

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2020

Present:

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

Councillor Nigel Barker
Councillor Lilian Deighton
Councillor David Hancock
Councillor Richard Welton

Councillor Joseph Birkin
Councillor Roger Hall
Councillor Jeff Lilley

Also Present:

A Powell	Portfolio Holder for Housing, Communities and Communications
S Sternberg	Joint Head Of Service - Corporate Governance & Monitoring Officer
S Veerman	Overview and Scrutiny Manager
D Stanton	Governance Officer
S Brunt	Joint Head Of Service - Streetscene
A Bryan	PA to Cabinet and Civic Officer
K Shiliitto	Solicitor

CSC/ Apologies for Absence

22/2

0-21 There were no apologies for absence.

CSC/ Declarations of Interest

23/2

0-21 Councillor R Hall declared a significant other interest in item 4 – CCTV in Taxis, and advised that he would withdraw from the meeting at the appropriate time.

CSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

24/2

0-21 RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 7 August 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CSC/ Change in Order of Agenda Items

25/2

0-21 The Chair agreed to take the agenda items in the following order.

CSC/ Previous Scrutiny Review - Domestic Abuse

26/2

0-21 The Committee welcomed the Director of Environment and Enforcement and the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Communities and Communications to the meeting, to discuss the previous Scrutiny Review on domestic abuse. Members were reminded that the Committee had supported the creation of a NEDDC specific Domestic Abuse Policy.

Members were informed that their agenda packs contained two documents relating to domestic abuse. The first was the Domestic Abuse Policy, and the second was the Domestic Abuse Toolkit. It was stated that the documents were due to be presented to the Rykneld Board before being submitted to a meeting of the Cabinet for final approval. Members noted that Rykneld Homes had taken a lead on the policy in partnership with the Community Safety Team.

The officer informed Members that the Policy set out the Council's requirements for managing cases of domestic abuse in the District, which included the safeguarding of victims and how the Authority dealt with perpetrators. The Committee noted that the Toolkit was intended to be used by staff from Rykneld Homes and the Community Safety Teams, but would also be available to the Council's wider staff on the extranet.

The Committee also discussed the progress made on other recommendations in the Action Plan including the appointment of a dedicated officer, and heard about additional funding provided by Derbyshire County Council.

There was a consensus that the Pandemic had brought about significant challenges in tackling domestic abuse. Concerns were raised over victims being isolated with their abusers during the initial lockdown, as well as the long term impacts of working from home.

Following the update, Members agreed to close the Action Plan and Review on Domestic Abuse, subject to no further changes being made to the Domestic Abuse Policy and Domestic Abuse Toolkit.

RESOLVED – That the Action Plan on Domestic Abuse be signed off as complete, subject to no further changes being made to the Domestic Abuse Policy and Domestic Abuse Toolkit.

**CSC/
27/2**

CCTV in Taxis

0-21

The Head of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer, and the Council's Solicitor were present at the meeting to update the Committee on progress made on the introduction of mandatory CCTV in taxis.

The Committee heard that the documentation presented to Members at the meeting contained the proposed changes to the Council's Vehicles and Drivers Policy, which would be the basis for introducing mandatory CCTV in taxis. The Solicitor advised that any further feedback given at today's meeting would then be incorporated into the Policy before being presented to the General Licensing Committee on 22 October. It was stated that if approved, it would then be sent out for consultation.

The Committee discussed the positive and leading role that NEDDC could play in introducing mandatory CCTV in taxis, and it was hoped that neighbouring authorities would soon follow suit. Members noted the government guidance which suggested that local authorities should be implementing mandatory CCTV, unless they had good reason not to do so.

The Committee had a wide ranging discussion on the benefits of CCTV, which included the protection of both passengers and the driver.

Members commented that they wished for the Policy to be implemented as soon as practically possible, but that due consideration was given to small businesses. The Committee also wished for the Policy to be communicated to Town and Parish Councils. The Solicitor reminded Members of the consultation process.

RESOLVED – That the Committee support the Draft Policy on CCTV in taxis, subject to the Committee’s additional comments.

CSC/ Scrutiny Review

28/2

0-21

CSC/ Approval of Project Plan

29/2

0-21

The Chair confirmed that the Committee had agreed to review obesity in the District’s younger residents of primary school age, and that the aim was to promote a healthier lifestyle. Members commented that the purpose of the review was to encourage greater physical activity and make more use of the District’s green spaces.

RESOLVED – That the Project Plan be approved.

CSC/ Approval of Timetable

30/2

0-21

The Committee discussed further potential interviews with the Healthy Partnerships Team, as well as with Town and Parish Councils to see how they maintained some of their green spaces and leisure facilities.

RESOLVED - That the Timetable be approved.

CSC/ Consideration of Documentation

31/2

0-21

RESOLVED - That the documentation be noted.

CSC/ Scrutiny Review

32/2

0-21

The Head of Streetscene was present at the meeting to discuss the District’s parks and green spaces.

The Committee heard that Streetscene was responsible for the maintenance of North East Derbyshire’s parks, green spaces and recreation facilities at Eckington, Arkwright and Sharley Park. Members noted that they also maintained recreation grounds and playgrounds as well for some Parish Councils.

The officer commented that child play areas were also maintained by the Council for District and Parish Councils. The Committee requested that a list of the parks and areas that the Council maintained be distributed to Members.

Members discussed the impacts of the Pandemic and Lockdown on the Council's ability to maintain those areas. The Head of Streetscene informed Members that services were running as usual, and that this was a credit to staff and management despite significant challenges that had been placed on the service.

The Committee also discussed the planning process and how it could be used to encourage more open and green spaces in the District.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

CSC/ Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

33/2

0-21 AGREED – That the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions be noted.

CSC/ Scrutiny Work Programme

34/2

0-21 Members noted that CCTV in taxis would be removed from the Committee's Work Programme.

AGREED – That the Work Programme be noted.

CSC/ Additional Urgent Items (if any)

35/2

0-21 There were no additional urgent items to be discussed at this meeting.

CSC/ Date of Next Meeting

36/2

0-21 The next meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee will be held on Friday, 27 November 2020 at 1.30 pm.