

MINUTES of a meeting of the CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Coalville on WEDNESDAY, 8 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillor N Smith (Chairman)

Councillors V Richichi, J G Simmons, E G C Allman, D Bigby, A J Bridgen, G Houlst, S Sheahan and M B Wyatt

In Attendance: Councillors R Johnson

Portfolio Holders: Councillors R D Bayliss

Officers: Mr A Barton, Mrs A Crouch, Mrs C Hammond, J Marshall, Mr M Murphy, Mr P Sanders, Mrs R Wallace and Miss E Warhurst

52. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A C Saffell

53. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

54. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

None

55. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022.

It was moved by Councillor J Houlst, seconded by Councillor E Allman and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

56. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the inclusion of any items on the work programme. The plan of forthcoming Cabinet decisions and the current work programme were set out in the agenda for information.

By affirmation of the meeting the work programme was noted.

57. ZERO CARBON UPDATE

The Head of Community Services introduced the report before handing over to the Climate Change Programme Manager who presented the detail of the report. The Portfolio Holder also addressed the Committee and spoke in support.

During discussion, a comment was made regarding the necessary work required to update many council homes to a decent energy efficiency rating, in some cases it was basic maintenance. It was felt that updating the properties would not only contribute towards the Council's zero carbon target but also help the tenants reduce their energy

Chairman's initials

bills. The Head of Community Services confirmed that there was a programme of improvements for council properties which included energy efficiency improvements but if there were any properties that were a particular concern, Members were encouraged to let him know so they could be reported. The Portfolio Holder concurred and stated that any property reported to him would be passed directly to the Interim Head of Housing when they meet on a regular basis.

Positive comments were made on the review of the staff travel expenses; it was felt that staff should be assisting with the zero carbon target by considering how they travel.

Officers were recognised for the work undertaken already in the Coalville Special Expenses area to reduce the carbon footprint, including tree planting, investment in solar panels and research into other investment opportunities.

In response to a question on the involvement of parish council's to reduce their carbon footprint, the Head of Community Services explained that parish clerks had been involved and have been offered support.

In response to a question in relation to the food waste collection trials, the Head of Community Services informed Members that usage was approximately 30 percent, which was above the national average, therefore performance was good. He added that as more funds became available from national government for this use, the collections would be rolled out across the district. The challenge to encourage people to recycle was acknowledged and it was noted that more publicity will be used going forward.

A Member questioned the usage figure for electric vehicle charges as it seemed low in comparison to the size of the district. The Climate Change Programme Manager explained that national evidence indicated that it took time for usage to grow but that there had been an increase in usage across all the sites, particularly North Street in Ashby. It was noted that the charging structure had changed to encourage usage.

Some concern was raised that investment was being made in relation to the use of electric vehicles which could be quickly outdated as other methods such as hydrogen were being explored.

It was suggested that the Planning Department start to encourage developers to install solar panels on all new builds as it was felt this would make a big difference on the carbon footprint.

A request was made for an update on the progress for the use of mine water for a heating source for the new leisure centre. The Head of Community Services explained that it was a very technical and challenging process, but it was something he was very passionate about, and progress was being made with the Coal Authority. Members were reminded that the heating system at the leisure centre was retrospectively fitted with a system that could be used for this type of heating, and talks were also ongoing with other organisations in Coalville to potentially use the heating source too. It was suggested by a Member that the mines in Ashby Woulds also be assessed as they could potentially be used in the same way.

Councillor M Wyatt left the meeting at 7.10pm, during discussion on the item.

Reference was made to the statistics showing the reduction in emissions as provided by BEIS, in particular the land use, land use change and forestry as no reduction was recorded. It was questioned if this was because there was no change or because it was not monitored. The Climate Change Programme Manager agreed to investigate the matter further and provide further information outside of the meeting.

Chairman's initials

During discussion on the role council houses would play in reducing the council's carbon footprint, Members felt more emphasis should be placed on this area. It was felt that efficiency improvements to council homes would make a considerable impact on the reduction target. The aim to achieve an EPC rating of C for all council homes was noted but it was felt that this did not go far enough to meet the zero carbon target. It was suggested that in the future, more information be provided to explain exactly how the efficiency work planned for council homes would help reduce the carbon footprint and if the current EPC rating targets were addressing the problem adequately.

In response to a question relating to the efficiency standards for the programme of new builds, it was confirmed that the standards were being pushed where possible, but it was acknowledged that the biggest benefit would come from improving the current housing stock.

It was moved by Councillor E Allman, seconded by Councillor J Simmons and

RESOLVED THAT:

The comments made be presented to Cabinet when considering the report at its meeting on 19 July 2022.

58. 2021/22 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development presented the report to Members.

In relation to the Marlborough Square project, some concerns were raised that works had not yet started on the site. It was noted that contractors had been appointed and several issues were still being resolved with Leicestershire County Council, Members were reassured that work was due to commence soon.

The accuracy of the footfall figures recorded for Coalville Town Centre were questioned as Members felt the town was much busier than indicated. The Head of Planning and Regeneration agreed that numbers did seem low compared to how busy the centre could be, particularly at the weekends. It was explained that these figures had to be used currently as it was the only evidence available from the counting system installed which used mobile phone signals, however as it did not seem accurate, better ways to collect the data moving forward were being investigated.

A Member questioned the performance of the Customer Services Team as targets were still not being met. It was noted that a dip in performance was always seen in Quarter 4 as demand was higher due to the annual council tax notification letters sent to every household. However, it was acknowledged that demand was particularly high this year due to the roll out of the national council tax rebate. The Strategic Director agreed to provide all available statistics outside of the meeting to allow a full picture of performance and to set up a briefing with the Customer Services Team Manager once the move to the new premises had concluded.

A Member commented on the number of parishes that were undergoing Neighbourhood Plans and asked what was being done to encourage take up from parish councils. The Head of Planning and Regeneration explained that the figure within the report was an annual figure for completed neighbourhood plans and confirmed there were several parish councils currently going through the process that were not indicated. Members were assured that parish clerks were contacted regularly, and support offered. It was agreed for further information to be provided outside of the meeting.

Chairman's initials

In reference to the success in setting up customer online accounts and the use of online forms, some concern was raised that there were not adequate systems in place to deal with the receipt of online forms. This was due to a personal experience of a Member and The Head of Community Services agreed to take this up outside of the meeting.

In response to a request for an update on the current position for the Ashby Tourist Information Centre, the Head of Property and Regeneration explained that progress was being made as part of the Ashby BID and a full update will be provided to Members in due course.

It was moved by Councillor E Allman, seconded by Councillor A Bridgen and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be noted and comments made be presented to Cabinet when considering the report at its meeting on 19 July 2022.

59. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Strategic Director presented the report to Members, detailing the work of the Scrutiny Committees over the previous 12 months.

It was moved by Councillor A Bridgen, seconded by Councillor V Richichi and

RESOLVED THAT:

The report be received.

Councillor M B Wyatt left the meeting at 7.10pm

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.50 pm