

**MINUTES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Monday 16 January 2023

Councillor Liz Clunie (Chair)

Councillor Paul Feeney	Councillor Pat Bosworth
Councillor Rachael Ellis	Councillor Lynda Pearson
Councillor Andrew Ellwood	Councillor Martin Smith
Councillor Meredith Lawrence	Councillor Sam Smith
Councillor Marje Paling	

Apologies for absence: Councillor Michael Boyle and Councillor Jim Creamer

Officers in Attendance: M Hill, E McGinlay and B Hopewell

Guests in Attendance: D Cumberlidge and S Mee

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Boyle, Creamer, Dunkin and Hope. Councillors Ellwood and Bosworth attended as substitutes.

21 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED:

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

22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None.

23 PARTNERSHIP REVIEW - CITIZENS ADVICE NOTTINGHAM & DISTRICT

The Chair welcomed Donna Cumberlidge, Chief Officer for Citizens Advice Nottingham district and Simon Mee, General Advice Service Manager, to the committee as part of the Council's partnership review programme.

A presentation was held, providing an overview on the key areas of their work. Highlights of the presentation were as follows:

- Citizens Advice are a national charity and network of 258 local Citizen Advice offices across England, offering free, confidential and impartial advice to help people find their way forward, whoever they are and whatever the problem.
- The Citizens Advice Nottingham District was formed in 1988, delivering services across Gedling, Rushcliffe and Nottingham City. Their main office is located in Nottingham City with outreach at various sites, offering general advice, debt management, housing and help to claim support.
- They aim to reduce poverty and inequality and provide support to the most vulnerable. To achieve this they work with local organisations to improve people's life chances and reduce levels of poverty as well as identifying and delivering key interventions to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping.
- Throughout 2022, Citizens Advice supported 696 Gedling residents with 1886 issues. They dealt with 2.7 issues on average for each client they supported with 55% of clients having long term health conditions.
- It was noted that the public are facing increasing difficulties concerning bills/daily costs, increasing debts, health and disabilities and increasing complexities with cases concerning multiple issues at once.

Members' discussed the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) cap and queried whether this was a government decision and how the figure for this varies across the country. It was explained that it was a government decision and that the LHA figures are set for the whole country for the Broad Rental Market Areas.

Members queried the financial support received by the bureau and how the Council monitors and evaluates this to ensure value for money. It was noted that it is monitored and a Service Level Agreement is in place.

Members discussed the citizens' advices capacity to see every person who presents themselves at their offices. It was explained that they see a few people at each office but would like to increase this number but they lost 50% of their volunteers since the Covid-19 pandemic so are unable to see every resident that arrives. Those who can't be seen are given the advice helpline where they may be referred to another office or if local assistance is required they will be given a local appointment.

RESOLVED:

The Chair thanked Donna Cumberlidge and Simon Mee for the presentation and information provided.

The Chief Executive introduced a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, informing members in summary of the position against improvement actions and performance indicators in the 2020-23 Gedling Plan at the end of quarter 2 of 2022/23 quarter 2.

Members noted that bed and breakfasts are used for large families and asked what is being done to tackle the issue with expenditure on temporary accommodation. They also highlighted that the Council are buying and building 2-3 bedroom properties, whilst some families may need 4-5 bedroom properties.

The Chief Executive explained that the funding received is predominantly spent where there is the most demand which is currently for single people but confirmed there are some large families seeking accommodation as well. It was highlighted that there are no large houses available in the borough but discussions have been held with partners and developers to address the issue. Some developers have committed to building 4-5 bedroom properties to help in this regard but agreed that this is a long-term solution.

Members asked whether the equalities and diversity training would be available for Members to attend online and whether the training will be incorporated into Member's induction training following the upcoming election.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this training will be available to Members and that an extensive induction training programme has been planned for any new members following the upcoming election.

RESOLVED:

That the progress against the improvement actions and performance indicators in the 2020-23 Gedling Plan for the end of quarter 2 of 2022/23 be noted.

Councillor Martin Smith left the meeting.

25

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOMESTIC ABUSE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Democratic Services Manager, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, to review the implementation of the domestic abuse working group recommendations and make comments as necessary.

Member's queried whether Sanctuary referrals will still be supported going forward. It was noted that this information would be checked and confirmed shortly.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

26 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

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

Members noted that the upcoming meeting schedule was very full and agreed that alternate arrangements should be made to spread the workload. It was decided that the April meeting would not be cancelled, but would be moved forward to before the pre-election period.

RESOLVED:

That the current work programme be noted, moving the April meeting date forward.

27 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT

None.

The meeting finished at 6.50 pm

Signed by Chair:
Date: