

SCRUTINY PANEL B

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

on Thursday, 21st July, 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Christian Chapman in the Chair;

Councillors Trevor Locke, Dave Shaw,
David Walters and Caroline Wilkinson.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Jim Blagden, Melanie Darrington and Dale Grounds.

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

SB.1 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SB.2 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 14 April 2022, be received and approved as a correct record.

SB.3 Dog Fouling and Littering

The Scrutiny Research Officer introduced the topic of Dog Fouling and Littering to the Panel, following its inclusion onto the 2022/23 Scrutiny Work Programme at the June 2022 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members were reminded that this particular topic had been looked at frequently over the years and had remained an important issue/priority for local residents. Following a recent increase in reported incidences of littering and dog fouling, it was a good time to revisit the issue and understand the scale of the problem within Ashfield.

Introductory evidence could be obtained in a variety of ways including speaking to Community Protection Officers, undertaking site visits or litter picks in hotspot areas and analysing fixed penalty notice data in respect of issues and/or legal proceedings over the previous few years.

Considering former scrutiny reports and subsequent Cabinet recommendations submitted during 2004 and 2010, it was apparent that the Council was continuing to do all it could to reduce incidences of littering and dog fouling.

These included:

- continuing to work with Keep Britain Tidy initiatives for incentivising action and implementing rules under Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) requiring dog owners to carry waste bags
- providing an effective network of bins in known dog walking areas and dog fouling hot-spots, capable of receiving dog waste and ensuring they are serviced and emptied regularly
- provision of a 24-hour web portal to enable residents to easily report incidences of littering and dog fouling
- provision of dog bags within all the Council's parks and open spaces
- the launch of a recent 'don't drop litter' campaign in early June 2022 which highlighted the amount of litter and dog fouling that the Council removed, with the overall aim of encouraging a positive change in behaviour and attitude towards picking up litter and dog foul.
- as part of the 'don't drop litter' campaign and to raise awareness; the creation and erection of four dog fouling trees in Brierley Forest Park, Kingsway Park, Selston Country Park, and Titchfield Park to show the effect of dog fouling and leaving dog bags discarded on trees
- facilitating regular litter picks with Council volunteers across the District
- provision of detailed information on the Council's website regarding the issue of fixed penalty notices for a number of offences, which include, amongst other things, dog fouling and littering.

Once the debate commenced it was quickly agreed that fly tipping should not be included in the review as the problems associated with it remained significant (and contentious) and would be best reviewed as a single topic at some point in the future.

Members then went on to discuss the following:

- the reasons as to why the external environmental enforcement contractor was not recommissioned by the Council following the 12 month pilot scheme
- concerns regarding recent reporting of non-Council regulated volunteers littering picking near busy roads without the necessary health and safety protection
- acknowledgment that littering and dog fouling was a perennial problem that never went away and the fact that the Council has to continually invest funding and resources to manage the problem

- why the Council no longer sells dog bags at local parks and outlets
- as a requirement for the review, to obtain up to date data regarding incidences of dog fouling and littering including hotspot locations
- the potential to engage with community service workers to support the Council's litter picking efforts across the District
- acknowledgement that incidences of littering and dog fouling always increase during the darker nights of winter and options for tackling this behaviour
- a suggestion to utilise the Council's mobile cameras to allow for surveillance of hotspot areas
- the existence of any Council data in relation to incidences of chewing gum littering.

RESOLVED that

- a) Councillors Helen-Ann Smith (Deputy Leader and Executive Lead Member for Community Safety and Crime Reduction) and Samantha Deakin (Executive Lead Member for Parks, Town Centres and Environmental Services) be invited to the next Panel meeting to give an overview of how littering and dog fouling issues are being addressed within their portfolios;
- b) a map showing dog waste bin locations across the Council's parks and open spaces (including emptying schedules) be submitted to the next meeting of the Panel for consideration;
- c) the Scrutiny Research Officer be requested to consider potential hotspot locations to facilitate a site visit and information gathering exercise as part of the review process.

SB.4 Commencement Time of Panel Meetings - Discussion

Having considered the commencement time for the Scrutiny Panel B meetings, it was agreed to keep the start time at 7.00pm.

The meeting closed at 7.55 pm

Chairman.