

SCRUTINY PANEL A

**Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,
on Thursday, 6th October, 2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor Dave Shaw in the Chair;

Councillors Dale Grounds, Trevor Locke,
Lauren Mitchell and Caroline Wilkinson.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Warren Nuttall and David Walters.

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

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

No declarations of interest were made.

SA.5 Minutes

RESOLVED

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

SA.6 Scrutiny Review: Gambling Harm

The Chairman introduced the report and advised Members that the Government had recently announced a further delay on the publication of the Gambling Reform White Paper. The White Paper was originally due to be published in Spring 2022 but had faced four delays including the resignation of the then Gambling Minister on 7 July 2022 and the subsequent change in Prime Minister.

The Scrutiny Research Officer presented his update and gave a synopsis of the review's progress to date. Alleged proposals in relation to the content of the first draft of the White Paper were released and these included:

Affordability

- A requirement for 'passive' automatic background affordability assessments
- A net loss of £125 a month or £500 in a year triggering automatic restrictions
- Affordability assessments to be conducted by established credit agencies
- Potential for mandatory deposit limits

Stake Limits

- ‘Smart stake’ limit of between £2 to £5 for online slots
- Customers who wish to stake more would need to pass further checks

Free Bets and Bonuses

- A potential ban on VIP schemes ran by betting companies
- This could include schemes such as free bets based on a customer’s spend or losses.

The Government also announced in July 2022 that loot boxes would not be contained within the scope of UK gambling regulation.

With so many unknowns still on the table, the Panel were asked to consider holding the review in abeyance until the White Paper had been published and Members could then hold informed discussions about potential implications for the Council and its residents following sight of the content.

Members debated the suggestion and acknowledged that the review could not progress satisfactorily until more detail was known. Disappointment was expressed that the Government had seen fit to remove loot boxes from their gambling reform proposals and felt that a lack of regulation in respect of this particular gambling format would fail to protect younger people from possible harm in the future.

The Service Manager for Scrutiny and Democratic Services spoke about how the Council was often left to pick up the pieces for individuals (and families) subjected to gambling addiction in the form of housing and homelessness issues, anti-social behaviour problems, debt complications and employment difficulties. He suggested that the Panel might wish to understand and evaluate the scale of the problem in Ashfield and how the Council might want to address this.

Education was also an important issue for tackling gambling addiction at an earlier stage, as evidence was showing that people were becoming victims to gambling addiction at a far younger age mainly through modern betting platforms on smart phones, gaming devices and television.

The discussion also touched upon how the Panel could start to address the issue whilst waiting for publication of the White Paper. It was agreed that a clear and instructive signposting page on the Council’s website in respect of help and support for people struggling with a gambling addiction would be a good starting point.

RESOLVED that

- a) it be agreed to hold the Gambling Harm review in abeyance until the Gambling Reform White Paper is published by Government;
- b) an interim recommendation be submitted to Cabinet requesting that the Council looks to providing a page on its website providing signposting details for help and support to those struggling with gambling addiction.

SA.7 Scrutiny Review: Waste and Recycling

The Scrutiny Research Officer introduced the new topic of Waste and Recycling and reminded Members that it had been added to the Scrutiny Work Programme in June 2022. The Panel were being asked to consider the terms of reference and parameters for the review and Members acknowledged the importance of establishing a specific topic for examination, due to the Council's waste and recycling service covering many areas and facets within the District.

Members were informed of the Council's legislative requirements for collecting household waste and recycling. The Council did have a Waste Strategy from 2013 published on its website and a Waste Collection Policy for 2022. The Garden Waste collection service was available to residents for an annual payment of £28 which was operational from March to November each year.

In respect of garden waste collections, it was acknowledged by the Panel that the Government had undertaken a consultation exercise in respect of this service being provided for free by local authorities but no outcomes to the exercise had yet been resolved or published.

Members discussed the new topic and considered the following:

- the potential to focus the review on asbestos within the District; how it is handled and removed and the costs to the Authority
- the success or otherwise of the garden waste collection scheme and whether the Council is making a profit on its delivery
- problems with household waste being strewn on estates for long periods of time before being removed by the Council
- current regulations for disposing of used paint receptacles
- the negative impacts of 'naming and shaming' residents being prosecuted for leaving waste in gardens etc. who often having underlying difficulties and are then subject to further online abuse
- current guidelines for disposing of fats, oils and greases and outcomes from a previous review, in conjunction with Severn Trent Water, regarding blockages from disposals within drains
- the importance of the Council providing clear instructions for residents regarding disposal of different types of household waste across its media platforms.

RESOLVED

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

- a) to check the Council's current policy for 'naming and shaming' residents who have been prosecuted for incidences of environmental crime;

- b) to request an update on the continued appropriateness of the Council's Waste Strategy document for 2013 and how the Council is responding to the Government's Waste Strategy and refining its local approach accordingly;
- c) to examine the Council's current instructions/guidelines for disposing of different types of household waste on its website;
- d) to obtain up-to-date figures in relation to delivery of the Council's Garden Waste Collection Scheme and the income generated since its inception.

The meeting closed at 7.57 pm

Chairman.