

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 18 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present:

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

Councillor Graham Baxter MBE
Councillor Pam Jones

Councillor Richard Beech
Councillor Pam Windley

Also Present:

D Thompson	Assistant Director of Planning
T Burdett	Programmes Manager
A Bashir	Improvement Officer
J Hayden	Senior Scrutiny Officer
T Scott	Governance and Scrutiny Officer

CSC/ Apologies for Absence

13/2

3-24 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Kevin Tait.

CSC/ Declarations of Interest

14/2

3-24 Councillor Graham Baxter MBE advised the Committee of an interest in the agenda item titled 'Voluntary Sector Grants' as Chair of the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers' Centre Management Committee. He indicated that he would not vote during the agenda item.

CSC/ Minutes of Last Meeting

15/2

3-24 Members requested for an amendment to be made in the minutes to the Minute Item titled 'Leisure Activities for Young Children and Older Children/Teenagers' to add another part of the discussion: "That consideration was also given to a voucher system for families using food banks, however it was unclear how this would be monitored."

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 24 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair with one amendment.

CSC/ Performance Management

16/2

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 30 June 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 enquired what was in place to monitor the number of times long-term empty properties were brought back into use. The Improvement Officer stated that he would pass this question on to Housing Strategy officers.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

CSC/ Voluntary Sector Grants

17/2

3-24

The Programmes Manager presented a report to Members providing an overview of the funding to voluntary and community sector infrastructure support organisations in 2023/24.

Members felt that the report did not include enough information about how much money each organisation brought into the local economy. The Programmes Manager explained that representatives from organisations often went to Cabinet meetings to inform them of the benefits of their organisation, so suggested that representatives come to a future Committee meeting to provide case studies and discuss the benefits of their organisations. The Chair agreed with this suggestion, but advised that organisations were currently in the middle of a bidding process, so inviting them to a Committee meeting would have to wait until at least May 2025.

Members asked if Chesterfield Citizens Advice Bureau was still functioning. The Programmes Manager stated that she would investigate this.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

CSC/ Five Year Housing Land Supply

18/2

3-24

The Assistant Director of Planning presented a report to inform Members of the current position of the Council's five-year housing land supply, and the potential implications of the current Government consultation on revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Assistant Director of Planning explained that one of the proposed revisions was going to significantly change the method for calculating housing need. The target for North East Derbyshire under the current standard method was 242 dwellings per annum, but under the proposed new method, this would rise to 611 dwellings per annum. It was advised that currently the Council did not have the scope to cover that requirement and so without any transitional arrangements, the Council would immediately lose its five year supply and the Local Plan would be out of date.

In addition, the Committee were informed that the Council would likely do a call for sites in the near future, to start the process of identifying land that could be allocated in the next iteration of the Local Plan to meet the new requirement.

Members asked the Assistant Director of Planning if the Committee could receive future updates once there was certainty about any changes to national planning policy. The Assistant Director advised that consultation was open until the end of September 2024 and it was likely that any changes would not be introduced for a few months. With this in mind, a detailed update would not be available for some time, so the Assistant Director confirmed he would attend a future meeting of the Committee to provide an update at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED – That the report was noted.

CSC/ Cabinet Business

19/2

3-24 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a digest of Cabinet decisions taken since 23 May 2024. The digest set out key information for each decision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer also presented Members with the Forward Plan of Executive Decisions for the period 15 August 2024 – 15 September 2024.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

CSC/ Policy Development

20/2

3-24 The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that there were no major policies for Members to consider.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

CSC/ 'Horizon Scanning'

21/2

3-24 The Senior Scrutiny Officer updated Members on potential significant changes in the Council's operating environment, including changes to national legislation and regulation.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed Members that there was nothing significant to inform them of.

RESOLVED – That the update was noted.

CSC/ Work Programme

22/2

3-24 The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented the draft Work Programme 2024/25 for the Committee to consider.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer informed Members that concluding the Leisure Activities for Children review had been added to the Work Programme for the 13 November 2024 meeting. In addition, the Police and Crime Commissioner had accepted an invite to attend the Committee meeting on 26 February 2025.

Members agreed to add a topic to the Work Programme based on the discussions from earlier in the meeting relating to organisations, so an addition was made reading: "Representatives from organisations should come to a future Committee meeting to provide case studies and discuss the benefits of their organisations."

RESOLVED –

(1) That a visit from voluntary sector organisations (ideally Citizens Advice, Derbyshire Law and the Volunteer Centre) to provide case studies be added to the Work Programme 2024/25.

(2) That the Work Programme 2024/25 be approved with this addition.

CSC/ Additional Urgent Items

23/2

3-24 None.

CSC/ Date of Next Meeting

24/2

3-24 The next meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to take place on 13 November 2024 at 10.00 am.