

SCRUTINY PANEL A

Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,

on Tuesday, 12th September, 2017 at 6.30 pm

Present: Councillor Jim Aspinall in the Chair;

Councillors Steve Carroll, Joanne Donnelly, John Knight, Rachel Madden (substitute for Tony Brewer), Lachlan Morrison, Christine Quinn-Wilcox (substitute for Helen-Ann Smith) and Kevin Rostance.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Tony Brewer, Cathy Mason and Helen-Ann Smith.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain and Mike Joy.

In Attendance: Councillor Paul Roberts.

SA.4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SA.5 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 11th July, 2017, be received and approved.

SA.6 Introduction to Scrutiny Review of Membership of Outside Bodies

The Scrutiny Manager informed the Panel that the 'Member representation on Outside Bodies' topic had been added to the 2017/18 Scrutiny Workplan to enable Members to consider the ongoing value such representation provides to the Council and its local communities.

Members were currently appointed to 40 Outside Bodies ranging from local charities to national boards and organisations as follows:-

1. Ageing Well Network
2. Ashfield Citizens Advice Bureau Management Committee
3. Ashfield Community Safety Partnership Joint Strategic Group
4. Ashfield Homes Limited
5. Association for Public Service Excellence

6. Beauvale Charity – Hucknall
7. Byron Charity - Hucknall
8. Cahn Memorial Homes – Hucknall
9. Citizens' Reference Panel (NHS)
10. Campaign to Protect Rural England (Nottinghamshire Branch)
11. D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership Board
12. East Midlands Councils
13. Economic Prosperity Committee
14. George and Ada Shepherd and Moss and Plumb's Charity
15. Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board
16. Greenwood Community Forest Steering Group
17. Groundwork Cresswell, Ashfield & Mansfield
18. Health and Wellbeing Board (County Council)
19. Historic England
20. Hucknall & District Voluntary Partnership (Under One Roof Project)
21. Hucknall Partnership Group
22. Hucknall Relief in Need Charity
23. The Industrial Communities Alliance
24. LGA District Council's Network
25. Mansfield & Ashfield Economic Development Partnership (MAEDP)
26. Mansfield & District Crematorium Joint Committee
27. Market Traders Consultative Committee
28. Memorandum of Understanding between Ashfield District Council, Mansfield District Council, Newark and Sherwood District Council And Nottingham County Council Sponsor's Board
29. NET Partnership Group
30. N.I.D.A.S
31. Nottinghamshire Building Preservation Trust
32. Nottinghamshire Joint Waste Management Committee
33. Nottinghamshire Local Government Leaders' Group
34. Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust
35. Our Centre
36. PATROL: Adjudication Joint Committee
37. Police and Crime Commissioner Panel
38. Rural Community Action Nottinghamshire
39. Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
40. Teversal Grange Advisory Committee.

Members were currently appointed to Outside Bodies for varying terms of office (ranging from 1 to 4 years) at the Annual Meeting of the Council in May of each year. Outside Bodies were then provided with contact details for the appointed Council representative(s) and asked to make contact with the Member(s) to attend meetings, seminars, workshops etc. as appropriate.

The Scrutiny Manager advised Members that they might wish to consider processes to monitor Outside Bodies feedback and activity. The Council presently did not ask Members to provide feedback on any information they gleaned at meetings which could potentially provide details of possible funding opportunities, initiatives or projects dependent on the Body concerned. In addition, the Outside Bodies very rarely provided any updates or feedback back to the Council regarding their work within the Ashfield area or any contributions from the Council representative(s) in attendance.

The Panel were advised that some local authorities ensured that the Council representatives they appointed were only to Outside Bodies aligned with their own corporate priorities and strategies to ensure any information gleaned added value to their particular corporate approach. In addition, some local authorities produced an Outside Bodies Annual Report which gave feedback/updates in relation to the work undertaken by their particular Outside Bodies over the preceding 12 months including the impact/contribution it had made towards the particular Council's corporate priorities.

The Panel acknowledged that there was also a cost to Members representing the Council on some Outsides Bodies in the form of travel and subsistence claims for attending meetings outside the District.

A lengthy debate ensued whereby Members discussed the following:-

- slight concerns regarding the amount of Outside Bodies the Council currently appointed to;
- the perceived haphazard approach to selecting Outside Bodies for the Council to appoint representatives to and attend meetings thereof;
- acknowledgement that no feedback was currently received from Members attending Outside Body meetings and the realisation that pertinent information might be being missed;
- following attendance at a meeting, a suggestion that Members submit feedback to the three political groups regarding the topics discussed (in a format to be agreed);
- recognition that many of the Outside Bodies undertake sterling work and that there were benefits to be gained from the Council being represented at such meetings;
- suggestion for officers to undertake a phone canvass or questionnaire to elicit Members views regarding the effectiveness, or otherwise, of Council representation on Outside Bodies;
- to make a request to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team to outline their vision of how Council representation on Outside Bodies should be facilitated to achieve maximum value going forward;
- suggestion to undertake an exercise to ensure there is no duplication of work between the Outside Bodies currently appointed to;
- proposal for officers to undertake a data capture exercise from Outside Bodies in relation to Council Member attendance at their meetings and the Member's perceived contribution/interest into the work of the particular organisation;
- the benefits of ascertaining best practice from other local authorities in relation to their management of Council representation on Outside Bodies.

RESOLVED

that the Scrutiny Manager be requested to undertake the following in readiness for the next meeting of the Panel:-

- a) to e-mail a complete list of Outside Bodies to all Members and ask them to indicate which bodies they believe are a priority to the Council and to which representation should be maintained;
- b) to undertake a data capture exercise (via phone canvass or questionnaire), to elicit Members views regarding the current effectiveness, or otherwise, of Council representation on Outside Bodies;
- c) to undertake an additional data capture exercise (via phone canvass or questionnaire), to elicit the views of Outside Bodies regarding Ashfield Council Member attendance at meetings and their contribution/interest into the work of the particular organisation;
- d) to ascertain best practice from a sample of local authorities in relation to their management of Council representation on Outside Bodies.

(During consideration of this item, Councillor Joanne Donnelly entered the meeting at 6.35 p.m. Councillor John Knight also left the room at 6.42 p.m. and returned to the meeting at 6.45 p.m.)

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm

Chairman.