

**MINUTES  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Thursday 23 March 2023**

Councillor Liz Clunie (Chair)

Councillor Michael Boyle	Councillor Meredith Lawrence
Councillor Jim Creamer	Councillor Marje Paling
Councillor Andrew Dunkin	Councillor Lynda Pearson
Councillor Rachael Ellis	Councillor Martin Smith
Councillor Mike Hope	

Apologies for absence: Councillor Paul Feeney and Councillor Sam Smith

Officers in Attendance: B Hopewell, L Juby and E McGinlay

Guests in Attendance: H Brown and K Fox

**36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Feeney and Sam Smith.

**37 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2023**

**RESOLVED:**

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

**38 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

**39 PARTNERSHIP REVIEW - WE R HERE**

The Chair welcomed Hilary Brown from We R Here to the committee as part of the Council's partnership review programme.

Hillary gave an overview on the key areas of their work at We R Here, highlights of which were as follows:

- 1) From April 2022 to present, community engagement referrals have been extremely high, with 17 adults and 12 children having 1-to-1 therapy consisting of 725 total sessions.

- 2) In June of 2022 We R Here delivered their first partnership event with a local training provider offering Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for teachers, college and support staff and introduced a programme looking at trauma and the impacts on mental health from domestic abuse. Unfortunately due to demand, the waiting list for new referrals was closed in September 2022 and remains closed at present.
- 3) The first post-pandemic family event was held in August, helping to reintroduce families in isolation to social settings and from September 2022, self-esteem building courses were resumed as well.
- 4) At present, We R Here are working with 11 adults and 7 children and young people every week as well as the self-esteem groups and other projects/activities.

Members then asked questions and queried what impact the pandemic had on the public and how this differs from the pre-pandemic period.

It was confirmed that the difficulties the public are facing, particularly regarding mental health are seeming far more complex when compared to the pre-pandemic period. It was noted that the effects on children and young people have yet to be seen and unfortunately services to help with this are struggling to meet demand.

#### **RESOLVED:**

The Chair thanked Hillary Brown for the information provided.

**40**

#### **PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER ATTENDANCE**

Members welcomed Councillor Kathryn Fox, Portfolio Holder for Diverse Communities and Life Chances to the meeting to examine her portfolio. Councillor Fox gave a presentation, providing an update to members on some key happenings in her portfolio.

Questions were received from Members in advance of the meeting so Councillor Fox delivered an update on this and the various areas of responsibility within her portfolio. She gave the following updates:

- 1) The Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFU) launched on 14 March 2022. Nottinghamshire County Council allocated £10,500 per guest, which was then reduced to £5,900 in 2023. Sponsors/Hosts receive £350 per month, increasing to £500 per month after 12 months.
- 2) Environmental Health Officers have undertaken a total of 218 visits to matched sponsor/host households in Gedling and keep in touch with sponsors and guests to support re-matching or accommodation moves. It was noted that no Ukrainian Guests have presented as homeless.

- 3) As part of a strategic review of leisure and community facilities, a resident's survey was carried out in December 2022 which received 605 responses, 25% of which had a health condition or disability. The survey suggested that health conditions, disabilities, cost and not enough time are barriers to getting active. This feedback is being used to inform the new strategy.
- 4) As part of the Council's domestic abuse statutory duty, Gedling Borough Council offers a Sanctuary Scheme which enables survivors to remain in their own home safely by providing additional security installations. Funding of £10,000 was received for 2022-2023 to facilitate this.
- 5) Various projects/events have been held or are ongoing across the Council's rural areas, such as community outreach programmes by Customer Services and Citizens Advice, exploring the creation of a parish conference and more. It was noted that support to rural areas is data led to address the needs of the community and the Portfolio Holder for Diverse Communities and Life Chances regularly attends Rural Services Network seminars to learn more about issues affecting rural communities and funding opportunities to address this.

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

Members asked whether communication channels between the Council and Serco are being looked at for asylum seekers prior to the determination of their asylum status, to allow more time for the Housing Needs team to make preparations.

Councillor Fox agreed that the current system is not ideal and that communication channels could be improved, which have been highlighted by other local authorities as well. It was noted that there is a feedback system in place providing an open dialogue to allow the home office to make efficiencies where possible to alleviate the concerns of both asylum seekers and council officers. The Council also liaises with other authorities, sharing best practices to further improve the service.

Members asked whether the Council receives any financial support with regards to supporting asylum seekers and asked where the asylum seekers are in the chain of priority for housing allocation in the Housing Needs system.

Councillor Fox explained that the Council receives funding from Nottinghamshire County Council. It was noted that Councillor Fox did not have information to hand regarding the chain of priority for housing allocations and will provide this information at a later date.

**RESOLVED:**

The Chair thanked Councillor Fox for her presentation and the information provided.

**41 SEWERAGE REVIEW WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Democratic Services Manager, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, detailing a final report of the sewerage review working group, asking the Committee to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Members agreed that an additional recommendation be inserted into the report, as follows:

The Council Liaises on a regular basis with Severn Trent, The Environment Agency and other relevant organisations to build a picture of current levels and locations of sewage and other pollutant discharges (e.g. agricultural and industrial) into the water courses of Gedling to inform planning and policy decisions.

**RESOLVED:**

That, having considered the report, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee refers the report to Cabinet so that a written response can be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee within 28 days of receipt of the report.

**42 REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WASTE & RECYCLING POLICY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Democratic Services Manager, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, asking Members to review the implementation of the Waste & Recycling policy and make comments as necessary.

**RESOLVED to:**

- 1) Request statistics on the recycling trial to consider its success;  
and
- 2) Note the report.

**43 ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT**

None.

The meeting finished at 7.18 pm

Signed by Chair:

Date: