

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Tuesday, 18 June 2019
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor P. Cumbers (Chair)

Councillors	R. Bindloss (Vice-Chair)	R. Browne
	R. Child	J. Douglas
	C. Evans	C. Fisher
	E. Holmes	R. Smedley
	J. Wilkinson	

Observers

Officers

- Chief Executive
- Director for Law and Governance
- Director for Corporate Services
- Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services
- People Manager
- Democratic Services Officer (CR)

Minute No.	Minute
1	Apologies for Absence There were no apologies for absence.
2	Minutes There were no minutes to be confirmed, as this was the first meeting of this Committee.
3	Declarations of Interest There were no declarations of interest.
4	Public Spaces Protection Order The Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services (a) provided an overview of his report to Cabinet on 5 June 2019. Approval had been granted by Cabinet to introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in Melton (the first stage of which would be to hold a public consultation) and this was now before Members for scrutiny; (b) highlighted that PSPOs did not only focus on dog fouling, they also covered antisocial behaviour. (c) advised that the proposed PSPO was in line with the Council's Corporate Priorities and failure to take action on this issue would leave the Council vulnerable, due to the forthcoming repeal of the Dog Control Order (DCO). There was a need to have a policy in place or be left in limbo. A Member advised that they welcomed the proposal to introduce a PSPO. It was good to see the Council take a proactive approach, in view of the repeal of the DCO. The Member asked whether the Council had considered using its powers of injunction and prosecution and asked how many fines had been issued. The Member further queried how the Council proposed to engage with the public to encourage participation in the proposed consultation (via social media, residents groups, community groups etc). The Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services (a) highlighted paragraph 7.1 of appendix 2 of the report (Cabinet Report dated 5 June 2019). This set out consultation and feedback proposals, including consultation with '...any community representatives the Council consider necessary... The consultation will be publicised widely through the Council's website, but also include, via press releases in local media, Facebook, e-

mailing... leaving copies for public perusal in the Council offices. Signs will also be erected in areas the order specifies, advising of the Council's proposals. In addition, the Council will publish a notice of its intention... in a local newspaper.'

- (b) advised that the Council had issued fines (the number of which would have to be confirmed outside this meeting, as the information was not on hand). He confirmed that he was not aware of any injunctions.

The Director for Law and Governance advised that the Council's resources to deal with this issue included an Enforcement Officer, the Corporate Enforcement Policy and there was also a group of officers from all departments within the Council who looked at issues and considered best use of Council powers to tackle them. Prosecutions and injunctions may be used as appropriate.

Another Member welcomed the proposals, commenting that antisocial behaviour was a blight on certain areas within the Borough.

The Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services highlighted articles 5 and 6 of appendix 1 of the report (Draft PSPO), which detailed directions to 'move on and disperse' and the prohibition of alcohol consumption. The Director for Law and Governance added that public engagement was a high priority for the Council. Members could explore options and lead on this.

A Member commented that the Council lacked enough enforcement staff to deal with issues. How would the Council ensure effective enforcement? The proposals were good but things could be missed. Was one Enforcement Officer enough?

The Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services advised that considerable progress had been made since the Enforcement Officer had been recruited and the Chief Executive re-assured members that issues had been identified and were being dealt with. The Council had resources deployed to help to tackle housing related issues, including two Housing Officers and two Neighbourhood Support Officers.

Another Member agreed that the proposals were positive. One Enforcement Officer may not be enough. This would be monitored before recruiting additional staff.

Members highlighted several typing errors within appendix 1 and the Director for Law and Governance confirmed that these would be corrected.

A Member referred to paragraph 1.3 (a) of appendix 1, commenting that the use of the word 'habitually' could provide a dog walker with a loophole to avoid accountability, as it implied that the dog walker should be witnessed in possession of the dog more than once. The Director for Law and Governance agreed.

The Member noted that there were lots of play areas within parish areas. Would

they be included in the PSPO?

The Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services advised that the intention was to approach parishes, initiating involvement when consultation started (on 1 July).

Members noted paragraph 1.2 (b) of appendix 1. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Regulatory Services clarified that the Council would never provide the consent described here. However, private land, subject to this consent was outside the remit of the PSPO. The Council could not instruct the owner of private land to withhold consent.

Members further discussed private land accessed by members of the public and the Director for Law and Governance advised that it may be possible to prosecute under the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act. She would look into this and confirm.

A Member queried whether given the areas which may be subject to the PSPO, would the Council consult with others, such as Persimmon Homes and the Assistant Director for Strategic Planning and Regulatory Services confirmed that they would.

A Member highlighted typing errors, which were noted and would be corrected.

There being no further comments or questions from Members, it was

RESOLVED that

- (1) the Committee's comments on the proposed PSPO be included for consideration when Cabinet decides whether to approve the PSPO;
- (2) the Committee's comments on the arrangements for consultation be submitted to Cabinet.

5

Future Options for Citizens' Advice Leicestershire

The Director for People and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members);

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement

- (a) advised that as part of the budget setting process, Council approved a reduction in grant to the CAL from £44k to £27k, deferred until 1 July 2019 to allow the CAL to determine how they will deliver the service within the grant allocated and a transitional fund of approximately £4k was agreed to maintain the service at current levels in the meantime;
- (b) confirmed that the outcome of the negotiations and the proposed option agreed in principle by the Council and the CAL, to deliver budget reduction,

whilst retaining a CAL service within Melton was for the Council to allocate and additional £8k per year to add to the existing £27k, bringing the total grant per year to £35k. Rent payments to the Council would be reduced to £15k, leaving a net yearly budget of £20k to deliver the service;

- (c) highlighted that continuing the service on the current drop-in and appointments based delivery offered the most value, in terms of available session hours and advice hours. The reduction in service was mitigated through the new Help to Claim Service funded through the Universal Credit grant funding arrangements.

The People Manager advised that this was a transitional arrangement for 2019/20. Funding for 2020/21 onwards would be addressed through the new arrangements to be introduced following the Community Grants Review.

A Member queried how much rent the Council charged CAL and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement confirmed how much rent was paid in rent to the Council.

Members noted that CAL had not provided any data or statistics, which would be useful for the Council, as a stakeholder. If public funding was to be issued, to CAL, more detailed information was needed from them.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Governance, Access and Engagement acknowledged that as Scrutiny, the Committee would like to see data but the information provided by CAL was not specific enough for this purpose. More detailed data could be requested once this issue had been resolved.

Members agreed that they did not want to lose the service, which could be invaluable but reiterated that the Council needed data from CAL and this should be expressed clearly to them. They should be accountable for the funding they receive.

There being no further comments or questions from Members, it was

RESOLVED that the update on the options proposed by Citizens' Advice Leicestershire (CAL) be noted.

6

Review of Forward Plan and Annual Workplan

The Director for Law and Governance

- (a) provided an overview of the Work Plan, advising that it was a 'living document', which could be amended as and when necessary and drew Members' attention to the Work Plan guidance;
- (b) highlighted the suggested Work Plan topics and asked Members to further consider what was important to them and what they would like to include in the Work Plan. Comments should be submitted to the Chair and Vice Chair

and the topics identified would be considered in more detail at the next meeting of this Committee;

- (c) drew Members attention to the Forward Plan for the period June 2019 to October 2019, asking them to note an additional item and key decision to be added (Debt Recovery Improvement Plan), which would be submitted to Cabinet on 4 September 2019.

Members noted that the Debt Recovery Improvement Plan was a high priority item.

Concerning the Work Plan, it was noted that the suggested topic relating to rent arrears was general and not specific to Melton.

A Member suggested that the Workforce Strategy be looked at, focussing on the recruitment of staff.

[Councillor Child left the meeting]

It was also agreed that the Council needed to re-engage with the community and Scrutiny could undertake valuable work on this.

[Councillor Child returned to the meeting]

A Member suggested that environmental sustainability be added to the Work Plan. There was a danger that recycling rates would decrease as a result of recent negative publicity around handling of recycling waste. Pro-active work to find out exactly how Melton's recycling waste was dealt with was needed and should be publicised to counteract the negative publicity.

[Councillor Evans left the meeting]

The Chief Executive advised that the Government had launched a series of consultations to overhaul the waste system and help to cut plastic pollution. Any initiatives would need to be funded correctly.

There being no further comments or questions from Members, it was

RESOLVED that any relevant items for inclusion in the Work Plan be submitted to the Chair and considered further at the next meeting of this Committee (on 23 July 2019).

7	Review Updates There were no review updates.
8	Urgent Business There was no urgent business.
9	Date and Preview of Next Meeting

	It was confirmed that the next meeting of this Committee would be held on Tuesday, 23 July at 6:30pm.
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The meeting closed at: 8.17 pm

Chair