

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 29 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillor J Hout (Chairman)

Councillors C C Benfield, T Eynon, J Geary, M D Hay, G Hout, J G Simmons and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors J Legrys and S Sheahan

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R Ashman, R D Bayliss, R Blunt and A C Woodman

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs C Hammond, Mr J Knight, Ms C Proudfoot, Mr P Sanders, Vickery, Mrs R Wallace, Miss E Warhurst and Mr P Wheatley

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bridgen and R Morris.

41. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor M B Wyatt declared a registerable interest in item 6 – The Future of Hermitage Leisure Centre and Recreation Ground, as a Whitwick Parish Councillor and a registerable interest in item 11 – A Cinema for Coalville Update as an owner of two businesses in Coalville Town Centre.

Councillors C Benfield, T Eynon, J Geary, M Hay, G Hout, J Hout and C Simmons declared they had been lobbied and had entered into conversations with residents in relation to item 6 - The Future of Hermitage Leisure Centre and Recreation Ground.

During discussion on item 12 – Linden Way, Coalville – Highway Extension, Councillor J Geary declared a registerable interest as a Director of the Springboard Centre that was located close to the site.

42. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

43. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2022.

Councillor T Eynon requested the following amendment to item 39 – Coalville Regeneration Framework:

‘Members expressed reservations that the promotion of walking and cycling would increase expenditure within the town and stressed the need for better transport links. Officers responded that whilst ideally it would be preferable to have a range of transport choices available, walking and cycling would be a viable choice. Members drew attention ~~was also drawn~~ to the fact that a station would be something which the authority hoped to deliver in due course.’

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor M B Wyatt and

RESOLVED THAT:

Chairman's initials

Subject to the above amendment, the minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2022 be approved as a correct record.

44. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

By affirmation of the meeting, it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The Committee's future work programme be noted.

45. THE FUTURE OF HERMITAGE LEISURE CENTRE AND RECREATION GROUND

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members.

Before a full discussion could commence, a Member reported that Whitwick Parish Council had not been formally consulted on the proposals, and as a major stakeholder this was very concerning. The Member felt that it was important for the Committee to receive the Parish Council's views before making further comments. Therefore, Councillor M B Wyatt moved that the report be deferred to allow Whitwick Parish Council to be formally consulted. It was seconded by Councillor T Eynon.

It was felt that the proposals were an unaffordable fantasy of the consultants which caused great concern. It was clear why social housing was appealing for the site but as the community had a problem with anti-social behaviour, there was desperate need for a centre to provide activities for young people.

Members believed more information was required and if the report was to be deferred, officers were asked to consider the following concerns:

- The consultation was not reaching enough people;
- The costings of the proposals were very high;
- Cabinet did not have enough information to make a decision;
- The Consultation had been affected by comments made by an elected member on social media;

and provide further details on the following:

- The legal issues in relation to holding competing activities to Everyone Active;
- Community asset transfer;
- Consulting on what the local people actually want on the site;
- How proposals fit in with the local plan;
- How to ensure this land dedicated to leisure remained outside the limits to development.

The Head of Community Services reported on a consultation event held on 9 June that was attended by several Whitwick Parish Councillors but he also offered to arrange an additional consultation meeting with Whitwick Parish Council if required.

The motion to defer the report was put to the vote. It was

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be deferred to allow Whitwick Parish Council to be consulted and for officers to address the concerns and requests for information as detailed above.

Chairman's initials

46. AIR QUALITY CAPITAL GRANT FUNDING (DEFRA)

The Head of Community Services introduced the report before handing over to the Air Quality Consultant who presented the detail of the report. The Portfolio Holder also addressed the Committee and spoke in support.

A discussion was had on the use of solid fuel heating, not only because there was no gas supply in some areas but also because of the increased cost of living and the price of gas. It was also noted that it was important to look at the barriers to those using solid fuel to enable them to change behaviours. Officers were aware of the issues and acknowledged it was a challenge moving forward. It was reported that the project would provide a better evidence base to allow the council to move forward with other projects, therefore it was an exploratory first step.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the equipment would belong to the Council once the project had concluded but the cartridges used in the equipment did need replacing every 12 months, therefore any future monitoring would incur a cost. Members felt it was important to continue to monitor so that any behavioural change recorded could be understood.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor C Benfield and

RESOLVED THAT:

The award of the DEFRA air quality grant funding be noted.

47. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director presented the report to Members summarising the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Committees over the previous 12 months.

Members were pleased to receive a clear report on what scrutiny was achieving and the commencement of the Scrutiny Work Programming Group was acknowledged. It was felt that the scrutiny function was moving in the right direction.

It was moved by Councillor T Eynon, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be received.

48. ESTABLISHMENT OF FUEL POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Strategic Director presented the report to Members and no comments were received.

It was moved by Councillor T Eynon, seconded by Councillor C Benfield and

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) A Task and Finish Group be established to review the work which the council is doing to minimise fuel poverty in North West Leicestershire.

Chairman's initials

- 2) The principles set out in the draft terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group be agreed.
- 3) Authority to seek nominations from the group whips to fill the seats on the Task and Finish Group be delegated to the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Chair of the Community Scrutiny Committee.

49. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Several Members expressed reservations that item 11 – A Cinema for Coalville-Update was to be considered in confidential session due to the public interest in the matter. It was requested that some discussion be had in public on matters within the report that did not relate to the organisations involved.

Officers responded that the matter was highly commercially sensitive, and any public discussion would undermine the delivery of the project. Members were informed that further public reports would be brought to Committee once this initial stage had progressed.

The Leader of the Council concurred with officers and stressed the implications involved if this was not dealt with correctly. He offered to meet with any Councillor individually if they wanted a further discussion on the matter.

Councillor M B Wyatt moved that item 11 – A Cinema for Coalville – Update be deferred to allow officers to provide a revised report that could be considered in public. The motion was not seconded.

As the Committee had not yet moved into confidential session, the Head of Legal and Commercial Services gave advice on the options available to Members regarding the exclusion of press and public.

It was moved by Councillor J Geary, seconded by Councillor J Houlton and

RESOLVED THAT:

In pursuance of Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that the business to be transacted involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act and that the public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

50. A CINEMA FOR COALVILLE - UPDATE

The Head of Property and Regeneration presented the report to Members. The Leader of the Council addressed the Committee in support of the report.

A lengthy discussion was had on the details of the report and all comments made would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 July in accordance with recommendations.

51. LINDEN WAY, COALVILLE - HIGHWAY EXTENSION

The Head of Property and Regeneration presented the report to Members. The Leader of the Council addressed the Committee in support of the report.

Chairman's initials

Members discussed the details within the report and all comments made would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting on 19 July in accordance with the recommendations.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 9.07 pm