

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on THURSDAY, 26 JUNE 2025

Present: Councillor T Eynon (Chair)

Councillors A Barker, M Ball, D Bigby, M French, K Horn, S Lambeth, P Lees, E Parle and L Windram

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mrs R Wallace, Ms J McGarry, Mr P Sanders and Mrs M Scott

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None.

4. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2025.

It was moved by Councillor P Lees, seconded by Councillor L Windram and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2025 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

5. FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS DELIVERY

The Head of Community Services presented the report to Members, outlining the current underspend in the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation and explained the historical role of the Light Bulb Service in early interventions.

During discussion, several questions of clarity were asked by Members and responses provided by officers.

Reference was made to the focus on private landlords receiving the grants to enable enhancements to be made to make their properties more accessible. Members were generally in support, however there was some concern regarding the use of public funds to enhance private assets. Officers assured Members that the foundation would be working on developing the process and criteria to ensure that all the correct processes and legal protections were in place.

Comments were made regarding the historical underspend and the Foundation Service Review that had been undertaken, Members felt that access to the review document would assist in understanding what has been happening. Officers explained that some elements of the document were sensitive and therefore had not been included in the agenda, however Members were permitted to see the details so the Head of Community Services would provide the document outside of the meeting if required.

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As a result of further discussions, the following concerns and recommendations were raised.

- The publicity around the availability of the grant. Following an explanation on publicity methods from officers, Members felt as it was primarily on the website, there would be lots of people who were in need of the grant but would not have access to the internet for various reasons. It was suggested that more be done to reach the community with this information including the use of local publications. Officers took the comments on board.
- Those people who were offered privately rented homes would lose their place on the housing register and therefore be disadvantaged, as they would no longer be eligible for a council property. Officers gave a technical explanation as to how the housing register operated in that the housing register was a list for any type of rented property not specifically a council property.
- It was felt that the cap on the disabled facilities grant was too low as it did not reflect the current cost of living. Officers explained that although means testing was not ideal, the council was limited to what it could do, however 'top ups' grants were available to assist. The change of the cap would be a decision of the partnership rather than the District Council. The Committee were in favour of this element being reviewed.

A thorough discussion was had on the eligibility criteria for the grants, with a focus on the appropriate length of time for the grant condition period. Members felt that the current five-year grant condition period should be increased to 10 years. It was also the consensus that the eligibility criteria should be tightened to ensure that value for money was achieved.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby, seconded by Councillor S Lambeth and

RESOLVED THAT:

The Lightbulb Service review document be available to the Committee outside of the meeting.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET THAT:

- 1) Marketing and publicity of the Light Bulb Service and grants available be improved.
- 2) Ensure that tenants housed in private properties are not disadvantaged on the housing register.
- 3) Request that the Foundation review the Disability Facilities Grant cap with the view to increase it, and to address issues with means testing that could prevent eligible residents from accessing the adaptations.
- 4) The grant condition period be increased from five years to 10 years.
- 5) The eligibility criteria be tightened to ensure value for money on grant awards.

6. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director of Place introduced the report to Members and then handed over to the Chair to present it.

In relation to the role of scrutiny as detailed in the report and the subject matters the committees could consider, it was noted that when considering the annual report, the Corporate Scrutiny Committee agreed to request the Governance Working Group add

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carbon zero to the list as part of the annual review of the constitution. Members endorsed this decision. Whilst talking about the listed subject matters, questions were asked about statutory crime and disorder, the Strategic Director believed this was now titled differently and would look into the matter further change the title if necessary.

It was moved by Councillor S Lambeth, seconded by Councillor A Barker and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) The decision of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee to request the Governance Working Group to include the addition carbon zero on the subject matter for scrutiny as detailed in the scrutiny terms of reference as part of the annual review of the constitution, be endorsed.
- b) The authority to make any final amendments to the report prior to the consideration by Council be delegated to the Scrutiny Committee Chairs.

7. ESTABLISHMENT OF WATER MANAGEMENT IN THE COALVILLE STRATEGIC GROWTH AREA TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Strategic Director of Place presented the report to Members.

The Chair spoke in support of the task and finish group as the member who requested the scrutiny topic.

It was moved by Councillor S Lambeth, seconded by Councillor P Lees and

RESOLVED THAT:

- a) A Task and Finish Group be established to review water management in the Coalville Strategic Growth Area.
- b) The principles set out in the draft terms of reference for the Task and Finish Group be agreed.
- c) The following Members of the Community Scrutiny Committee be appointed to sit on the Task and Finish Group in accordance with the terms of reference:

Councillor Barker
Councillor Parle
Councillor Eynon
- d) The political group whips be consulted on the appointment for the remaining three seats on the task and finish group.

8. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committee Work Programme.

In relation to the 'Leisure Centres Annual Review' report, Members requested that more detail be included around community outreach and engagement.

The Committee Work Programme was noted.

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The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.40 pm

Chair's signature