

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Minutes of a meeting held at the Council Offices, Narborough

WEDNESDAY, 11 SEPTEMBER 2024

Present:-

Cllr. Nick Brown (Chairman - Scrutiny Commissioner)

Cllr. Adrian Clifford
Cllr. Luke Cousin

Cllr. Roy Denney
Cllr. Janet Forey

Cllr. Antony Moseley
Cllr. Tracey Shepherd

Officers present:-

Julia Smith	- Chief Executive
Caroline Harbour	- Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager
Katie Brooman	- Elections and Governance Manager
Ian Jones	- Housing Services Manager
Sandeep Tiensa	- Senior Democratic Services & Scrutiny Officer
Nicole Cramp	- Democratic & Scrutiny Services Officer
Isaac Thomas	- Democracy Support Officer

Invitees:-

Councillor Les Phillimore, Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor Terry Richardson, Leader of the Council (and Cabinet Executive)

Apologies:-

Cllr. Neil Wright, Cllr. Royston Bayliss, Cllr. Susan Findlay and Cllr. Matt Tomeo

72. MINUTES SILENCE IN REMEMBRANCE OF MR BHIM KOHLI

The Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown invited Members and Officers to join him in a minutes silence in remembrance of Mr Bhim Kohli who had sadly died following a tragic event in Braunstone.

73. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

No disclosures were received.

74. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 as circulated, were approved and signed as a correct record.

75. STATE OF THE BLABY DISTRICT

The Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown welcomed the Leader of the Council Cllr. Terry Richardson and the Chief Executive to the meeting.

The Leader and the Chief Executive provided an update on the following topics:

- Homelessness figures in the District.
- The latest update on HNRFI and an invitation to the Deputy Prime Minister to visit Blaby District.
- Ensuring that the new ICT project is fit for purpose and secure.
- Emergency planning response during the recent storms, gas outages and contaminated land areas.
- New housing figures released for District, but this may include unmet targets too.
- Future funding challenges – the Council may receive 2 year funding plan, and the UKSPF is not expected to continue. The Council awaits further news on any devolution plans.

Members questioned the Leader and Chief Executive on the following:

- Updated Blaby District Plan following the General Election and revisiting any priorities.
- Flooding response.
- Green initiatives, including support towards solar panels
- Support for residents regarding winter fuel allowance.

DECISION

That the State of the Blaby District update provided by the Leader, Cllr. Terry Richardson be accepted.

Reason:

Part 3, Section 6, Sub-Section 15 of the Constitution requires the Leader of the Council to present to the first meeting of Scrutiny Commission, 'State of the Blaby District', the Cabinet Executive's priorities for the coming year and its performance in the previous year.

76. **CORPORATE PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown welcomed the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager (EHHCSGM) and Cllr. Les Phillimore (Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder) to the meeting.

The EHHCSGM presented the following points:

- Summary of Corporate Parenting Responsibilities under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 and guiding principles.
- Summary of the 2019 Leicestershire Partner Commitment & Promise.
- The Blaby Offer (free leisure membership, local connection to anywhere across Leicestershire, no Council Tax until they are 25, appointed Care Champion roles in key departments, protected characteristic status 2024).

Members questioned the EHHCSGM and the Portfolio Holder on the following:

- Levels of contact the Council has with people in care and how it is monitored.
- The Blaby Offer – Members commented that the Council tax initiative and the leisure offer provided was excellent.

DECISION

That the Corporate Parenting Responsibilities update be accepted.

Reason:

The item was highlighted to be considered in the 2024/25 Scrutiny Work Programme.

77. HOMELESSNESS & SOCIAL HOUSING PRESENTATION

The Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown welcomed the Environmental Health, Housing & Community Services Group Manager (EHHCSGM), the Housing Services Manager (HSM) and Cllr. Les Phillimore (Housing, Community Safety and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder) to the meeting.

Members considered the current homelessness caseload in comparison to data from September 2023, Members noted that there was an increase in both open homelessness cases and officer caseload. Members were concerned to learn that there had been an increase in homelessness due to domestic violence and requested further information from the HSM on this.

Members questioned the officers on the increasing number of families in temporary accommodation, they requested the latest figures of individuals and children currently homeless. Members were pleased to learn that properties purchased by the Council to support families in need were having a positive impact.

Members requested that the costs associated with temporary accommodation to the Council be provided to Scrutiny.

Members discussed the current increasing caseload of officers and reaching trigger points whereby the team would require extra support. It was requested that should the trigger point be reached that Scrutiny be notified.

The Chairman thanked the Housing Services Manager and Portfolio Holder for their analysis and update.

78. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman, Cllr. Nick Brown presented the latest update to the Work Programme which included the addition of the Blaby District Growth Plan on 15 October 2024 and RIPA Policy being considered by Scrutiny Commission at its next meeting on 13 November 2024.

Members accepted the items on the Scrutiny Work Programme 2024-25 and no additional actions were proposed.

79. CONSIDERATION OF FORWARD PLAN ITEMS

No items were raised for further information or examination.

80. FURTHER ACTIONS FOR SCRUTINY ARISING FROM MEETING

There were no further actions arising from the meeting.

THE MEETING CONCLUDED AT 7.13 P.M.