

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

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

on Tuesday, 5th June, 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Lee Anderson in the Chair;

Councillors Amanda Brown, Jackie James,
John Knight, Rachel Madden (as substitute for
Glenys Maxwell), Lachlan Morrison and
Christine Quinn-Wilcox.

Apology for Absence: Councillor Glenys Maxwell.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain and Mike Joy.

OS.1 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests.

No declarations of interest were made.

OS.2 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 15th February, 2018, be received and approved as a correct record.

OS.3 Overview and Scrutiny Workplan Annual Refresh 2018-19

Committee were requested to consider seven new topics for inclusion in the Scrutiny Workplan for 2018/19, as outlined in the report. If approved, the topics would be in addition to the regular standing topics which were considered each year as part of the Scrutiny work programme namely, Performance, the Council's Budget and Crime and Disorder.

Members considered the proposed topics including four additional topics that had been suggested since the publication of the report as follows:-

Digital Service Transformation Project

Committee Members were aware that this initiative was a priority for the Council who had already agreed funding to undertake the transformation. A Members' Seminar had been arranged for 12th June, 2018 to outline the digital transformation framework and the timelines for implementation. The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) had requested this topic to be included on the Workplan.

The Committee welcomed the chance to review this initiative but expressed their desire for the review to be robust. Members were well aware of the ongoing problems being faced by residents not being able to pay for Council services online etc. and wished to see these issues resolved properly and in a timely manner.

It was suggested that Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of the review, could be the interface between the Transformation Project Sponsors and the District's more vulnerable residents/groups that particularly need support and guidance for sharing their 'voice' in relation to accessing Council services. An idea was also mooted that the Council could make contact with local organisations (who offer help to the vulnerable sectors of Ashfield) and tap into their resources to inform/shape the digital transformation requirements to ensure access for all.

Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers

This topic was due to be discussed at the next Scrutiny Panel A meeting.

Leisure Centre Project

Members commented that there were various parts/stages of the Kirkby in Ashfield Leisure Centre build project that could be reviewed and suggested that CLT could be asked to provide a more informed steer as to their intentions for the review.

Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme

Committee welcomed this review but hoped that a post project evaluation exercise had taken place following the initial refugee resettlement in 2017. Access to this information would be useful and would inform the review process.

Selective Licensing

It was noted that Phase 1 of the Selective Licensing Scheme had been successfully implemented and the Council were now looking to roll out Phase 2 within the District.

Markets (Indoor/Outdoor)

The Chairman advised Committee that he had proposed this topic for the Workplan following recent conversations with disgruntled market traders and the ongoing decrease in stall occupancy at both the indoor and outdoor markets at Sutton notwithstanding the recent £1.8m refurbishment of the indoor market.

Members expressed their reservations at reviewing this topic and felt that any review of the recent occupancy rates and rent levels for the indoor/outdoor markets should be undertaken by the Cabinet whilst having regard for the projected outcomes that were agreed as part of the initial refurbishment contact.

Free Community Skips

Committee felt that this item should be included on the Workplan but suggested that a review be undertaken towards the end of the 2018/19 municipal year.

Modern Slavery in Ashfield

It was agreed this item should be on Workplan but Members felt that contact should be made with Nottinghamshire County Council to ascertain their proposals for tackling this escalating problem. This would then ensure the review, once undertaken, would complement the work being undertaken at a county and national level. It was also agreed that this topic be undertaken as part of the annual Crime and Disorder Scrutiny meeting.

Community Fears - Fracking in Ashfield

Members briefly debated the perceived level at which the District Authority could potentially influence this important topic and decided not to include it on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2018/19.

Impact of HS2

it was agreed this topic would not be included on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2018/19.

Internet Speeds on new Developments within Ashfield

It was acknowledged that this topic was worthy of a review as Members had been dealing with complaints for some time from residents being promised efficient internet access/speeds from BT (through Developers building new homes) who then failed to deliver. However, it was agreed that the Council could not bring much, if any, influence to bear on such a large organisation and decide the topic would not be included on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2018/19.

RESOLVED that

a) the following topics be included on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2018/19:-

- Digital Service Transformation
- Council Tax Exemption for Care Leavers
- Leisure Centre Project
- Syrian Refugee Resettlement Scheme
- Selective Licensing
- Free Community Skips
- Modern Slavery in Ashfield (as part of the annual Crime and Disorder Scrutiny meeting);

b) having decided not to include the Markets (Indoor/Outdoor) topic on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2018/19, Cabinet be asked to undertake their own review/consideration of the reasons for the declining occupancy rates for the indoor/outdoor markets, including the appropriateness of the increased rent levels which were set based on the projected outcomes agreed as part of the initial refurbishment contract and its subsequent negative impact on the viability of Ashfield's markets.

Reasons

Consulting, reviewing and agreeing items for the Scrutiny Workplan 2018/19 provides guidance and direction for the work undertaken by Scrutiny in the coming year.

The meeting closed at 8.05 pm

Chairman.