



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: THURSDAY, 21 OCTOBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)
Councillor Solanki (Vice Chair)

Councillor Joshi, Councillor Nangreave, Councillor O'Donnell, Councillor Waddington

In Attendance:

Councillor Claire, Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Westley.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that the items on the agenda would be taken out of order, with the Public Safety Team Update being taken before the Litter and Fly-Tipping Strategy.

The Chair announced that Covid-19 updates would no longer be a regular item on the Commission and that any necessary updates could be brought by Officers when appropriate.

Officers stated they would update Councillor Waddington on the status of Fosse Library as it was currently being used as a Covid test site.

The Chair also joined Councillor Joshi in remembering and paying tribute Councillor Mo Chohan on the third anniversary of his passing.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission held 9 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

5. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

6. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

7. GAMBLING POLICY 2022-2025

Councillor Claire, Deputy City Mayor for Regulatory Services introduced the item, noting that the Gambling Act required Local Authorities to publish a Gambling policy. It was noted that the existing policy would expire in January 2022 and that a new policy was out for consultation and would be brought before the Licensing and Public Safety Committee and Full Council.

Deborah Bragg, Licensing Team Manager, presented the item. It was noted that:

- The Gambling Commission had updated its guidelines with some minor changes, reflected in the policy.
- The Local Area Profiles had also been updated.
- Various bodies such as the Police, other Council departments, and gambling charities had been consulted on the policy.

In response to Member's comments it was noted that:

- A previous Commission had led a task group on Gambling policy. Recommendations made by this task group had fed into the updated policy.
- The Government had introduced limits on fixed odds betting machines in betting shops.
- The Code of Conduct outlined by the Gambling Commission outlined procedural rules for Gambling premises which they had to keep in line with.
- A Gambling premises would need first to get approval from the Gambling Commission before getting final licensing approval from the Local Authority. The Local Area Profile was used in the licensing process.
- Applications for Gambling licenses were very rare, with the industry increasingly becoming online focused. There had been a Government call for evidence on the online gambling industry. Regulation of online gambling was not possible at the local level.

- A no casino policy had not been introduced in the city. There were 3 existing Casinos when the policy became an option and there had been no applications for a new Casino since then. If the policy were to be brought in it would need to be evidence based.
- Gambling premises had very stringent conditions on protecting vulnerable people.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Commission notes the report.
2. That the Commission recommends the Council to consider how a No Casino Policy would be implemented,
3. That the Commission recommends that the Council participate in the Government call for evidence on the online gambling industry.
4. That the Commission recommends that the impacts of television advertising of gambling be considered in the policy.

8. LITTER AND FLY-TIPPING STRATEGY

Bob Mullins, Head of Standards and Development for Neighbourhood and Environmental Services, presented the item, it was noted that:

- A strategic approach to litter and fly tipping had been developed by the Council in 2016. Which led in a 15% reduction in fly tips from 2016-2019. However there had been a 24% increase in fly tipping in 2020-2021, in-line with national trends.
- There were various ways for residents to dispose of waste legitimately.
- Businesses had certain legal duties regarding the waste they generated.
- Local Authorities were only responsible for clearing fly tips on public land.
- The Council avoided a one size fits all approach to fly tipping, taking a more localised, targeted approach.
- There were partnerships with various agencies such as the Environment Agency and Canal and River Trust in order to understand and combat litter and fly tipping.
- There had been several successful campaigns on these issues in collaboration with local partners.
- There had been several successful area-based interventions such as on Tudor Road.
- It was hoped that the various ways of reporting local issues would all be recorded to the same online database, making the process more efficient.
- An Action Plan was in place to focus on the priorities of the service.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- It was calculated that clearing up fly tips in Leicester cost the Council £374,000 in 2019, in 2020 it cost £847,000.
- The possibility of a telephone number to report fly tipping issues would be considered.
- The Action Plan was out for comment.

- The contract with Biffa would expire in 2028, opportunities to vary the contract had been explored such as with the green waste collection service.
- Parks and Open Spaces staff had fed into the Action Plan.
- There were communications between Highways and Cleansing services on the issue of abandoned vehicles.
- There was a webpage where people could volunteer to support cleansing efforts.
- A hot washer had been purchased in order to clean up Paan on the streets.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the report.
2. That the Commission recommends the possibility of a telephone number for fly tipping reporting be considered.
3. That the Commission recommends that another campaign to address the issues relating to waste outside Paan shops.
4. That the Commission recommends that the cost of cleaning up litter and fly tips be highlighted in the Strategy and to the general public,

9. PUBLIC SAFETY TEAM UPDATE

Govind Mandora, Team Manager for Public Safety, presented the item. It was noted that:

- Due to the pandemic, the priorities of the public safety team had changed since the last time the Commission was updated.
- The public safety team was a relatively small team and advised on health and safety legislation.
- The team had been busy during the pandemic, advising businesses on the latest rules and legislation. Enforcement action taken during the pandemic was limited.
- Covid risks were now integrated into consideration for projects of the team.
- The team was currently looking at high-risk premises.
- There was an 18-month recovery plan in place for the team.
- Shisha premises were a major issue for the team as there was presently no national licensing policy on the matter.
- There were a large number of new and unrated businesses which still needed to be reviewed.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- Support was still being provided to businesses for creating risk assessments for premises.
- With regards to manufacturing premises, the Health and Safety Authority was primarily responsible. However the Council stepped in to help advise on Covid measures during the pandemic.

- The effort to assist public health during the pandemic was made across the range of regulatory services.
- The heavy workload of the team was managed by prioritising the most high-risk areas.
- Other premises where controls were limited continued to be an issue.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the report and thanks the public safety team for their work.
2. That the Commission recommends that no further cuts be made in the budget to the public safety team.

10. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair noted that any suggestions for future items for the Commission should be emailed to himself or the Scrutiny Policy Officer.

11. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

