

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 12 JULY 2019

Present:

Councillor Kevin Tait (Chair)
Councillor Oscar Gomez Reaney (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Lilian Deighton
Councillor Roger Hall
Councillor Bette Hill

Councillor Mark Foster
Councillor David Hancock
Councillor Jeff Lilley

Also Present:

T Buckland Senior Engineer (for Min No 126 only)
N Clark Director of Property Services and Regeneration (for Min No 126 only)
V Dawson Solicitor - Team Manager (Contentious) (for Min No 130 only)
R Purcell Joint Head Of Service – Planning (for Min No 128 only)
H Rawson Senior Environmental Health Officer (for Min No 130 only)
D Stanton Governance Officer
S Veerman Overview and Scrutiny Manager

123 Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received.

124 Declarations of Interest

Members were requested to declare the existence and nature of any disclosable pecuniary interest and/or other interest, not already on their register of interests, in any item on the agenda and withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

There were no interests declared at this meeting.

125 Minutes of Last Meeting

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 7 June 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following clarifications to Minute number 37.

“However, the Committee felt that consideration of child obesity was also a priority for the District and wished to keep this review on the radar and defer it until later in the municipal year if time was available.”

This was to be changed to:

“However, the Committee felt that consideration of child obesity was also a priority for the District and wished for this to be the next topic to be reviewed later in the municipal year if time was available.”

Members raised items that had been included on the List of Key Decisions from the previous meeting. It was stated that various reviews were being instituted by the new administration, including the installation of CCTV in North East Derbyshire District Council licensed private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager advised Members that the Principal Solicitor had stated that this would be initially taken to the General Licensing Committee for review in due course.

Whilst Members differed in their opinions on the practicalities of the installation of CCTV in taxis within the District, there was a consensus that passenger safety should be a priority, and as such would like to review it in greater depth. The Overview and Scrutiny Manager agreed to include this on the Committee's work programme at a later date.

At this point in the meeting, Cllr Roger Hall asked whether he should have declared that he had a Significant Other Interest, as he was a licensed taxi driver with another authority.

126 Scrutiny Review

(a) Scene Setting

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Property Services and Development at Rykneld Homes, and Tracy Buckland, Senior Engineer who outlined parking issues within the District.

Members noted the historical context of the District's parking issues, as well as the cause of those issues and improvements delivered to-date.

The officers left Members with a number of issues to consider, including:-

- The creation of a clear criteria for additional off street parking on Council owned land.
- A purpose and eligibility for use of any new parking provision.
- Improved links with the Highway Authority to combine highway projects with provision for parking.
- The size and scope of any programme to create parking spaces.
- A communication strategy.
- A decision making process and appeals.
- Electric vehicles; future transport use; and improved integrated transport systems.

The Committee discussed the expense of replacing grass verges with parking provisions, and the impact and strain that a lack of parking spaces was having on their own communities as Ward Members.

The role of the Police was also discussed when parked cars had been blocking public highways and the limited powers that were deemed available in tackling this issue.

Members agreed that they would like to see greater involvement of the Highways Authority and that they played an important role in the prevention of highway obstructions.

The Committee was advised that a review in to parking spaces was currently in draft format and it was anticipated that it would be available within the next four weeks. It was agreed that the Senior Engineer would liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Manager in due course, and present the report to the Committee.

Members discussed the health and safety issues associated with highway obstructions and narrow roads, and the impact this could have on emergency services. The Director of Property Services and Development commented that Rykneld Homes worked closely with Derbyshire County Council to resolve such issues. The relationship between Rykneld Homes and the Highways Agency was discussed, as well as what could be done to strengthen the partnership going forward. The Committee was informed that, according to highway law, new developments must demonstrate that there was suitable access for refuse vehicles. At this point, Members were reminded that the Head of Streetscene would be attending the next Communities Scrutiny Committee to discuss the accessibility for Streetscene vehicles across North East Derbyshire.

Members thanked the officers for attending the meeting.

The officers then left the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

127 Change of Order of Agenda Items

The Chair, in agreement with other Members of the Communities Scrutiny Committee, changed the order of the agenda items as set out within these Minutes.

128 Scrutiny Review

The Committee welcomed Richard Purcell, Joint Head of Planning to the meeting who gave an update on residential parking provision from a planning perspective.

Members were reminded that at the last meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee, information was given on the parking provisions for new developments. The Joint Head of Planning had been requested to attend to clarify the situation.

The officer stated that under the old Local Plan, a one bedroom property was given one parking space; a two bedroom property was given 1.5 parking spaces and a 3 bedroom plus property was given two parking spaces.

Members noted that under the National Planning Policy Framework, there was two key paragraphs that set out guidance on parking provisions for local authorities. It was stated that there was a number of factors that determined

residential parking provisions and that there was no blanket approach in solving the parking issues within the District. Therefore, a set space was not deemed to be suitable. The Committee heard that the minimum standards in the old Local Plan should not set the maximum standards for new developments. Members were told that new developments were commercially driven, and that developers were aware that good parking provisions were needed to sell properties.

The Joint Head of Planning reiterated that the current Council Policy let the authority look at individual developments to address any problems. Members with issues in their own Wards were encouraged to speak to officers so that their concerns could be addressed.

Members thanked the officer for attending the meeting.

The Joint Head of Planning then left the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

129 Scrutiny Review

(a) Approval of Project Plan and Timetable

RESOLVED – That the Project Plan and Timetable be approved.

(b) Drafting of Questions

The Overview and Scrutiny Manager explained that it was usual practice to draft a set of questions for stakeholders who would be interviewed by the Committee, in order to gather evidence. The Committee felt this would not be appropriate for this review topic, as questions would ultimately depend on the type of discussion and particular area of the topic that was being discussed.

(c) Documentation

The Committee discussed several pieces of information requested from Officers to help inform the review. These included NEDDC Parking Space Loss/Gain 2009 to 2019, the specification for the construction of driveways and hardstandings on Council owned property and NEDDC Parking Space Creation 2009 to 2019.

130 Animal Welfare Policy

The Committee welcomed the Solicitor – Team Manager (Contentious) and Senior Environmental Health Officer (Commercial) to the meeting to discuss the draft Animal Welfare Policy.

The officers informed Members that whilst the Council does not have a legal obligation to have such a Policy, it was good practice to do so. It was stated that it was up to the local authority to determine what made a fit and proper person, and as such, the Council had decided that a basic DBS check would be suitable.

Members heard that the Licensing Team had written to everyone who had a current license and that a four week consultation period was now underway. This consultation period also included veterinary practices.

Members made enquiries in regards to a number of well known businesses within the District who were using animals as part of their business models, and whether or not their business would be applicable to the new Animal Welfare Policy and License. The officers informed the Committee that there was still a review to be done around the different categories and whether or not they would be required to apply for a license.

Members heard that the new Licensing Policy would be cost neutral to the Council due to all the associated costs being factored into the license fee. It was stated that the Authority's current Environmental Health Officers would inspect animal welfare facilities, but after three years they would need to have a specific qualification. Furthermore the Council may need to employ more officers as the workload increased. As such, the fees would be reviewed each year to ensure that they remained cost neutral to the Authority. Members noted that when breaches were found the Council would always seek to prosecute.

The relationship between the RSPCA and the Licensing Team was discussed, and the officers stated that the charity was providing valuable expertise that was assisting the authority, as it ventured into a previously unknown area.

Members thanked the officers for attending the meeting.

The officers then left the meeting.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

131 List of Key Decisions

The Committee considered Issue No 86 of the List of Key Decisions which set out the major decisions being taken over the next few months.

Members made enquiries about the Manor Farm Investment report.

RESOLVED – That the List of Key Decisions, Issue No 86, be noted.

132 Scrutiny Work Programme

The Committee considered its Work Programme for the Communities Scrutiny Committee 2019/20.

RESOLVED – That the Communities Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2019/20 be noted.

133 Additional Urgent Items (if any)

There were no additional urgent items to be discussed at this meeting.

134 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee would take place on Friday, 13 September 2019 at 10.00 am in Chamber 1, District Council Offices, 2013 Mill Lane, Wingerworth.
