants were approved to 45% of applicants after being asked to isolate following Test and Trace. And 18% of the discretionary grant scheme had been approved. Voluntary Action Leicester were administering the grants for community organisations and this information would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

There had been support provided to some of the locally effected manufacturing businesses and it was suggested that the wider manufacturing sector needs to be observed.

Support for essential retail was only provided on a discretionary basis. It was suggested that if businesses were not required to close then no grants were available. Information on car mechanics and dry cleaners would also be circulated outside of the meeting.

Although discretionary grants were available to taxi drivers in other parts of the country, it was noted that the city council were aware of this but did not provide this scheme, but this was under review.

AGREED:

That the Services delivering the work be thanked for their continuous efforts.

### **93. SAFER LEICESTER PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2021-2024**

The Deputy City Mayor and the Chair of the Safer Leicestershire Partnership Board introduced the current Safer Leicester Partnership Plan (SLP) item. It was noted that the consultation had been undertaken with partner organisations and the plan was brought to the Commission as the views of the Commission were valued to understand and reflect the needs of the local people. It was noted that the plan was reviewed annually.

The Head of Community Safety and Protection delivered the presentation on the Safer Leicester Partnership Plan

As part of the discussions it was noted that:

- It was suggested that the priorities were adequate whilst some priorities may need refreshing as time goes on. It was noted that elected Members were all emailed for their contributions as consultants as part of the consultation work.
- Members of the Commission welcomed the report and the initiative. It was suggested that Members agreed with the priorities set out in the presentation and suggested this item stayed on the work programme, for future Commission meetings to allow Members to monitor annually.
- A theme group of partners worked on individual agenda items to present to the SLP Executive meetings on their findings and if required, senior level involvement would be involved to resolve matters that emerge.
- It was suggested that as a collective there were actions that could be taken to resolve some of the priorities and concerns such as street drinking. It was noted that, Public Space Orders gave the police powers to confiscate alcohol from street drinkers whilst wider work with partners such as the City Wardens Team helped address concerns with litter created by street drinkers.
- It was suggested that the key enforcement powers were the public protection orders, with the potential of introducing extra signage or a scheme to educate the offenders.
- These priorities were monitored by the SLP where a team leader was responsible to present dashboard of information which indicated the team were meeting their priorities satisfactorily.
- It was suggested that a new strategy was being considered to tackle the different nuances of alcohol.
- Although the Noise Team had adapted to the new ways of working, it was suggested that there had been a slight delay in installing noise recording equipment as a result of the pandemic and analysing information collected by the noise recording equipment. Recording from outside of properties was still ongoing and appropriate action was being followed up, with seven seizures since September.
- It was noted that information on crime and disorder hotspots was shared from the Police Crime Commissioners office for both crime and anti-social

behaviour on a quarterly basis. It was suggested that information was available for the public on local crime on the police website.

- It was noted that the fund for the SLP had decreased over the years, but partners had come together to deliver the priorities with an additional support from the Police Crime Commissioners office where all the Community Safety Partnerships receive an allocation for the full financial year.

AGREED:

- 1) That Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission support the three-year plan and the priorities going forward;
- 2) That Members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission request future updates on the final plan and progress reports on a quarterly basis;
- 3) And that, the members of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission suggest a joint scrutiny meeting with the Health Scrutiny Commission around alcohol misuse and street drinking.

## **94. POLLUTION CONTROL**

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the item on Pollution Control and Delivered a presentation on the noise and pollution control work that had been undertaken.

As part of the discussions it was noted that:

- Members had complaints from residents during the lockdown period with concerns of garden bonfires. It was suggested that larger garden bonfires were likely to lead to complaints from neighbours, whereas incinerators that did not emit smoke were less likely to cause a nuisance. Officers suggested that residents should log their complaints on the website which would be followed up by a member of the team and advisory letters had been sent out to residents.
- It was noted that areas that had bigger garden spaces were common areas where complaints with bonfires would be received.
- Members shared their concerns with smaller garages where car repairs and service works were carried out leaving oil spills in public footpaths. It was noted that, the City Council were no longer responsible for the waste from smaller garages, who now sent their engine oil waste away. If the concerns were over oil going down the drains, then Severn Trent would be the point of contact and a health and safety inspection. If Members had concerns with particular garages, this information could be shared with the team and the City Warden Services could further investigate.
- Members of the Commission praised the team for the transformation of the site where the Morningside Arena now stands.
- It was noted that the Groby Road school site had a contaminated land condition attached to the plans and the Planning Department may be able to explain better why the work had seized to progress.
- It was noted that there were 29 licenses for petrol storage, 28 of which were petrol stations and one private company, which stored petrol for its own vehicles.

- It was noted that the service would investigate any complaint that was raised related to odour from local commercial activity. This included takeaways, restaurants, food production and dye houses. Odour from domestic properties was an area that the service could not investigate.

**AGREED:**

- 1) That the Director of Neighbourhoods and Environmental Services be requested to bring the results of the government funded pollution pilot project when they are available;
- 2) And that, the Officers be thanked for their informative presentation and this item be added to future work programmes.

**95. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair suggested that Members should contact the Chair or the Scrutiny Policy Officer, if they had any items they wish to have considered.

**96. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

There being no items of urgent business, the meeting closed at 8:03pm.