

MINUTES of a meeting of the POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2017

Present: Councillor M Specht (Chairman)

Councillors N Clarke, T Eynon, J Geary, D Harrison, G Houl, P Purver, V Richichi, A C Saffell and N Smith

In Attendance: Councillors J Legrys

Portfolio Holders: Councillors A V Smith MBE

Officers: Mr C Brown, Mr D Gill, Ms K Greenbank, Mr A Hunkin and Mrs R Wallace

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor V Richichi.

19. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Members declared the following interests:

Councillor N Clarke declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, Community Focus Grants due to his connections with Agar Nook Community Association.

Councillor M Specht declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, Community Focus Grants, due to his connections with Coleorton and New Lount Volunteer Group.

Councillor T Eynon declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, Community Focus Grants, as a volunteer at Hermitage FM.

Councillors D Harrison and A C Saffell declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5, Community Focus Grants as a member of Castle Donington Parish Council.

20. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No questions were received.

21. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 23 August 2017.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 August 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

22. COMMUNITY FOCUS GRANTS

The Head of Economic Development presented the report to Members, highlighting the processes and a summary of the grants awarded. She informed Members that as suggested, groups that were currently applying for grants had been informed of the possibility of being invited to attend a Policy and Development Group meeting.

Chairman's initials

Councillor D Harrison thanked officers for a good report and he was pleased that the council was helping community organisations.

Councillor T Eynon concurred with Councillor D Harrison and she now had a clear idea of the number of grants awarded as well as the process involved. However she felt that it was not clear what happened after the grant was awarded as there was not a measurable target to complete the process. The Head of Economic Development explained that some organisations were visited by Officers and the Portfolio Holder after a grant was awarded and this information would be included in the report in future.

Councillor N Smith reported that he had seen outcomes of some very successful projects and fully supported them. He commented that he was surprised to discover that a number of Parish Councils were not aware of the scheme and asked officers to make information available. The Stronger and Safer Communities Team Manager reported that his team were currently undertaking work to advertise the grant scheme further. In particular, an officer had been tasked with the marketing and has already managed to obtain a segment on East Midlands Television.

In response to a question from the Chairman, the Stronger and Safer Communities Team Manager confirmed that an unsuccessful status within the report related to the application being unsuccessful not the project itself.

The Chairman asked Members if they would like groups to come to a committee meeting to give presentations regarding their success stories. Councillor T Eynon confirmed that she would be happy with additional information accompanied by photographs within the report in future. She would also be interested in accompanying officers to some of the group visits.

With the consent of the Chairman, the Community Services Portfolio Holder addressed the Committee. She confirmed that she did undertake visits to the community groups and there were photographs taken which were used in the press and social media. Councillor N Smith suggested that a collage of the photographs be displayed once a year at a committee meeting, which could also be placed in reception. The Stronger and Safer Communities Team Manager agreed to look into a photograph collage for future reports.

At this point the Chairman stopped the discussion as Councillor A C Saffell was making a political statement which was not appropriate for the meeting.

Councillor G Hoult referred officers to the grant awarded to the Kegworth Plan Group as included within appendix A and queried the figures as she understood that it was a grant for 50 percent match funding. The Head of Economic Development apologised as she believed that was a mistake and would make the amendment.

Councillor N Clarke felt that the grant scheme was brilliant as he was aware that they were a lifeline for the groups. He hoped that long may they continue.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, seconded by Councillor J Geary and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

23. ANNUAL REPORT

The Interim Director of Resources presented the report to Members highlighting the regular meetings with the Chairman and Councillor J Geary as the Labour Group's

Chairman's initials

scrutiny lead representative, the scoping report and proposed changes to the meeting schedule.

In response to a question from Councillor D Harrison, the Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that there was a provision within the Council's Constitution to co-opt individuals to the Policy Development Group with non-decision making powers. It was required for assistance in making decisions or if the committee needed particular expertise. This was not a new addition to the scrutiny procedure rules but as it was rarely used Members may not have been aware of it.

Councillor T Eynon commented that she believed there had been an improvement to the level of scrutiny since it had been questioned and thanked officers for the report.

By affirmation of the meeting it was

RESOLVED THAT:

The annual report for presentation to council on 21 November 2017 be noted.

24. UPDATE TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented the report, drawing Members attention to the proposed changes regarding the increase in the number of Policy Development Group meetings, key decisions and contracts.

In response to a question from Councillor J Geary, the Deputy Monitoring Officer reported that there was a contracts register which was available for public viewing.

Councillor J Geary expressed concerns regarding the proposed changes to small contracts as he felt that obtaining three quotes was important to ensure that the Council was getting value for money. The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that officers would still seek value for money, the change was intended to reduce the amount of unnecessary paperwork and give responsibility to officers. He assured Councillor J Geary that the appropriate checks would still be undertaken through the purchase order system and the finance team would also be monitoring. Councillor J Geary still believed a formal record of quotes obtained should be kept to ensure value for money.

Councillor J Geary drew officers' attention to paragraph 13.1 on page 64 of the report as it was not gender neutral because of a reference to 'her'. The Deputy Monitoring Officer acknowledged it and would make the amendment.

Councillor A C Saffell commented that the Council's Constitution was very lengthy and repetitive. He understood that it was a legal document but he would like to see the document shortened rather than growing with each amendment. The Deputy Monitoring Officer agreed that the document was lengthy but was generally due to change in legislation. He reported that it would be a large project to review the Council's Constitution in its entirety but it was something that could be done with Members involvement through a task and finish group. Councillor A C Saffell stated that he would be looking through the document and would let the Deputy Monitoring Officer have any comments. He agreed with the suggestion of a task and finish group.

Councillor T Eynon suggested that the Policy Development Group could review the Council's Constitution in sections throughout the year.

The Interim Director of Resources added that lots of people now searched the Council's Constitution on line so it was important that the information was in the right place. He felt this needed to be considered when reviewing the document.

It was moved by Councillor G Hoult, seconded by Councillor T Eynon and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted.

RECOMMENDED THAT:

The proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution, as detailed within the report, be approved when considered by Council on 21 November 2017.

25. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor T Eynon requested that the Medium Term Financial Strategy be considered by Policy Development Group before Cabinet agreed it in February. She also referred to the residential parking and planning policy which was discussed at a previous Council meeting, Councillor T J Pendleton had announced that the Policy Development Group could scrutinise it once all of the evidence had been collected. Finally, Councillor T Eynon also asked to look at Coalville Heroes contracts so the outcomes could be scrutinised.

Councillor J Geary asked what the situation was with the attendance of a representative from the gas supplier to rural areas item as it had been on the work plan for many months. The Interim Head of Resources explained that he had been let down by the representative as they had been scheduled to attend for the last two meetings. He informed Members that he had made contact with the agency to express his disappointment and it was scheduled for the meeting in January.

The Interim Director of Resources also advised Members that the presentation regarding customer services would be given to the Committee in January due to the availability of the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED THAT:

The work programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.28 pm