



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2022 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Thalukdar (Chair)
Councillor Solanki (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Aqbany
Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Pickering

Councillor Fonseca
Councillor O'Donnell
Councillor Rahman

Councillor Westley

Also Present:

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

Councillor Clarke, Deputy City Mayor for Environment and Transportation
Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor for Social Care and Anti-Poverty

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27. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Chamund.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interest they may have in the business on the agenda.

There were no declarations of interest.

29. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that Members of the Housing Scrutiny Commission had been invited to the meeting to consider the safe accommodation strategy and CrASBU update, which also fell under the portfolio of that Commission.

30. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

It was noted that the issue of the retendering of the Council's contract with Biffa had been raised at the previous meeting. A briefing note for Commission Members on the retendering process including timescales was requested

AGREED:

1. That the Minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission held 16 August 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.
2. That a briefing note on the retendering of the Biffa contract, including details of the process and timescales, be provided to Commission Members.

31. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

32. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

33. DOMESTIC ABUSE - SAFE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

The Director of Social Care and Early Help submitted a presentation updating the Commission on the progress of the Domestic Abuse – Safe Accommodation Strategy. It was noted that this area fell under Community Safety Services which now fell under the Social Care portfolio.

The Team Manager for Domestic and Sexual Violence presented the item, it was noted that:

- The Council was required to create a Safe Accommodation Strategy under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- The Strategy included a number of priorities including establishing a Partnership Board and expanding the accessibility and suitability of safe accommodation.
- All target dates set out by the legislation were met.
- 'By and for' BME safe accommodation had been expanded.
- Respite Rooms had been piloted, bringing in 5 specialist accommodations.
New locations had opened to cover a wider area of the city.
- Specialist support around issues such as substance abuse and mental health had been expanded.
- The trauma informed framework aimed to discover and implement best practice across organisations and bodies.
- The aim was to have accommodation suitable for all different needs.
- Engagement activity with new facilities would be ongoing.

- A programme of workforce training for Council staff would commence soon.
- The performance management framework would be reviewed as data came in.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- This strategy had been developed as a result of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. All of the Council's work and support around domestic violence was much broader than what was covered in the Strategy.
- Work had been done with Housing Officers to look at the ability to remove perpetrators from tenancies. However, this could involve giving priority to perpetrators for other Council accommodation which would present problematic optics.
- Housing Officers would also be consulted on what barriers exist for victims accessing safe accommodation.
- Extrapolated national data indicated that 54k people in Leicester had been victims of domestic abuse since age 16.
- The community champions scheme was focused on providing training on domestic abuse to different partners.
- The Council was supporting hundreds of people a quarter in the area of domestic abuse. Work was ongoing to understand what factors lead to people going through different access points.
- The accommodation provided by the Strategy was entirely within the city boundaries, however a national network existed which could place victims in other Authority areas.
- There were good relations with private sector providers enabling quick turnarounds on areas such as respite rooms.
- Accommodation options were becoming more supportive for different needs such as providing resources for children.
- Statistics were available in issues such as victims returning to perpetrators.
- Joint working between providers and different Council departments aimed to address barriers such as school admissions.
- A focus in recruitment was on language skills to enable those with language barriers to access the Service.
- Focus group discussions with community groups had led to a radio campaign.
- Those feeling domestic abuse would be given priority for Council accommodation.
- The sufficiency of staffing levels would be reviewed as more data came in.
- Grant money covered administrative costs as well as accommodation costs.
- Poverty and financial concerns were a key strand of vulnerability in this area, so there were concerns of how the cost of living crisis could impact on domestic abuse levels.
- Specialist support was available for those with immigration issues.
- The Government funding was £857k for a 12-month period. The funding

formula for future Government funding would be reviewed.

AGREED:

- That the Commission notes the update.

34. CRASBU UPDATE

The Director of Social Care and Early Help submitted an update on the work of the Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (CrASBU).

The Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services introduced the item, noting that CrASBU continued to support victims and investigate complex and high-risk cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The Service Manager for Community Safety and Protection presented the item, it was noted that:

- Low level ASB involving council tenancies was currently dealt with primarily by Housing Officers, however this responsibility would soon be passing to Community Safety with an additional 4 Officers.
- CrASBU were able to address ASB through a number of mechanisms including legal sanctions, with evictions as a last resort.
- The work of CrASBU increased during the Covid-19 period due to an increase in reporting.
- CrASBU referred cases to the Changing Futures Programme where the criteria was met.
- In 2022 the average cases per month CrASBU dealt with was 159, with a large influx of cases being referred from Housing Officers over the last few weeks.
- The Community Trigger allowed victims and communities to demand reviews of cases when they were not satisfied.
- CrASBU used a peer review process to help solve complex cases.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- CrASBU were aware of ASB issues on the streets coming off of Narborough Road, the work to resolve the situation was being driven by the Police.
- Issues with problem landlords could be tackled with selective licensing.
- The previous intervention to deal with ASB on West Street was successful and considered a good model going forward.
- Joint action groups on ASB were now entirely closed, with the role of open joint action groups being passed to Ward Community Meetings. The possibility of an open joint action group was being considered in the wake of the unrest in East Leicester.
- Issues with people on the homeless pathway causing disruption were known. A report into tenancy sustainment for those on the homeless

pathway had been commissioned.

- With ASB soon coming entirely under Community Safety, there would be able to be more joint-working to address issues earlier.
- There was a presentation regarding the Changing Futures Programme which would be sent to all Members. Online sessions about Changing Futures were also available for Members.

Members expressed the view that the Council's approach to ASB should be stricter, and that the examples of positive interventions to resolve severe ASB issues on West Street and London Road should be followed.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission requests that Members receive a copy of the report on tenancy sustainment for those on the homeless pathway.
2. That the Commission requests that all Members be sent the presentation on the Changing Future Programme.
3. That the Commission requests that Members' comments be taken into account by Officers.

35. LITTER AND FLY TIPPING STRATEGY REPORT

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a presentation on the Neighbourhood Services Litter and Fly Tipping Strategy for Leicester.

The Deputy City Mayor for Environment and Transportation introduced the item, noting that the Litter and Fly Tipping service was data led, and that Member engagement was important to locate issues.

The Head of Standards and Development presented the item, it was noted that:

- The framework to litter and fly tipping was to prepare, protect, prevent, and pursue. This was the framework for the ongoing action plan.
- The Council's waste and recycling contract with Biffa would end in 2028.
- 140 Street Cleansing Officer provided weekly maintenance of streets.
- The allocation of resources was determined by a data and intelligence led approach.
- The team ran campaigns to promote tidiness in the city.
- Targeted interventions included area based activities and action days.
- Fly tips in 2021/22 had fallen to pre-Covid levels.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that:

- Mapping of areas was in-line with DEFRA categorisations. A map of frequency of cleaning for each street for each ward would soon be available.
- The frequency of cleaning for each street was determined by footfall. This also determined where litter bins were placed, but bins could be put

in places with lower footfall if there were issues.

- The cleaning of side streets was often determined by timing factors.
- There was now only 1 footway sweeper, which attended each ward on a rota basis. Tending to focus on the main gateways into the city.

Members noted concerns with the focus of cleaning efforts being on main roads, leaving side streets dirtier.

AGREED:

- That the Commission requests that Members' comments be taken into account by Officers.

36. KNIFE CRIME AND SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY WORK

The Director of Social Care and Early Help submitted a presentation on the ongoing Knife Crime Strategy for Leicester.

The Deputy City Mayor for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services introduced the item, noting the importance of partnership between the Council and external organisations on tackling knife crime.

The Community Safety (Knife Crime) Co-ordinator presented the item, it was noted that:

- The strategy was a pledge in the City Mayor's manifesto.
- The strategy was developed in consultation with the community.
- The strategy developed several recommendations on areas such as education and employment.
- Education initiatives from the strategy included a school and mentoring programme run by LCFC, and a project aimed at supporting those at risk of exclusion from schools.
- An initiative to support communities was opening up more school spaces for community use.
- A community parent forum had been developed.
- The Leicester Employment Hub was working with communities to support people getting employed.
- Statistics showed that knife crime involving under 25s had declined over the last 2 years.
- An operational group involving various Council departments had been developed to drive the work of the strategy.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that:

- The funding for the strategy would come from the internal budgets of all departments involved. There were also budgets from organisations such as the Safer Leicester Partnership and Violence Reduction Network which were drawn upon.

- The system was starting to join-up more cohesively with stakeholders, with the next aim being joint-up with communities as well.
- The Serious Violence Group was where all partners fed into the knife crime issue.
- The Prevention team received referrals from Police for vulnerable people.
- Street-based youth work team went out and engaged with young people not using Council services.
- The Council was happy to support community groups looking to engage on knife crime with help finding funding.
- University research into this area would be based on research funding.

Members praised the work of Officers in this area. Members also expressed concerns about the levels of funding from the Government to address these issues and wanted more longer-term funding. Concerns were expressed over the lack of early intervention now in place and emphasised the need for prevention to be the priority.

AGREED:

- That the Commission requests that Members' comments be taken into account by Officers.

37. WORK PROGRAMME

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

38. ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair requested a verbal update on the Council's position regarding recent unrest in the east of Leicester.

The Director of Social Care and Early Help noted that as part of the major incident process, the Police were chairing regular meetings with a range of partners and Government representatives. The Council was running a recovery group to monitor concerns about tensions re-emerging and evaluate what happened. Sub-groups were targeted towards different age groups and communities. Terms of reference were being written for a review into the incident.

Members noted that they had reported concerns about rising tension in their areas in late August and that work to address the situation did not begin until the situation flared up into a major incident. Members expressed their shock and sadness at how events had unfolded and impacted communities.

The meeting closed at 8.48pm.