



Leicester
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SCRUTINY
COMMISSION

Held: WEDNESDAY, 25 JANUARY 2017 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Cutkelvin (Chair)

Councillor Aldred
Councillor Dr Chowdhury

Councillor Fonseca
Councillor Hunter

In Attendance:

Councillor Master, Assistant City Mayor - Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Waddington, Assistant City Mayor - Jobs & Skills

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62. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gugnani and Councillor Halford.

63. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Dr Chowdhury declared Other Disclosable Interests in the following agenda items:

- Agenda item 8, "Community Asset Transfer Update", in that he worked in a voluntary organisation that could be involved in asset transfer in the future;
- Agenda item 10, "Citywide Voluntary and Community Sector Support", in that he had received support under the contract discussed in the report and the organisation he worked for was a delivery partner for a project funded through the European Social Fund and the Lottery Fund; and

- Agenda item 11, “Response to the Leicester Advice Sector: A Report Outlining the Risk and Demands in the City”, in that his employer received some funding from the Council and HMRC to provide advice to city residents.

Councillor Fonseca declared Other Disclosable Interests in the following agenda items:

- Agenda item 10, “Citywide Voluntary and Community Sector Support”, in that he was a member of a voluntary organisation affiliated to Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) that had received assistance from VAL some years previously to frame a constitution; and
- Agenda item 11, “Response to the Leicester Advice Sector: A Report Outlining the Risk and Demands in the City”, in that he had done some voluntary work with the Citizens Advice Bureau, (now Citizens Advice Leicestershire), approximately three years ago.

In accordance with the Council’s Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors’ judgement of the public interest. They were not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the relevant items.

64. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Commission received the minutes of its meeting held on 30 November 2016, noting that amendments to minute 54, “Transforming Neighbourhood Services – North East”, had been tabled at the meeting.

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 30 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record, subject to the incorporation of the amendments attached at the end of these minutes, (new text shown in italics).

65. PROGRESS ON ACTIONS AGREED AT THE LAST MEETING

The Chair gave a verbal update on actions agreed at the last meeting, reminding Members that the Commission had asked her to write to the City Mayor, asking him to advise the Executive of the Commission’s regret that the Youth Services Review was not being undertaken concurrently with the Transforming Neighbourhoods Programme, (minute 54, “Transforming Neighbourhood Services – North East”, as amended, referred).

As consultation on the Youth Services review had only just started, the sending of this letter had been deferred, in order to ascertain what was being included in the review and therefore whether the letter was still needed. Having seen

the scope of the review, it was clear that it did not include a review of the use of buildings, so the Chair would now send the letter to the City Mayor.

66. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised the Commission that, further to minute 39, "Citizens Advice Leicestershire City Advice Services Contract Performance 2015-16", (Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission 5 October 2016), work on developing "problem noticer" training was progressing and it was hoped that it soon would be formally incorporated in to the Member Development Programme.

The Chair also noted that the format of the standing item on the Commission's agenda relating to Spending Reviews had changed, so that details of each review relevant to this Commission's work now would be presented in a table, setting out details of the reviews and updates on their progress, including the timeline for each review and the Commission's involvement. (See agenda item 13, "Spending Reviews")

67. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

68. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

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

69. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER UPDATE

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report providing an overview of the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy, a summary of the work undertaken as part of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services project and information on lessons learned from early experiences.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services introduced the report, explaining that:

- The process used enabled community groups to make an early offer to lease community premises before firm options for those premises were developed. This gave such groups time to develop an understanding of what was involved in managing community premises before they made a commitment;
- This was followed by a six-week consultation period and early consultation was undertaken with Ward Councillors;

- The Council procured assistance for groups through the organisation Locality. This assistance was optional, but could include things such as helping groups write business cases, so helping provide groups with an understanding of what was involved in managing a building;
- Bids received were assessed by Property Services officers against the criteria specified for each transfer and Ward Councillors were consulted again before a decision was taken;
- The business case provided by the successful bidder was written in to the lease for the building they would manage; and
- It was recognised that some asset transfers had been more successful than others. For example, some organisations had increased hire charges significantly, and access to transferred buildings had become difficult for some groups. Work to resolve these issues was ongoing.

The Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services noted that every time a CAT was undertaken, the Council learned something, as all transfers were different. Great care was taken throughout the transfer process to ensure that the organisations leasing premises were able to take on this role, as it was important that assets did not become liabilities for the groups managing them.

The following comments were then made during discussion on the report:

- The report was welcomed and the process by which organisations acquired a lease of community building was noted;
- It could be useful for a handbook, or guidance, to be provided on how to prepare a business plan for a community asset transfer, in order to reduce the challenges faced by organisations interested in taking on the lease of a building;
- The Council was very aware that voluntary groups often relied on a few key individuals to manage or maintain the group, but if those individuals were no longer able to continue in this role, the group could find it difficult to function efficiently. The criteria for CAT therefore included the need for assurance from a group that its proposals were financially viable and that it had strong governance. However, leases under CAT contained terms under which a group could terminate a lease before it ended;
- Locality recommended that groups undertook their own risk analysis as part of the business case they prepared and some groups now did this;
- The criteria that groups or organisations needed to fulfil to be considered for taking on the lease of community building were set out in the Council's CAT policy. The CAT process was designed to ensure that community assets remained in use for the community, so the heaviest weighting was given to the community benefit of the transfer that bidding groups anticipated;

- Information on the building being considered for transfer was available to interested organisations at the start of the CAT process, such as its size and current running costs;
- Workshops were held when a proposed transfer was advertised, which also gave groups an indication of whether they would be considered suitable to take on a lease;
- Information was set out in the Council's CAT policy on how a community-led group was defined for the purposes of CAT;
- A standard lease for transferred buildings was not used, as the terms for each transfer were different, to reflect the different opportunities identified and timescales preferred or required for each transfer. For example, an organisation could lease a building for a few years, to see whether it worked for them, but others could take on a longer lease;
- When considering the future of a building, a range of disposal options were considered;
- Once a group had taken on a lease for a building, assistance was available on an on-going basis from the council's Neighbourhood Services officers; and
- A key fob entry system had been introduced for various community buildings in the city, with the Council retaining management of these buildings. This meant that access to these buildings was increased, as staff did not need to be on the premises. Most of the buildings included in this scheme had been identified through the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme.

Some concern as expressed over whether adequate assistance was available for groups and organisations leasing community buildings after they had taken on a lease, but Members felt that the effectiveness of assistance provided could be monitored as the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme developed.

AGREED:

- 1) That the undertaking of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme in stages be welcomed;
- 2) That the Head of Neighbourhood Services be asked to provide Members with any additional information available to that provided in Appendix 1 to the report on the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy, in particular on the criteria used against which an organisation's suitability for Community Asset Transfer is considered and, if available, information on any criteria used by the Locality organisation;

- 3) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to report to the Commission on the success, or otherwise, of the key fob system used to provide access to some community buildings;
- 4) That representatives of some groups who have taken on leases for community buildings be invited to advise the Commission of the success, or otherwise, of Community Asset Transfers; and
- 5) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services and the Head of Neighbourhood Services be asked to consider the comments recorded above when considering future Community Asset Transfers.

70. PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES & STREET DRINKING)

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services submitted a report providing details of the work undertaken to date to consider establishing a city-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) around new psychoactive substances (“legal highs”). Information on plans to consult residents and communities on the continuation of the current street drinking PSPO also was included in the report.

The Head of Community Safety explained that:

- The Commission was being asked to comment on these PSPOs as part of the consultation process for each of them;
- The street drinking PSPO gave Police powers to ask people not to drink in the street, or to take substances away from, or arrest, people who did not comply;
- Both PSPOs would be valid for three years. The previous street drinking PSPO was due to expire in December 2017, so consultation currently was being held on whether it should be renewed;
- During its operation, the Police had monitored the operation of the street drinking PSPO and wanted it to continue as, although there had been a 24% decrease in street drinking within the inner ring road area, more use could be made of the order;
- Currently it was not illegal to take new psychoactive substances (NPSs), but the Council wanted to avoid anti-social behaviour associated with their use;
- 86% of respondents to consultation on introducing a NPS PSPO were in favour of a city-wide order being introduced; and

- Consultation on introducing a NPS PSPO also had shown that many people were not aware of what NPSs were, so it was hoped that ways could be found to raise awareness.

The Commission welcomed the proposals and made the following comments:

- Licensing officers and Committee members already worked closely with the Police on maintaining the Cumulative Impact Zone and controlling the strength of alcoholic drinks being sold;
- The Police were not always present when anti-social behaviour by street drinkers occurred, so could be unaware of the full extent of it;

Reply from the Head of Community Safety:

If the Police identified drinkers who it was felt were not behaving anti-socially at the time they were observed, but could do so later, under the PSPO the Police could take the alcohol from those drinkers to avoid anti-social behaviour arising.

- Some shops sold alcohol outside of their licensed hours, which could exacerbate anti-social behaviour problems;
- Large groups of people drinking could feel intimidating to other members of the public;
- Evidence was available of large groups of drinkers gathering on some of the city's outer estates and in parks. Was there also evidence of anti-social behaviour by these groups?; and
- NPSs appeared to be taken by individuals, rather than groups, who often were found in distress, rather than behaving anti-socially.

Reply from the Head of Community Safety:

Wrappers from NPSs caused litter problems in some areas and reports were received of people screaming and shouting when using NPSs.

The Head of Community Safety advised the Commission that, as part of the consultation on the street drinking PSPO, respondents had been asked where they felt notices advising of the PSPO should be placed. The same question was being asked as part of the consultation on the NPS PSPO, along with a question on whether the NPS PSPO signs should be placed with those relating to the street drinking PSPO. Consideration currently was being given to the most appropriate locations and it was suggested that it would be most effective if the NPS PSPO signs were placed in "hot spots".

The Head of Community Safety and the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services also noted that:

- Some people believed that the PSPO imposed a ban on street drinking and the taking of NPSs in the street. A lot of work had been needed to explain

that this was not the case;

- Although the Council had to make the PSPO, it was enforced by the Police. However, recent reductions in Police numbers limited the amount of time available for this;
- The Council had commissioned help and outreach services for street drinkers and NPS users through Turning Point. Contact details for this organisation would be included in the Frequently Asked Questions produced in relation to the PSPOs;
- Some people who drank or took substances could harm themselves to the extent they needed medical assistance. This could result in them becoming regular visitors to hospital accident and emergency departments;
- The PSPOs were city-wide orders, but as people tended to congregate in parks and open spaces to drink or take NPSs, this was where most enforcement was undertaken. Spare signs about the orders were available and could be put up in “hot spots” when needed;
- When a “hot spot” was identified, a multi-agency action plan was drawn up on how to address the problems specific to that area. However, it was recognised that removing a problem in one area could be achieved by causing it to move on to somewhere else; and
- Street drinking tended not to be an issue on its own. For example, it often was associated with reports of criminal damage.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted;
- 2) That Members be invited to pass concerns about shops selling alcohol outside of their licensed hours to the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services for investigation; and
- 3) That the Head of Community Safety be asked to provide Members with details of the local demographics of users of new psychoactive substances in the city.

Agenda item 10, “Citywide Voluntary and Community Sector Support” and agenda item 11, “Response to the Leicester Advice Sector: A Report Outlining the Risk and Demands in the City” were taken in the reverse order to that set out in the agenda

71. RESPONSE TO THE LEICESTER ADVICE SECTOR: A REPORT OUTLINING THE RISK AND DEMANDS IN THE CITY

The Director of Finance submitted a report responding to the issues raised in the annual Social Welfare Advice Partnership (SWAP) Report.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager introduced the report, reminding Members that this was a retrospective review, relating to 2015/16. The report had been due in July 2016, but had been delayed due to cumulative delays to annual reports in other years as the SWAP developed its strategies and built its partnership.

The government's welfare reforms had imposed a re-assessment programme to ensure that people claiming Employment and Support Allowance were eligible to receive it. During 2015/16, SWAP campaigned/lobbied members of parliament and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) contract managers to ensure that the DWP's third party provider of these assessments was offering access to their specified premises. Previously, there had been no disabled access to the premises that disabled city residents were required to attend for their assessments, but they had been sanctioned for not attending. Home visits now were offered, which had reduced the number of interventions needed by the SWA or Welfare Rights officers.

It was noted that the government's programme to replace the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payments (PIP) was expected to be concluded by 2018. SWAP had monitored this, providing a statistical basis in the city to inform policy decisions and showing that the transition from DLA to PIP was the main cause of the high volume of Tier 3 appeals work they had experienced.

The Revenues and Benefits Manager reminded Members that Universal Credit had been introduced in Leicester on 25 January 2016 for single claimants who were in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) (income-based). Details of those impacted by this were included in the report.

The Chair welcomed Richard Evans, (Chief Executive of Citizens Advice LeicesterShire), and Emily Foskett, (Advice Session Supervisor, Citizens Advice LeicesterShire), to the meeting and, in accordance with Procedure Rule 8(2) of Part 4E of the Council's Constitution, (Scrutiny Procedure Rules), invited them to address the Commission.

Richard Evans addressed the Commission, explaining that Citizens Advice Leicestershire was part of the SWAP. The partnership had been established in 2013 and all groups and organisations providing social welfare advice across the city were able to join. As a result, it was a diverse and developing partnership, signposting and promoting services in the city, as well as providing guidance, acting as a pressure group, providing joint communications activity (including a guide to SWA in the city), and monitoring all major statistics of concern.

He then made the following comments:

- Leicester had a higher level of indebtedness than the national average;
- Case studies were collated from the work being undertaken by the Partnership. Some cases were very complex and outcomes could change significantly on appeal;
- The SWAP had drafted a strategic action plan for the next five years. An important element of this was the desire to maintain face-to-face contact with clients, despite moves to channel shift to electronic means of communication; and
- Monitoring of the SWAP's work would continue, to enable it to continue to demonstrate the impact of its services.

The Assistant City Mayor for Jobs and Skills stressed the importance of the SWAP's work in bringing users together. The Council's report showed how it had responded to the issues raised by the SWAP. This was particularly important following the removal of the national "safety net" for those on benefits, as these people now were dependent on what local authorities could provide.

She also noted that, although the number of sanctions had reduced, it was still of concern, especially for disabled people. This could have the result of leading claimants to accumulate debt, which then affected their everyday lives. Without the assistance of the SWAP, fewer appeals against these sanctions would be won.

The Assistant City Mayor thanked the SWAP for its work and welcomed its report.

The Commission noted that anecdotal evidence suggested that other organisations in the city also were working with a high number of people who were in financial difficulty due to the government's recent Welfare Reforms.

Members questioned why the number of successful appeals was so high. In reply, Mr Evans explained that this was due to poor decision-making by either third party suppliers to the DWP or the DWP's assessors. Additionally, the Department for Work and Pensions previously had often not sent a presenting officer to appeal hearings. However, the DWP now was investing in resources to enable it to be represented at these hearings.

It was noted that the indices of deprivation had last been updated in 2016. In Leicester, these generally showed that Council estates' areas mirrored the highest levels of deprivation, so work was being done to provide advice in those communities through the Social Welfare Advice outreach contract.

A major problem for some people was how they could cope financially while their case was going through the appeal process. Discretionary funding "safety

nets” within the Council, such as the Community Support Grant crisis element, enabled emergency food and utilities to be provided to those who were most vulnerable, so were being used to address such issues. However, this continued to put pressure on Council resources, especially as the time being taken for appeals to be processed had increased, so the length of time for which people needed this support also was increasing. Policies therefore were being considered carefully, to ensure they continued to relate to what was happening in the community.

Ms Foskett confirmed that the number of Disability Living Allowance applications had reduced significantly over the last year, although the number of recipients had not reduced significantly.

In addition, applications for JSA had reduced by over half in the same period. This reflected a reduction in the number of unemployed people registered in the city from approximately 8,000 in April 2015 approximately 3,500 in December 2016. This was the greatest improvement in the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire DWP District and showed that the city’s economy was improving.

It was noted that the SWAP hoped to have its 2016/17 report available for the Commission to scrutinise in July 2017.

On behalf of the Commission, the Chair thanked the SWAP for its work.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted and the way in which the Social Welfare Advice Partnership is establishing itself be welcomed;
- 2) That the Social Welfare Advice Partnership’s 2016/17 Annual Report be submitted to this Commission in July 2017; and
- 3) That the Scrutiny Policy Officer be asked to amend the Commission’s Work Programme to reflect 2) above.

72. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 7.25 pm and reconvened at 7.30 pm

73. CITYWIDE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT

The Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance submitted a report providing an update on the arrangements for citywide support to the voluntary and community sector (VCS).

The Head of the City Mayor’s Office introduced the report, explaining that the current three year agreement with Voluntary Action LeicesterShire (VAL) to provide support services to the VCS in the city would end in September 2017.

Consideration therefore needed to be given to what support the market required for the future and how this should be structured.

In addition, the current co-funders, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Leicester City Clinical Commissioning Group, were being consulted on whether they wished to assist with the funding of any support provided in the future.

The Voluntary and Community Sector Engagement Manager gave a presentation on the review, a copy of which is attached at the end of these minutes for information. During this, he drew particular attention to the following points:

- At present, responses were fairly evenly distributed across the three different response methods;
- In an earlier review, the VCS had identified the support of collaboration as very important and wanted the Council to sustain this. The commissioning of VCS support services at that time accommodated this, but it did not appear to have been used much;
- The traditional roles of volunteers and volunteering were still very important;
- The consultation was not an inquiry in to VAL's performance under the current agreement, but asked the respondents how they valued the services and whether they had been beneficial to them. VAL was not referred to anywhere in the survey;
- Individuals responding to the consultation were not asked to identify themselves. Those responding on behalf of an organisation were invited to say which organisation they were from, which some had done; and
- To date, 79 responses had been received, which was considered to be good. Although a large number of groups were eligible to respond, they were very diffuse and it could be difficult to get them to engage with things such as the consultation.

Members noted that the Council's Libraries service maintained a list of volunteers, to which organisations had free access. The Head of the City Mayor's Office confirmed that volunteering was an area in which new approaches could be tried, such as using social media platforms to attract volunteers.

Some concern was expressed that VAL had not evolved to meet the current needs of the VCS and so did not fully appreciate the problems faced by VCS organisations. It also was felt that VAL could be hard to engage with, particularly as they did not appear to be active within the community.

It was noted that Council officers worked with a wide variety of VCS groups and organisations, many of which worked in areas that related to specific Council service areas. A list of these groups was compiled for the Service Analysis team, to assist with contract and performance monitoring, but the groups were not managed centrally and contacts were not yet available for all of them.

VAL had included notification of the availability of the consultation in the regular briefing that it circulated to organisations on its database. Some concern was expressed that this could result in contact only being made with long-established groups and miss newer, possibly “grass roots”, groups and organisations who did not use VAL’s services.

Members were assured that the briefing circulated by VAL was only one of the ways in which contact was maintained with groups and organisations. For example, details of all groups contacting the Council were kept, as it was known that various groups did not have contact with VAL for various reasons.

The Commission noted that the situation had changed for many VCS groups and organisations over recent years, as many now had to spend a lot of time sourcing finance and following processes, such as training and paperwork. This review of the support given to such groups and organisations provided an opportunity to manage the perceived cultural change in their relationship with VAL, by ensuring that any future services commissioned through VAL reflected this cultural change.

Councillor Dr Chowdhury reminded Members of the interest he had declared in this item. (See minute 63, “Declarations of Interest”, above)

AGREED:

- 1) That the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance be requested to:
 - a) Ask Members and service directors to promote the consultation on arrangements for city-wide support for the voluntary and community sector with the groups they are aware of, the link to the on-line consultation to be included in this request; and
 - b) Invite groups and organisations who may not be in contact with Voluntary Action LeicesterShire, but could usefully contribute, to participate in the consultation on arrangements for city-wide support for the voluntary and community sector;
- 2) That, in view of 1) above, the Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance be asked to extend the deadline for the consultation on future support arrangements for the voluntary and community sector in the city by at least one week; and

- 3) That a further report on support arrangements for the voluntary and community sector in the city be submitted to this Commission at a time to be agreed between the Chair, Vice-Chair and Director of Delivery, Communications and Political Governance.

74. GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2017/18 TO 2019/20

The Director of Finance submitted a report setting out the City Mayor's proposed budget for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

The Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services introduced the report, explaining that the report did not contain a lot of detail, as this was scrutinised through the various spending reviews being undertaken in service areas. The Commission noted this, but expressed some disappointment that it was not included in the report, as this would have facilitated consideration of issues such as alternative ways of releasing funds.

The Commission welcomed the increase in managed reserves, but felt that it would have been useful to know which service areas had made the savings discussed in the report.

It was noted that the report made reference to anticipated financial difficulties in coming years, but did not contain information on the approach that would be taken to these challenges, (for example, what would be prioritised). This was felt to be an omission, as it made it difficult to comment on the proposed budget.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted; and
- 2) That the Overview Select Committee be asked to take account of the comments made by this Commission in its consideration of the General Fund revenue budget for 2017/18 to 2019/20, particularly noting the Commission's disappointment at the lack of detail contained in the report.

75. SPENDING REVIEWS

The Commission received an update on spending reviews affecting services within this Commission's portfolio and not considered elsewhere on the agenda.

Members were reminded that this was the first time the information had been submitted in this format, which it was hoped would evolve to incorporate information that Members felt would be useful to them.

AGREED:

- That the report be received and welcomed.

76. WORK PROGRAMME

NOTED:

- 1) That future reports on food safety regulation will be submitted to this Commission approximately one month before they are considered by the full Council;
- 2) That it is hoped that a report on procurement options for social welfare advice can be considered at the meeting of this Commission scheduled for 22 March 2017, but as some work remains to be done on this report, it may need to be deferred; and
- 3) That the Chair will contact all Commission members by e-mail regarding arrangements for the Task Group undertaking the review "Getting the best out of our services in neighbourhoods".

77. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8.23 pm

54. TRANSFORMING NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - NORTH EAST

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The Chair commented that people had been concerned *that the charging system was complex and applied inconsistently. Although the system had been simplified, the more straightforward system was not being applied uniformly across the city. Members therefore asked that this situation be reviewed and a consistent approach adopted.* ~~The Chair commented that people had been concerned about increased charges and in 2013, when TNS had been previously considered at Scrutiny, the Commission had requested a simplified system. The Head of Neighbourhood Services responded that the council had not increased charges last year, but they had been simplified.~~

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) Officers are asked to continue to talk to user groups to find a workable solution in respect of the Lunch Club held in the Belgrave Neighbourhood Centre, as it is clear that the club provided benefit for people in the community.
- 2) In respect of youth services, the Commission has concerns about putting groups of a very different demography alongside each other and request that consideration be given to making separate access or entrances available.
- 3) ~~The~~ *That the Chair write to the City Mayor, asking him to advise the Executive of the Commission's regret express concerns that the Youth Services Review is not being undertaken separate to concurrently with the Transforming Neighbourhood Services Programme, as not doing so could be a lost opportunity to invest in properties to make them more suitable for joint access and use by differing groups and suggest that in future, those reviews are held at the same time.*
- 4) That the Director of Neighbourhood and Environmental Services be asked to:
 - a) *Reconsider whether certain spaces within community buildings can be made available free of charge for small groups or individuals for informal meetings by identifying them as "shared space". This could include facilities such as café areas; and The concept of shared space, such as café areas, in community and neighbourhood centres be revisited, to ensure that members of the community have some affordable and easy access*

- b) *Review the application of the charging system for the hire of Council-owned community premises, to ensure that the system is being applied uniformly across the city.*

VCS Support Services Review

VCS Support Services Review: online survey

- Citizen Space online consultation.
- Started 18 Nov 2016; ends 3 Feb 2017.
- Respondents complete online survey in one of three ways (following “skip logic” path):
 - On behalf of local VCS group or organisation
 - As someone who uses services provided locally by VCS.
 - As a member of public interested in how LCC supports VCS
- Each set of questions appropriate for respondent, obtaining different kinds of information.
- 79 respondents to date.

VCS Support Services: current provision

- LCC commissions services to support Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups and organisations in city.
- Contracts in place for three services:
 - Supporting collaboration and guaranteeing collective voice for city's VCS.
 - Providing infrastructure support to city VCS.
 - Supporting volunteers and volunteering in city.
- Non-statutory, discretionary provision.
- Current cost: £276,00 p.a.
- Includes support from Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Office of Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC).

Supporting collaboration; guaranteeing collective voice

1. Discussing matters of common concern among VCS groups, organisations and service users.
2. Promoting collaboration and partnership working among city VCS.
3. Supporting a collective voice for city's VCS.
4. Maintaining dialogue among VCS re issues important to Sector.
5. Looking at ways to become more sustainable (e.g. opportunities to leverage external funding).
6. Sharing and making sense of data and information with LCC (esp. re LCC policy and service development affecting VCS).
7. Disseminating news and information from LCC (esp. re policy and service development affecting local VCS).
8. Advice, assistance and support to help city's VCS groups and organisations become more self-sufficient and sustainable.

Providing infrastructure support

1. Information about setting up and running a VCS group or organisation.
2. Developing funding applications.
3. Sharing good practice in effective governance.
4. Sharing good practice in financial management.
5. Sharing information about funding opportunities.
6. Training in marketing and communications.
7. Providing tailored support to address concerns voiced by VCS.
8. Advice re changing operational working arrangements to help city's VCS meet current challenges.
9. Supporting VCS to reach potential clients or service users considered "underserved", "difficult to reach" or "hard to engage".
10. Giving information, advice and support about changes to national legislation and local policies and practices affecting VCS.

Supporting volunteers & volunteering

1. Recruiting and retaining volunteers.
2. Marketing volunteering opportunities.
3. Sharing good practice regarding volunteering.
4. Training volunteers and managers of volunteers.
5. Support to develop volunteering opportunities.
6. Recruiting and assisting volunteers to serve as board members, directors and/or trustees.

