

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,**

**on Thursday, 6th June, 2019 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor Sarah Jayne Madigan in the Chair;  
Councillors Ciaran Brown, Melanie Darrington,  
Andrew Harding and Andy Meakin.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Phil Rostance and  
Caroline Wilkinson.

**Officers Present:** Lynn Cain, Mike Joy, Robert Mitchell and  
Shane Wright.

**In Attendance:** Councillor Dale Grounds and Councillor  
John Wilmott.

### **OS.23 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **OS.24 Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 5<sup>th</sup> February and  
12<sup>th</sup> March, 2019, be received and approved as correct records.

### **OS.25 Scrutiny Workplan Annual Refresh 2019/20**

The Scrutiny Research and Support Officer presented the report and outlined  
the main requirements of the Council's Scrutiny Workplan.

The Scrutiny Workplan, once finalised and approved by the Committee,  
outlined the Council's yearly rolling work programme of in-depth reviews and  
standing items considered by Panels A and B and the Committee respectively.  
Facilitation of the Workplan was flexible and new items could be added during  
the year dependent on need or changing priorities as appropriate.

Traditionally, the Workplan had sometimes contained review topics that were  
too vague or unwieldy which had resulted in a disjointed or unfocussed  
approach to the resulting reviews and their outcomes. It had therefore been  
acknowledged that a more focussed approach to topic selection and inclusion  
would be beneficial for the Workplan going forward.

As a result, Members were asked to give consideration to a short terms of reference form to ensure any suggested topics were well structured with the potential to add real value and outcomes to the Authority's provision of services.

Topic sources were often varied and could be identified from one or more of the following:-

- Issues of community concern
- Service delivery concerns
- Review, audit and inspection outcomes
- Issues relating to Council priorities
- Partnership objectives
- The Forward Plan
- Performance
- Budgets
- Improvement Plans.

At this point Members were asked to consider the list of potential topics for the 2019/20 Scrutiny Workplan, as contained in the report, and earmark around 7 or 8 initial topics for initial inclusion and progression.

#### Heritage and Conservation

Under this particular topic, Members considered specifically the promotion and preservation of the Council's War Memorials and acknowledged that officers were keen to see this review undertaken to ensure provision was adequately made for their conservation now and for future generations. It was agreed that should this topic be approved, it would be allocated as a priority to ensure that the review was completed and submitted to Cabinet in good time for the commencement of Remembrance Day events during November 2019.

#### Wildlife Protection

The item had been submitted by the Chairman who took a keen interest in wildlife and wanted to see a more collaborative approach to the preservation of wildlife within the District. The financial constraints of the Authority were acknowledged and Members were unsure as to whether there was currently sufficient wildlife protection available within the Nottinghamshire boundaries. It was agreed that the review could consider how the Council could better work with charities and partner organisations to protect and preserve the wildlife within Ashfield.

#### Climate Emergency

The item had been submitted to enable the Council to consider national climate concerns in relation to how it affected the Ashfield area.

#### Car Parking Facilities for Residents in Ashfield

Members considered car parking facilities as a potential topic with the review to specifically focus on space sizes, disabled and family provision and the continued appropriateness of the Council's current car parking locations. The Service Manager, Scrutiny & Democratic Services advised the Committee that the Council currently had a Car Parking Strategy document in place.

### Roadside Memorials Protocol

Members raised slight concerns that this topic was potentially very emotive and any restrictions or guideline protocols could cause distress to newly grieving relatives and family members. It was accepted that the grieving process was different for everyone and any premature removal of meaningful items from the roadside could potentially cause additional upset.

However, it was also acknowledged that the complaints from local residents in relation to problems associated with the memorial sites needed to be considered and addressed in a similar manner.

### Commercialisation and Income Generation

Income generation for the Council had increased in importance over the last few years due to ongoing Central Government cuts and loss of funding. The Council's recent investments had been predominantly in property but additional ways of generating income needed to be considered in the longer term. A clothes collection scheme and a peoples' lottery were mooted and Members felt a review of the topic would be extremely useful for the Authority.

### Attendance Management

The topic would involve a review of how the Council manages its sickness and attendance levels. Members were informed that the Committee already undertook a monitoring role in relation to attendance management through the quarterly performance reports it considered and therefore an additional review would cause some duplication of this exercise.

### Impact of Waste Facilities in Ashfield

The topic had been raised by Kirkby Councillors following ongoing issues being experienced by residents from a local waste facility. It was acknowledged that the issue would probably be better resolved by the Council's Environmental Health team and the County Council.

### Community Safety Partnership Priorities

Committee were advised that a report in relation to Community Safety partnership priorities had already been earmarked for submission to Cabinet in July 2019. However, it was agreed that the topic would lend itself well to being discussed at the annual Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting provisionally set for October 2019.

### Modernising Access to Information and Participation

The topic had been suggested to endeavour to improve communication and openness between the Council and Ashfield's residents.

### Homelessness in Ashfield

A recent decision has been taken by the Council to bring the Homelessness service back in house from the current shared service provision. It was agreed that some time should be given to the team to re-integrate itself back into the Council before any review of the service was undertaken. The topic could therefore be held in reserve until early 2020.

### Fly Tipping

The Cabinet Member responsible for waste collection had offered support for this topic to consider actions to reduce and deter fly tipping in Ashfield through reviewing trends, initiatives and enforcement action.

### Affordable Homes in New Housing Developments

The Service Manager, Scrutiny & Democratic Services advised Members that he considered this potential topic better suited to examination by the Local Plan Working Group as part of their ongoing work to prepare and submit a new Local Plan.

### Impact of Universal Credit

A number of Members had raised concerns surrounding the impact of the recent introduction of Universal Credit on Ashfield residents. The Council were doing an excellent job in assisting residents with their applications but added value could be sought by undertaking a review of its impact on the Authority going forward.

### Impact of Nursery Closures on Employment and Young People

The topic had been submitted following recent concerns that local private nurseries were having to close due to costly business rates and not being able to compete with current County Council provision. Having considered the suggestion, it was accepted that the Council could not overly influence or add value to this particular situation.

### Digital and Service Transformation

The topic had been submitted as a suggestion following publication of the agenda for the meeting. A report was due to be submitted to Cabinet in July 2019 and Executive Members and officers were keen to enlist Scrutiny Members views in relation to the Digital Service and Transformation Programme. If accepted, the topic would need to take priority due to Cabinet meeting deadlines for July 2019.

### Local Bus Provision for the Elderly

The topic had again been submitted as a suggestion following publication of the agenda for the meeting. Recent concerns had been raised with a local Councillor regarding the ongoing reduction of bus provision within the District, specifically for more elderly residents trying to visit shops and attending doctor appointments etc. Coupled with the recent Government led initiative to endeavour to prevent loneliness and isolation in elderly persons, it would be a timely topic to review from an Ashfield perspective.

### Community Engagement

The topic suggestion was raised at the meeting by a Committee Member in relation to how the Council could better improve self-promotion in relation to Council initiatives, good news stories and the services it currently provides. Increased engagement with communities and increased understanding from residents would be a benefit to the Council in the longer term.

### Amalgamation of Clinical Commissioning Groups in Nottinghamshire

Concerns were raised by a Member in attendance regarding the recent decision to consult on the possible merger of the six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) in Nottinghamshire; Mansfield and Ashfield, Newark and

Sherwood, Nottingham City, Nottingham North and East, Nottingham West and Rushcliffe, to create one Nottingham and Nottinghamshire CCG.

The Service Manager, Scrutiny & Democratic Services advised the Committee that the District Council no longer had sufficient powers to scrutinise the health service and as such he would investigate the proposal further and report back to a future meeting.

RESOLVED that

a) the following items be included on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2019/20:-

- Heritage and Conservation – War Memorials
- Wildlife Protection
- Commercialisation and Income Generation
- Community Safety Partnership Priorities
- Impact of Universal Credit
- Local Bus Provision for the Elderly
- Community Engagement;

b) 'Homelessness in Ashfield' be added to the Scrutiny Workplan for 2019/20 as a reserve topic for consideration at a later date to be specified;

c) the following items be declined and not included on the Scrutiny Workplan for 2019/20:-

- Climate Emergency
- Car Parking Facilities for Residents in Ashfield
- Roadside Memorials Protocol
- Attendance Management
- Impact of Waste Facilities in Ashfield
- Modernising Access to Information and Participation
- Fly Tipping
- Affordable Homes in New Housing Developments
- Impact of Nursery Closures on Employment and Young People
- Digital Service and Transformation;

d) the Service Manager, Scrutiny & Democratic Services be requested to undertake some further research in relation to the possible merger of the six Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG) in Nottinghamshire and report back on how the Committee or Panels might potentially consider the issue and participate in any of the consultative process.

## **OS.26 National Statutory Scrutiny Guidance**

The Service Manager, Scrutiny & Democratic Services advised the Committee that the new Statutory Scrutiny Guidance had finally been released after a long delay on 7<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. The guidance was originally due to be published in December 2018 but due to Brexit priorities it had been pushed back by a few months.

Having considered the document, local authorities and combined authorities were required to have due regard to the guidance when exercising their functions with the acknowledgement that the scrutiny function maintained its legislative status as part of the Stronger Leader model's decision making framework and processes.

The new guidance had been summarised within the report and Members were encouraged to read both the report and the Statutory Scrutiny Guidance document in full. There would be an ongoing expectation that any scrutiny function provided by an authority would be as effective as possible with the function being adequately resourced and financed as required.

**RESOLVED**

that the report be received and duly noted.

The meeting closed at 11.23 am

Chairman.