

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 19 MAY 2021

Present: Councillor D Harrison (Chairman)

Councillors B Harrison-Rushton, A J Bridgen, T Eynon, J Geary, G Hoult and K Merrie MBE

Portfolio Holders: Councillor A Woodman

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs C Hammond, Ms J Lloyd-Davies, Mrs C Ridgway, Mr P Sanders, Mrs R Wallace and Miss E Warhurst

38. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Benfield and M B Wyatt.

39. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

40. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None.

41. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021.

The following additional wording to minute number 32 – Items for inclusion in the future Work Programme, was proposed and agreed:

‘A discussion was held on the current position of the Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group and the work required to undertake before it ceased.’

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2021 be approved as a correct record subject to the amendment as detailed above.

42. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

A Member expressed frustration in the current work programme process as there were several items on the Cabinet’s Executive Decision Notice that were not scheduled for Scrutiny to consider. There was also some disappointment that several upcoming items were omitted from the work programme. It was also suggested that when the Cabinet’s Executive Decision Notice stated an item would not be considered by a Scrutiny Committee, there was also a valid reason provided.

The following items were requested for the work programme:

- Covid -19 and the Impact on the Community
- An anti-social behaviour update
- How the Development Corporation was affecting the Community
- Marlborough Centre

Chairman’s initials

The Strategic Director assured Members that the upcoming items detailed in previous agendas were still being scoped and would be brought to a future meeting. He also confirmed that the Committee would be considering a report in relation to the Marlborough Centre but due to timescales it was possible that an additional committee meeting could be required. He thanked the Member for the suggested items, these would need to be scoped and discussed with the Chairman.

43. COMMUNITY GRANTS - ANNUAL REPORT

The Head of Community Services presented the report and the Portfolio Holder spoke in support.

A presentation was then given to Members and guest representatives from the Citizens Advice Bureau and Age UK were invited to address the Committee in relation to the service information within the report.

Members were pleased with the positive information shared with the committee and the work being undertaken by voluntary groups. Comments were made on the positive returns detailed within the report and it was hoped that this type of information was included in future reports along with calculations. A Member remarked on the digital exclusion concerns raised in the report and felt that joint working with Age UK would be beneficial moving forward.

Following a question from a Member, clarification was given on the community grant criteria in relation to religious groups, and a discussion followed on the applications made by these groups for religious events and activities.

The Chairman thanked the officers and guests for their attendance.

44. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director presented the report.

Some Members expressed their disappointment in the virtual scrutiny training received and the low number of Members in attendance. It was also felt that the Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group had not yet achieved its objectives and therefore Members were against the recommendation within the report to disband the group.

A discussion was had on the work of the Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group, and it was felt that the following actions were yet to be completed:

- The introduction of a briefing for Members
- A clear plan for placing items onto the work programme
- A review of the scrutiny function in a years' time by the Cross Party Working Group, to evaluate how successful the changes had been.

The Chairman reminded Members that it was the responsibility of the Committees to move the scrutiny function forward and it was important for Members to lead the agendas. The Head of Legal and Commercial Services assured Members that proposals from the Cross Party Working Group would be reviewed and officers would discuss the points made at the meeting with both Scrutiny Chairs to compose a plan to move forward.

It was strongly agreed that the Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group should not be disbanded and following advice from the Head of Legal and Commercial Services, it was

decided to consider the two recommendations within the report separately so that individual votes could be taken to allow recommendation two to be voted down. An alternative proposal could then be put forward.

Recommendation one as set out in the report was put to the vote and by affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The Annual report be noted ahead of its submission to Council at its meeting on 22 June 2021.

Recommendation two as set out in the report was put to the vote and by affirmation of the meeting it was LOST.

Councillor K Merrie moved the recommendation to Council that the Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group remain operational to assess the work of the scrutiny function at a future date to be determined as appropriate. It was seconded by Councillor J Geary.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group remain operational to assess the work of the scrutiny function at a future date to be determined as appropriate.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.57 pm

Chairman's signature