

ASHFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL



Council Offices,
Urban Road,
Kirkby in Ashfield
Nottingham
NG17 8DA

Agenda

Scrutiny Panel A

Date: **Tuesday, 11th July, 2017**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue: **Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road,
Kirkby-in-Ashfield**

For any further information please contact:

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SCRUTINY PANEL A

Membership

Chairman: Councillor Jim Aspinall

Vice-Chairman: Councillor John Knight

Councillors:

Ben Bradley

Steve Carroll

Cathy Mason

Helen-Ann Smith

Tony Brewer

Joanne Donnelly

Lachlan Morrison

FILMING/AUDIO RECORDING NOTICE

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SUMMONS

You are hereby requested to attend a meeting of the Scrutiny Panel A to be held at the time/place and on the date mentioned above for the purpose of transacting the business set out below.



R. Mitchell
Chief Executive

AGENDA

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1. **To receive apologies for absence, if any**
2. **Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests**
3. **To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 7th March, 2017** 5 - 10
4. **Waste and Recycling - Scrutiny Introduction** 11 - 14

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SCRUTINY PANEL A

**Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,
on Tuesday, 7th March, 2017 at 6.30 pm**

Present: Councillor Amanda Brown in the Chair;

Councillors Rachel Bissett, Ben Bradley,
Tony Brewer, Helen Hollis, Glenys Maxwell,
Lauren Mitchell and Helen-Ann Smith.

Officers Present: Craig Bonar, Lynn Cain, Joanne Froggatt and
Mike Joy.

In Attendance: Councillor Paul Roberts.

SA.13 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary and Non-Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

(During consideration of declarations of interests, Councillors Ben Bradley and
Lauren Mitchell entered the meeting at 6.34 p.m.)

SA.14 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10th January, 2017, be
received and approved.

SA.15 Scrutiny Consideration of Community Engagement - Introduction from Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager

The Chairman introduced the item and reminded Members that the
Community Engagement item had been added to the Scrutiny Workplan in
2016 with an aim to considering how the Council and Councillors currently
engaged with local communities. Craig Bonar, Service Director for Corporate
Services and Transformation and Jo Froggatt, Corporate Performance and
Improvement Manager were also in attendance at the meeting to assist
Members with their discussions.

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Panel that there is a corporate review of engagement to be undertaken during 2017 which would be commencing shortly. To ensure there was no duplication of work, it was intended that the Panel's recommendations from the meeting would feed into the wider engagement review as appropriate.

It was acknowledged that local communities currently engaged with the Council and Councillors in a variety of ways. The democratic process allowed opportunities for the public to proactively engage in the decision making process and the Council were continually committed towards ensuring that engagement and consultation with the public was undertaken as widely and as often as possible.

The primary methods for active engagement and involvement with the community included:-

- community attendance and involvement at Area Committees, Planning Committee and Council meetings;
- community participation and involvement in the Scrutiny process;
- formal consultation exercises;
- specific projects (i.e. the New Cross Project);
- Locality Team support for community groups and organisations;
- submission of petitions (paper and e-petitions);
- Councillor surgeries;
- social media presence;
- introduction of new website – more accessible and user friendly;
- live twitter feeds from Council events.

For the purposes of the meeting, Members were requested to express their views in relation to the Council's current engagement methods, how effective they were, what worked well for them and what, if anything, could be done better. The Service Director, Corporate Services and Transformation commented about managing the expectations of the public in relation to engagement and ensuring that any methods utilised remained good value for money. It was also acknowledged that the Council needed to maximise its use of social media outlets in the future, recognising its effectiveness at reaching communities swiftly and in large numbers, at minimum cost.

The Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager gave a presentation to the Panel entitled 'What is Engagement?'

Recognised levels of engagement were quoted as follows:-

Informing (*telling people something*)

Consulting (*asking people what they think*)

Involving (*bringing people together to talk about issues*)

Empowering (*enabling people to make decisions themselves*).

Members were advised of the benefits of good community engagement:-

1. it can create social connections between individuals and groups;
2. it can enhance the motivation and capacity to participate in decision-making, instead of being passive recipients;

3. it fosters a more open relationship with residents;
4. it generates capacity in the community, by building on assets, networks and local identity;
5. it helps residents understand and access the system more easily, interacting with the Council more.

The results of the Council's Place Survey, undertaken in 2016, had shown that the public's preferred method of contacting the Council was still via the telephone and also that they most preferred the Council to contact them via paper correspondence. The survey had captured information from a varied demographic range and had confirmed that the public's confidence in the Council acting on resident's concerns was increasing along with the public perceived ability to influence Council decisions. The Panel duly acknowledged this improvement.

At this point in the proceedings, the Panel undertook a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis regarding current Council engagement methods and how to create more opportunities for the future. The results were as follows:-

Strengths

- the Council engages the public in a large variety of ways;
- local public meetings are arranged for local issues as they arise;
- the Council provides good opportunities for face to face dialogue/contact;
- 'Member Enquiry' e-mail service through Democratic Services Team enables prompt signposting for prompt responses to queries;

Weaknesses

- Council and Committee meetings can be too formal;
- some Committees do not have enough decision making powers to encourage public to attend and contribute;
- older generations can be fearful of digital/social media channels and methods of communication;
- no tenant/resident representation on Area Committees;

Opportunities

- meeting dates could be more widely advertised;
- better/increased use of social media to reach wider audiences within quicker timescales;
- to consider the possibility of more interaction between the public and Members during consideration of planning applications;
- increase promotion of 'good news' stories thereby encouraging interest and public pride;

- introduce use of 'instant chat messaging' to enable prompt responses to public enquiries;
- increase awareness of Council plans and policies (i.e. Area Locality Plans) with information guides in plain English about their objectives and aspirations;
- offer more ongoing support to resident-led groups to encourage sustainable, effective local decision making;
- utilising Twitter to give real-time updates during Council meetings;
- consider scrapping traditional Councillor Surgeries thus enabling individual Councillors to utilise more modern methods for keeping in touch with their constituents;

Threats

- public expectations being too high in current climate of austerity;
- ongoing Government spending cuts and impact on local community services.

Following the SWOT exercise, Members considered various different types of engagement as outlined in the Local Government Association Guide to Engagement. These included:-

1. Getting Out There (Advice Surgeries, Mobile Surgeries, Community Events);
2. Keeping People in the Loop (Newsletters, Direct Mail, E-Newsletters and Text Messages);
3. Reaching Out (effective internal communication teams, working with other agencies, community networks);
4. Using the Media (Local newspapers, TV/Radio, blogs/online radio);
5. Going Digital (Google alerts, FixMyStreet, Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor Forums, Surveys/Polls/Petitions, Personal Websites and Blogs).

Following the presentation, the Panel debated the issues and methods of engagement asking questions of the officers in attendance and sharing anecdotal evidence of personal experiences in relation to their work with local communities.

RESOLVED

that the Council's Corporate Performance and Improvement Manager be requested to take on board the comments/views expressed by the Panel Members during the SWOT analysis exercise and consider them as part of the wider corporate engagement review being undertaken during 2017.

(During consideration of this item, Councillor Helen Hollis left the room at 7.46 p.m. and returned to the meeting at 7.48 p.m.)

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Chairman.

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|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Report To: | SCRUTINY PANEL A | Date: | 11 JULY 2017 |
| Heading: | WASTE AND RECYCLING – SCRUTINY INTRODUCTION | | |
| Portfolio Holder: | ENVIRONMENT | | |
| Ward/s: | ALL | | |
| Key Decision: | NO | | |
| Subject To Call-In: | NO | | |

Purpose Of Report

Overview and Scrutiny added the topic of waste onto its 2017/18 Workplan in June 2017. Scrutiny Panel A seeks to consider the initial outcomes following 12 months since the changes to waste were introduced in 2016. In considering this topic, Members have expressed an interest in what progress has been made in achieving Council objectives of reducing the amount of waste being disposed of in an unsustainable way and the impact of these changes on residents.

This report provides an overview of how the changes were implemented and the initial outcomes and performance of the service following its initial 12 months. The Director for Place and Communities will be in attendance to give a detailed presentation, providing Members with further information and will answer questions on the scheme to allow Members to consider this topic in further detail.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the panel are asked to;

- Consider the information contained in this report and analysis provided by the Director for Place and Communities at the meeting;
- Provide views and comments relating to the initial updates following the changes to the waste collection service;
- Consider any areas for improvement.

Reasons For Recommendation(s)

The topic of waste was added to the Overview and Scrutiny Workplan in June 2017 to consider the impact of the changes to the service following its initial 12 months.

Alternative Options Considered (With Reasons Why Not Adopted)

This is the first meeting of the Panel considering this topic. Any options or considerations put forward will be discussed at the meeting and reported back in due course.

Scrutiny can put forward recommendations to Cabinet relating to any topic that it considers. These recommendations will be supported with sufficient reasoning to allow Cabinet Members to give due consideration to any alternative options put forward by the Committee.

Detailed Information

During March and April 2016, the existing 240 litre black-lidded general waste bins were transferred for use as garden waste bins and new 180 litre general waste bins were provided. This was part of a new scheme funded by Nottinghamshire County Council that aimed to improve the Councils recycling rates, which were averaging 34%.

With the introduction of the scheme, an ambitious proposal to deliver free garden waste collections to all Ashfield residents for a period of two years was introduced.

The Scheme was proposed on an invest to save basis with the initial set up costs projected to be paid back after 5 years due to savings made in disposal costs. It is hoped that the scheme will help boost recycling levels significantly, helping to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In 2014/15 nearly 30,000 tonnes of waste collected by Ashfield District Council was not recycled and went for other disposal/treatment and potentially up to 20% of the material which went into the grey bins could have been recycled or composted using one of the other receptacles provided.

A report presented to Cabinet in November 2015 outlined the reasons for the changes to the waste collection service. These were as follows;

- Recycling rate will rise to approximately 45% and collection costs will fall
- The risk of reactive unilateral investment and threat of fines is reduced
- Overall more free waste capacity would be provided for 2 years:
- Up to 20% of waste being put in the grey bin currently could be recycled or composted:
- The majority of residents have stated before that they would like a garden waste bin.

Following the announcement of the changes in November 2015, a number of roadshows took place around the District, and feedback was received through the Council's Citizen's Panel and with resident groups.

This was utilised to assist the Council in developing a number of supportive policies to assist residents with the transition. These included:

- The establishment of waste advisor roles to assist residents with their specific needs.
- Provision of larger bins for those with larger families or medical waste needs.
- Recognising that additional waste is created at certain times of year and a bag of general side waste will now be allowed on the first collection after Christmas, a time at which residents said they felt they needed extra general capacity
- To help people recycle as much as they can, extra or replacement recycling bins and boxes will be provided free of charge.

Initial Findings 2016/17

The data analysis for the first 12 months of the scheme highlights that the recycling rate for the year ending 2016-17 was 41%, compared the 31.74% at the end of the previous year, 2015-16, an increase of 9.26%.

General waste has also improved with a reduction of 10.86% to 28,688 tonnes in 2016-17 compared to 32,182 tonnes collected in 2015-16.

Garden waste collected in 2016-17 was 9,684 tonnes, compared to 4,903 in 2015-16, an increase of 4,791 Tonnes (97.72%). Recyclable waste increased by 19 tonnes (0.19%), from 9,621 in 2015-16 to 9,640 in 2016-17. Glass waste collected increased by 93 tonnes (4.23%) from 2,196 tonnes in 2015-16 to 2,289 tonnes in 2016-17.

The Director of Place and communities will be in attendance at the meeting to give a detailed presentation of the findings and answer any questions from Members of the Panel.

Next Steps

In considering this topic, Members of the Scrutiny Committee will need to consider any further areas that it would like to consider in more detail. Fly tipping has been added to the Workplan as a stand alone topic. Members will need to decide whether there are any areas from the report or the presentation that may benefit from a more detailed scrutiny review. In considering this, the panel should discuss;

- Implications to residents following the scheme introduction
- Progress made in reducing less sustainable disposal of general waste
- Improvements to recycling waste
- Future options and areas for consideration

Should the Panel wish to consider any areas of waste in further detail, a clear terms of reference will need to be agreed.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Improving the environmental sustainability of the district is an important aspect of the Council's Corporate plan, within the Place and Communities theme the Council commits to creating a greener Ashfield, reducing the impact of what we do on the environment, minimising waste and recycling more

Legal:

There are no legal implications contained within this report. Advice will be sought following the initial meeting should any legal issues be presented.

Finance:

There are no financial implications arising from this report. Advice will be sought following the initial meeting should any finance issues be presented and before any recommendations are proposed.

| Budget Area | Implication |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------|
| General Fund – Revenue Budget | N/A |
| General Fund – Capital Programme | N/A |
| Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget | N/A |
| Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme | N/A |

Human Resources / Equality and Diversity:

There are no human resource issues contained in this report. It is recognised that should any human resource issues be discussed, advice will be sought.

It is recognised that in reviewing the impact of the changes to the public following the introduction of the scheme, Members will need to consider equality / diversity issues.

An initial Equality Impact Assessment was carried out when the scheme was proposed, outlining additional support required to members of the community who are part of the assisted bin collection scheme, whom may not have English as a first language or have additional requirements or adjustment.

Other Implications:

None

Reason(s) for Urgency (if applicable):

None

Background Papers

Cabinet Report – 5 November 2015
 Overview and Scrutiny Report – 12 September 2016

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