

SCRUTINY PANEL A

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

on Thursday, 9th February, 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Dave Shaw in the Chair;

Councillors Dale Grounds, Trevor Locke,
Warren Nuttall, David Walters and
Caroline Wilkinson (Vice-Chair).

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Lauren Mitchell.

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

In Attendance:

SA.8 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and/or Non-Registrable Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SA.9 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 6 October 2022, be received and approved as a correct record.

In accordance with Minute No. SA.6, the Scrutiny Research Officer advised Members that no further updates had been received to date in respect of the publication of the Gambling Reform White Paper by Government.

SA.10 Scrutiny Review: Waste and Recycling

The Scrutiny Research Officer presented the report and reminded Members that this was the last meeting of the Panel before the District Council Elections in May 2023. With the Waste and Recycling review topic still being in its infancy and work still needing to be done to compile a stronger evidence base, it was suggested that any final recommendations to Cabinet at this point in time would be premature.

At the introductory meeting, the Panel acknowledged the wide scope of the topic and to date Members had considered issues around:

- household waste
- recycling
- waste collection and legislation
- the Council's Waste Strategy and policies
- the Council's Corporate Plan priorities for waste and recycling
- the Spring Clean, Bulky Waste and Bag It campaigns.

At the last meeting the Panel had considered the importance of the Council offering quality volunteering opportunities within Ashfield which often overlapped with the Council's efforts for tackling waste and recycling related issues. Members had also requested further information in respect of the current Garden Waste Scheme and reasons as to why the Council's Waste Strategy had not been updated since 2013.

Members discussed the former Council Neighbourhood Charter and its potential for being invigorated and used as a communication tool for raising waste and recycling awareness in addition to setting standards for the service.

The supporting information was presented as follows:

Garden Waste Scheme

The scheme being offered by the Council was currently at capacity and had been a success with maximum take up by residents. Collections had been down in 2022 due to high weather temperatures and a lack of garden growth but the scheme was generally well used and at £28 cost per annum, it was competitively priced in comparison with neighbouring authorities.

Volunteering Opportunities

From April 2022 to January 2023 66 volunteering enquiries had been received with 114 being received within the same time frame the year before. The level of enquiries made was encouraging and the Council currently had 19 volunteers registered.

In respect of expanding volunteering opportunities within the Council, any volunteer programme was required to have a comprehensive support system working alongside it and with capacity and resources being limited within the Community Engagement Team, officers were more likely to signpost any potential volunteers to voluntary and community organisations that could offer more consistent support and supervision.

Waste Strategy

Officers continued to be aware that the Council's Waste Strategy was out of date but were awaiting long delayed key documents and policies from the Government (such as the Environment Bill 2021), before any refresh work could be undertaken.

Guidance for Disposal of Waste Types

The Council does not currently provide this information on its website but instead, relies upon Nottinghamshire County Council to provide the information through a variety of its media platforms.

Following the update, Members discussed the review and considered amongst other things:

- a 'voucher for returns' system operated in Germany which enabled users to return bottles/cans via an automated machine. The procedure not only crushed and recycled the bottle/cans but also dispensed a credit note voucher for the user to redeem when purchasing further beverages

- the importance of the draft Waste Strategy being submitted to the Scrutiny Panel at an early stage to enable Members to work with officers and contribute towards the document refresh exercise
- new and upcoming technology in relation to the disposal of food waste and how this might be incorporated into the Council's weekly bin collections in the future
- the volunteers that serve Ashfield and how the Council could possibly expand its numbers whilst being mindful to the provision of adequate health and safety protection and guidance as required
- a suggestion that the Council's volunteering policy and procedures could be a potential topic for a scrutiny review within the next municipal year
- a suggestion that Members could be more proactive in spreading the word regarding volunteering within Ashfield and offering support and advice to any residents that wish to do so.

To conclude the Scrutiny Research Officer summated on the comments and views raised within the meeting and advised that he would speak to the Council's Senior Community Engagement Officer and seek to obtain some further information regarding the Council's plans for supporting a volunteering service going forward and the levels of training and safety support that might be offered as part of the arrangement.

RESOLVED

that having considered all the evidence to date but being mindful of the District Council Elections in May 2023 and the potential introduction of new Members to the scrutiny process, evidence and information gathered as part of the Waste and Recycling review be carried forward and incorporated into considerations for the 2023/24 Scrutiny Work Programme.

The meeting closed at 7.37 pm

Chairman.