

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 22 April 2024

Councillor Catherine Pope (Chair)

Councillor David Brocklebank	Councillor Rachael Ellis
Councillor Roy Allan	Councillor Grahame Pope
Councillor Lorraine Brown	Councillor Kyle Robinson-Payne
Councillor Andrew Dunkin	Councillor Russell Whiting

Apologies for absence: Councillor Roxanne Ellis, Councillor Martin Smith and Councillor Sam Smith

Officers in Attendance: T Adams, M Cryer, B Hopewell and L Juby

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Roxanne Ellis, Martin Smith and Sam Smith.

46 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2024

Councillor Whiting joined the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

47 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

48 PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER ATTENDANCE

Members welcomed Councillor Henry Wheeler, Portfolio Holder for Lifestyles, Health and Wellbeing to the meeting to examine his portfolio. Councillor Wheeler gave an update to members on some key happenings within his portfolio.

Councillor Wheeler delivered a presentation, answering questions received in advance of the meeting and updating Members on the various areas of responsibility within his portfolio. He gave the following updates:

Attendance across Gedling leisure centres had grown steady over the last few years and targets for 2023-2024 were surpassed by 93,000. It was noted that Annual attendance had been higher than the pre-Covid levels by 21,200. DNA and Swim School memberships had also surpassed pre-Covid levels.

The falls prevention programme delivered by qualified instructors in Gedling had been shortlisted in the Prevention category of the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care System Health and Care Awards 2023. It was noted that the programme had been running for over 12 months with participants noticing improvements in their strength, balance and social confidence.

Food clubs and pantries had been set up across the Borough to improve resident's access to affordable nutritious food, whilst reducing food waste. Individuals and families could become a member of their local food club for £1 a year. The clubs and pantries operate at the following sites across the borough:

- Calverton CORE Centre Food Pantry Club
- Carlton Community Hub Food Club
- Newstead Village Food Pantry
- Netherfield Food Club
- Arnold Methodist Church

In 2022, Killisick had been selected as one of four areas across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire to deliver an NHSEi pilot project which aimed to promote healthy and happy communities. It was noted that engagement had led to co-produced interventions based on community feedback which included a breakfast club during school holidays, a friendship group reducing loneliness and social isolation and afterschool clubs which were sustained by the local community.

Councillor Wheeler reported that attendance at The Bonnington Theatre had exceeded the target set for 2023/24 with 47,500 attendances compared with 40,200 in 2022/23.

The Chair gave members the opportunity to ask questions of Councillor Wheeler's portfolio.

Members asked whether the council recorded data on how often those with memberships had attended the leisure centres.

The Head of Leisure and Communities explained that although the Council did not record attendance data, it did record and monitor membership retention rates which provided an indication of how many active members there were for a given period of time.

Members queried the ways in which leisure centre attendees could provide feedback and asked whether the Gedling leisure app offered such a feature.

The Head of Leisure and Communities explained that although regular surveys are conducted to seek feedback, the app does not currently offer a feedback feature. It was noted however that the app received regular development and that such a feature could be considered.

Members queried the ways in which Gedling Borough Council (GBC) currently engaged in social prescribing initiatives, and what non-clinical services the council provided or supported that were accessible through those schemes.

Councillor Wheeler explained that social prescribing is largely the work of the Communities and Leisure Service Area. It was noted that there were a range of physical activity options both within Leisure Centres and within the community that offer non-clinical support for people with health conditions. Leisure centres work with health professionals to raise awareness of activities which patients could be signposted to. The communities team facilitates and supports activities from falls prevention classes and green social prescribing, to walking groups across the Borough to which vulnerable people could access and be signposted to.

Members asked how GBC collaborates with the NHS and the voluntary sector, ensuring joint ownership and involvement in social prescribing programs. Councillor Wheeler was also asked to elaborate on the strategies GBC employs, ensuring that the voluntary sector had been adequately prepared to handle the anticipated increase in referrals resulting from Social Prescribing initiatives.

Councillor Wheeler explained that NHS Social Prescribing is commissioned by the local Primary Care Networks which form a part of the Integrated Care System (ICS) with strategic oversight being undertaken by the South Nottinghamshire Placed Based Partnership (PBP). The Council played a key role within the PBP over a four-year period developing the voluntary sector and community development support for social prescribing. It was noted that additional funding had been allocated by both the ICS through its Health Innovation Fund and by Public Health through its PBP fund to support the community development programme.

Members asked how soon the delivery of the Heartbeat scheme would resume.

The Head of Leisure and Communities informed members that recruitment to the role was ongoing and noted that there had been some challenges to recruit to the post.

RESOLVED:

To thank Councillor Wheeler for the information provided.

49 PROGRESS REPORT ON CARBON MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Head of Environment introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the progress of the Carbon Management Strategy and Action Plan.

Members queried whether there were more actions that the Council could take to reduce the use of carbon emitting fuels by taxi vehicles within the borough.

The Head of Environment agreed that this was something the council could consider looking at and potentially make some recommendations to help reduce their carbon emissions. Members noted that increased infrastructure within the borough such as charging stations would also make such reductions more feasible.

Members commended the tree planting figures and asked whether the council had been successful in identifying land to plant more significant numbers of trees going forward.

The Head of Environment informed Members that the council would be appointing an ecology officer in due course to identify areas in which biodiversity could be improved and work alongside the planning department and private landowners to further improve biodiversity.

Members queried what the most difficult challenges were with regards to reaching its net zero targets.

The Head of Environment highlighted that decarbonising the Councils property portfolio would be the most difficult challenge to the council, explaining that a lot of the buildings were old and not energy efficient.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

50 UPDATE ON BEE FRIENDLY POLICY

The Head of Environment introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the application of the Council's Bee Friendly Pollinator policy and the actions taken to stop the decline of bee and pollinating insect populations.

Members queried whether the Council could liaise with various local housing organisations such as Nottingham City Homes to potentially use some of their green spaces as wildflower meadows within local neighbourhoods.

The Head of Environment agreed that working with partner organisations with green spaces could be something that the council could incorporate into their Bee Friendly policy.

Members queried how well the Council monitors the effects of the Bee Friendly policy and whether an increase in pollinating insect populations had been noted. Members also asked whether the Council liaises with organisations such as the Wildlife Trust on insect populations.

The Head of Environment confirmed that the Council does work with various organisations and the Wildlife Trust had conducted insect monitoring exercises on Gedling Country Park and other locations across the borough.

Members queried whether the Council would liaise with Parish Councils to plant more wildflower meadows in their local neighbourhoods.

The Head of Environment said he would welcome a conversation with Parish Councils to plant wildflower meadows.

RESOVLED:

To note the report.

51 UPDATE REPORT ON THE QUIET FIREWORK POLICY

The Head of Environment introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the application of the Council's Quiet Fireworks policy in relation to firework displays held on Council owned land.

Members queried whether the Council had liaised with other neighbouring authorities noting that fireworks over their borders might still affect residents within the borough.

The Head of Environment confirmed that various neighbouring authorities had also adopted a similar quiet fireworks policy.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

52 QUARTER 3 RISK SCORECARD

The Head of Finance and I.C.T introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the current level of assurance that could be provided against each corporate risk.

Members queried which teams within the council had been training their own staff to mitigate against the lack of applicants to recent vacancies.

The Head of Finance and I.C.T noted that this had been happening and highlighted some recently employed trainees within the Legal and Finance departments.

Members asked if the Council held data on whether roles offering hybrid positions received more applicants compared to roles which were less agile.

The Head of Finance and I.C.T explained that the majority of office-based roles were now hybrid positions but noted that employees did have the option to work in the office full time if desired. It was noted that the HR department could provide further data on this.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

53 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Democratic Services Manager, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, updating Members on the scrutiny work programme.

Members highlighted an increase in section 21 notices within their wards, asking whether a report could be brought before the committee, allowing the Council's Housing department to provide further insight on how their systems were coping with the rising evictions.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

54 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 7.45 pm

Signed by Chair:

Date: