

**OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP
16TH OCTOBER 2017**

PRESENT: The Chair (Councillor Smidowicz)
The Vice-chair (Councillor Bebbington)
Councillors Bradshaw, Capleton, Tassell and Taylor

Chief Executive
Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing
Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing
Democratic Services Officer (NA)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Gerrard and Sutherland

33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Group held on 18th September 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed.

34. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY AND PERSONAL INTERESTS

No disclosures were made.

35. DECLARATIONS OF THE PARTY WHIP

No declarations were made.

36. QUESTIONS UNDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES 11.16

No questions had been submitted.

37. RECYCLING CREDITS – DIRECTION NOTICE

A report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces was considered, (item 6A on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item.

They gave the following responses to issues raised:

- (i) Clarification was given regarding the recycling bring sites in the area in that there was a mixture of council and privately owned sites. The Group highlighted some issues with bring sites in their areas such as anti-social behaviour and fly tipping and this was thought to be occurring on privately

owned sites. The Head of Service for Cleansing and Open Spaces confirmed that these sorts of issues were often experienced with bring sites and the Council incurred expense in dealing with their own Council sites.

- (ii) The risk element to customers was raised due to the loss of income from recycling credits for the Council and the possible effect it may have on them. The Group was advised that the Council was looking at making minor changes that would have a low impact for the customer. The loss of income had already been incorporated into the financial plans so the council would be able to mitigate for the change.
- (iii) One of the suggestions made was to charge residents for bulky waste collection but this was not an idea that was currently being considered in line with maintaining a good service and low impact change for the customer.
- (iv) The amount of recycling collected from the bring sites was minimal so would not make a difference to the household collections and there would only be a minimal impact on the service.
- (v) The group was advised on the process for disposing of the recycling waste and the financial benefit in recycling although it was noted that the market for recycling had changed and the value of items had dropped which meant that the Council was paying for the recycling to be sorted and sold on its behalf.
- (vi) A daily report was received by the Council on the refuse collection figures highlighting any trends or issues with individual properties who are given advice by the officers.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

38. FUTURE CEMETERY PROVISION IN CHARNWOOD

A report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces was considered (item 6B on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Strategic Head of Neighbourhoods and Community Wellbeing and the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item.

They gave the following responses to the issues raised:

- (i) The chosen site for the new cemetery would provide 30 years of usage for Charnwood which would give the team sufficient time to plan for the longer term.
- (ii) The plan for the additional land adjacent to the current cemetery to be used for ashes plots was commended by the Group.
- (iii) The choice of location for the new cemetery was questioned by the Group and the reasons behind the decision were explained. There was a feeling by some that one of the other options may be more suitable but the choice was explained in terms of accessibility to the site for residents, current infrastructure already in place and the costs of development
- (iv) There was a discussion about the different types of burials and some suggestion from the Group that the Council look at the arrangements in other countries for more innovative ideas.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Cleansing and Open Spaces on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

39. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS ALLOCATION POLICY

A report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing was considered setting out the revised Allocation Policy, the option of whether to remain within the sub-regional CBL system and the procurement of a system to administer CBL following the end of the current contract (item 6C on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing attended the meeting to assist with consideration of the item and gave the following responses to the issues raised:

- (i) One of the changes proposed was to suspend applicants in Band 3 who did not place any bids within the first 12 months of being on the waiting list. The Group acknowledged this as a change from the current system and it was explained as a prompt to review the applicant's housing need as there may have been a change in circumstances or they may no longer

have a need to move. It was made clear that applicants were not being penalised.

- (ii) The financial income threshold had been raised from £53,265 to £60,000 per household and seemed high to the Group although research had been completed as to what the figure should be, in line with the County. The Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing advised that this was derived from an extinct report and would check the source of that figure.
- (iii) There was a query over the bedroom allocation for applicants which was explained to the Group. This led into a discussion about the availability of properties for residents, the requirement for larger properties being built and village connection being given sufficient priority for applicants.
- (iv) The current sub-regional allocation system ABRITAS was confirmed as being out of date and the contract is due to expire next year. There was currently a discussion being held between Councils in the sub region to see whether a new sub regional contract could be procured and if not what alternatives were available.
- (v) There was clarification given to the Group about the government's right to buy scheme and the financial implications for the Council. The proposed option being offered by Registered Providers of right to buy for their tenants was discussed as well as the financial implications of that scheme.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet be informed that the Group supports the recommendations as set out in the report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing.

Reason

Having considered the report and asked questions of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing on the matter, the Group concluded that it would be appropriate for Cabinet to approve the recommendations set out in the report.

40. OVERVIEW SCRUTINY GROUP PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY – CABINET RESPONSE

A report of the Cabinet was considered setting out its responses to the recommendations of the Group on pre-decision scrutiny items (item 7 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet's responses to the Group's recommendations be noted.

Reason

The Group was satisfied that it added value where appropriate and welcomed the Cabinet's consideration of the Group's views and recommendations as part of its decision making process.

41. WORK PROGRAMME

A report of the Head of Strategic Support was considered, to enable the Group to consider its Work Programme and forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet in order to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny and to provide an opportunity for members of the Group to raise suggestions on issues for scrutiny (in addition to pre-decision scrutiny) which fell within the Group's remit, for scheduling by Scrutiny Management Board (item 8 on the agenda filed with these minutes).

The Group considered the report (and further information on the forthcoming Key Decisions and decisions to be taken in private by the Cabinet provided by the Chief Executive at this meeting) and agreed to schedule items for pre-decision scrutiny prior to the next Cabinet meeting, but that the following pre-decision scrutiny item should be added to its work programme at this stage:

- Award of Housing Capital Programme (Decent Homes) Contract – deferred to 13th November 2017
- Buy Back of Student Occupied Former Council Properties – 13th November 2017
- Homelessness Strategy – 13th November 2017

RESOLVED that the Group's current work programme be noted and updated following this meeting, in accordance with the decisions taken during consideration of this item and at this meeting.

Reason

To ensure effective and timely scrutiny, either to provide Cabinet with advice prior to it taking a decision or to ensure that the Council and external public service providers and partners were operating effectively for the benefit of the Borough.