

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8 MAY 2024

Present:

Councillor Michael Durrant (Vice-Chair) (in the Chair)

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE
Councillor Pam Jones

Councillor Richard Beech

Also Present:

F Green	Community Safety Manager
D Parker	Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

CSC/ Apologies for Absence

30/2

3-24 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Fawcett, C Renwick, K Tait, N Morley and P Windley.

CSC/ Declarations of Interest

31/2

3-24 None.

CSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

32/2

3-24 RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 28 February 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CSC/ Community Safety

33/2

3-24 The Community Safety Manager delivered a presentation to Members about the North East Derbyshire Community Safety Partnership and what it had achieved in the last year. The presentation also included aims and challenges for the Partnership over the next year.

Members referred to the part of the presentation which stated the Partnership has purchased 10 covert cameras, and asked if these could be used to identify fly-tipping. Members were informed that Environmental Health officers have specialised fly-tipping detection cameras.

The presentation highlighted that activities were being offered to older children as a way to reduce anti-social behaviour. The Chair asked which activities were on offer for older teenagers. The Community Safety Manager explained that the Extreme Wheels events covered this, and the team behind the events also carried

out Laser Tag and Climbing Walls. However, the Community Safety Manager did explain that the current funding used for this was coming to an end and further funding would be required to be able to continue this.

Members referred to the part of the presentation which stated “public disorder has increased by over 68 crimes this year” and enquired exactly what this meant. The Community Safety Manager agreed to investigate the reasons behind the number.

Members asked if online forms to report incidents had been investigated into the Council website. The Community Safety Manager agreed to ask the Communications department about this.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

CSC/ **Policy Development**

34/2

3-24

The Committee agreed to amend the order of the agenda to swap this item with the Performance Management item.

Members were given a briefing note and presentation about proposed amendments to the Council’s Adaptations Policy. The Adaptations Policy needed to be amended due to a Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman complaint, which related to recent changes in case law. The Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer also made clear that this policy only applied to Council tenants.

Members asked that if there was a case of an adapted property which became empty and someone was applying, whether or not the Council would assist them. The Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer explained that the Council would offer that person the option of receiving it.

Members asked about the waiting list of people needing adapted properties. The Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer explained that the waiting lists were based on medical needs.

Members asked if tenants had found the Adaptions Policy helpful. The Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer advised that although the policy was in its early stages, feedback had been mainly positive. However, the Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer did state that due to the changes in the policy it would mean that adaptation costs were likely to rise in the future.

Members referred to “self-referrals” in Appendix A and asked where the funds for DFG applications came from. The Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer explained that Derbyshire County Council issued funds from a DFG pot to Councils, and although DFGs are open for anyone to apply whether it be a Council tenant or private tenant/owner occupier, this funding is only available to private homes and not Council owned properties. Environmental Health at the Council make the final decision on each application for private homes. Adaptations to Council tenants are funded through the Housing Revenue Account and are administered by Rykneld Homes.

The Chair requested that Rykneld Homes be asked about people waiting a long time for adaptations, specifically if there were any interim measures in place to help them, and how long it was taking at the moment on average. The Housing Intelligence and Assurance Officer agreed to ask Rykneld Homes these questions.

The Chair also requested that the adaptation demand data (once the amended Policy is in place) be presented to the Committee in the future. The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the adaptation demand data would be added to the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25 to be considered in approximately 6 months' time, which would give the policy amendments time to be in place.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the amendments to the Adaptations Policy were noted.
- (2) That adaptation demand data would be added to the Committee's Work Programme for 2024/25 to be considered in approximately 6 months from now, which would give the policy amendments time to be in place.

CSC/ Performance Management

35/2

3-24

The Improvement Officer presented a report setting out progress on the strategies underpinning the Council Plan objective 'A great place to live well' for the period ending 31 March 2024.

Members were updated on progress under the following objective sub-categories in Appendix 1 of the report:

- 1) A community with lifelong good health
- 2) A place to live that people value
- 3) A place where people enjoy spending time

Members referred to 'Operation Shango' in Appendix 1 and asked what this was. The Improvement Officer explained that it was an Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) initiative, but he would ask the Community Safety Manager for more information on it.

Members referred to the 5 Community Action Grants in Appendix 1, and enquired where the funding for this had come from. The Improvement Officer agreed to investigate the funding source from the department responsible for CAGs.

The Chair was also interested to find out further information on the grants the Council issues to voluntary groups. The Senior Scrutiny Officer stated that this could be added to the Committee's 2024/25 Work Programme if the Committee wished to progress it.

Members referred to the empty properties in the District and what the Council was doing to reduce this. The Improvement Officer agreed to find out this information from the relevant department.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That progress against the Council Plan “A great place to live well” objective was noted.
- (2) That information on the grants the Council issues to voluntary groups to be considered as part of the Committee’s Work Programme for 2024/25.

CSC/ Cabinet Business

36/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since 29 February 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the digest was now presented in a new format, so that Members are now only seeing decisions made since the last round of Scrutiny meetings.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

CSC/ Work Programme

37/2

3-24

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2023/24 for the Committee to consider. The Work Programme had now come to the end of the municipal year, and the Senior Scrutiny Officer explained that the Committee must confirm the Programme has been completed.

Members were informed that at the end of the Work Programme document, there were a list of suggested topics for the Committee to include in its new Work Programme, which will be discussed further with the Chair and Vice Chair, and then presented to the Committee for approval.

RESOLVED – That the 2023/24 Communities Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be signed off as complete.

CSC/ Additional Urgent Items

38/2

3-24

None.

CSC/ Date of Next Meeting

39/2

3-24

The next meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place in the new Municipal Year.