

MINUTES of a meeting of the COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the Forest Room, Stenson House, London Road, Coalville, LE67 3FN on THURSDAY, 27 MARCH 2025

Present: Councillor T Eynon (Chair)

Councillors M Blair-Park, M French, S Lambeth, P Lees, E Parle, L Windram, N Smith (Substitute for Councillor M Ball), J Windram (Substitute for Councillor K Horn) and C A Sewell (Substitute for Councillor D Bigby)

In Attendance: Councillors A Barker, D Everitt, J Legrys and P Moul

Portfolio Holders: Councillors M B Wyatt

Officers: Mr J Arnold, Mr T Devonshire, Ms J McGarry, Mr A Barton, Mr P Stone and Mr P Sanders

66. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors M Ball, D Bigby, and K Horn.

67. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no interests declared.

68. PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

69. MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025.

It was moved by Councillor M Blair-Park, seconded by Councillor E Parle, and

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2025 be approved as an accurate record of proceedings.

70. THE FUTURE OF WASTE SERVICES

The Head of Community Services presented the report, with support from Eunomia consultants.

Members asked whether the specific changes being proposed would be obvious to the public. The Head of Community Services advised that a detailed programme of engagement would be undertaken to communicate the specific differences to residents.

In response to Members, the Head of Community Services answered a range of technical questions on what could and could not be recycled, and why, and when more bespoke solutions would be deployed. With support from Eunomia consultants, he also set out some of the strategic considerations behind the favoured proposal.

The Chair referenced questions the Unions had raised with her, and a discussion was held regarding future staffing arrangements and support for staff. The Head of Community Services advised that the Council wanted to protect and retain staff, that he engaged with

Chair's initials

trade unions on a monthly basis, and that there were many mitigating options available; nevertheless, Members should note this was a service which had significant staff turnover due to the nature of the work. Agency staff were only used when mitigating sickness or extra demand. The proposed option would reduce physical strain of the job, this would, in turn, reduce the levels of sickness related absence which would consequently reduce the use of agency staff.

An extensive discussion was held concerning the potential impact of the proposed local government reorganisation and the creation of a unitary authority may have on the proposals. The Head of Community Services advised that this proposal was ahead of legislative requirements and be an example of best practice to other authorities in Leicestershire. It would be for the new authority to synthesise the different waste service operations throughout the County, but it was highly likely that separate systems would carry on for some years before changes were made.

A Member suggested that residents had expressed frustration about the delay to the process, but noted that Officers were recommending the proposal with overwhelming public support. The Head of Community Services advised that the delay was unavoidable, as Officers had been awaiting certain decisions from central Government which they needed to take into account. The final outcome would be clearly communicated to residents.

Members of the Committee put forward a range of opinions regarding charging for green bins and a potential reduction in the frequency of black bin collection. Officers advised that the report in front of them had not considered those matters one way or another, and Cabinet would not be deciding on them. They were for possible consideration in the future as set out in the report but decisions were not being made at this point.

The Chair invited the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Climate Change to address the Committee.

The Portfolio Holder said that given the financial and qualitative assessment of the three options, it was recommended to transition the service to a twin bin recycling scheme to replace the current bags and boxes scheme. This had received strong public support during the consultation, would be in line with all legislative requirements, would promote more recycling, and would be the leading waste collection service in Leicestershire.

Members thanked the Portfolio Holder for his contribution. The Chair welcomed the strong consensus between the Committee and the Portfolio Holder on proceeding with the officer's preferred choice, Option 3.

The Chair thanked Members for their comments, which would be presented to the Cabinet on 22 April.

71. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN THE FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to any items on the Work Programme.

A Member raised the issue of HGV parking provision in the district. The Strategic Director of Place advised that this had previously been addressed by the Scrutiny Work Programming Group, who had decided no further action was necessary as the matter would need to be considered as part of the Local Plan and would be considered and scrutinised by the Local Plan Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm

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The Chair closed the meeting at 7.34 pm