



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 14th December 2023

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

2nd November 2023 at 10.00am

Present:

Councillor Westcott (in the Chair)
Councillors Aisthorpe, Astbury, Batson, Sandford, Shutt and K.Swinburn.

Officers in attendance:

- Helen Isaacs (Assistant Chief Executive)
- Kath Jickells (Assistant Director Environment)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Service Manager Consultancy and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Neil Clark (Head of Regulatory and Enforcement Services)
- Jo Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Sophie Pickerden (Scrutiny and Committee Support Officer)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Ron Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor Stewart Swinburn, (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Councillor Hayden Dawkins, (Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy)

There were no members of the press present.

SPC.32 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for this meeting from Councillor Farren.

SPC.33 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in relation to any items on the agenda.

SPC.34 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Communities Scrutiny Panel meeting held on the 7th September 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

SPC.35 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

SPC.36 FORWARD PLAN

The Panel received the current forward plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

SPC.37 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

Ms. Paterson took members through the tracking report and provided an update on SPC.8 (Management of Homestead Park in relation to the new Resort PSPO) it was noted that this was now complete, and it was agreed that this item be removed from tracking.

Ms. Paterson further referred to SPC.28 (CCTV Update) noting that the actions were complete, members asked that this remain on tracking for regular monitoring and review and members sought clarification on a number of matters, including how the CCTV data had been presented and the process followed with CCTV in around schools within the borough.

In response to further concerns, members were assured that the same process was followed through the courts for recovery of unpaid civil penalties with members recognising that the law was limited.

The panel requested that the CCTV data be recorded on a quarterly basis going forward, to help identify any patterns in the data i.e. the number of fines issued.

It was suggested that a briefing paper be circulated to the panel detailing the processes followed in and around schools with regard to the issuing of Penalty Charge Notice (PCN)'s and the cost effectiveness of the CCTV cameras and sustainability of this in future. Officers agreed to provide further information to the panel on the effectiveness and sustainability of CCTV cameras around schools.

Ms Paterson noted that the remaining items were now marked as complete and sought agreement from the panel for these to be removed from the tracking report.

RESOLVED-

1. That SPC.3 (Parish Council Community Governance Review), SPC.27 (Council Plan Resources and Finance Report Quarter 1) and SPC.29 (Procurement Strategy and Social Value Policy) be removed from the tracking document.
2. That a briefing paper be circulated to the panel detailing the processes followed in and around schools with regard to issuing of PCN's and the effectiveness and sustainability of CCTV cameras going forward.

SPC.38 COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL – WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Statutory Scrutiny Officer) providing panel members with the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the panel's work programme at the half year stage and provide a formal opportunity for the panel to update its work programme.

Ms Paterson noted that the panel had already attended a site visit to the Police Control Room which had been extremely useful. Ms Paterson also reminded members that an upcoming workshop on Humberside Probation Services was due to take place later this month.

Ms Isaacs noted that the Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) and Ongo proposals for social housing would be going to the Economy Scrutiny Panel and asked members to look out for this in the coming months.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

SPC.39 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The panel received the Annual Equality Report from the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy outlining the equality objectives for North East Lincolnshire. In addition, members also received a short presentation from the Assistant Chief Executive. The presentation focused on the following key highlights:-

- Statutory duties and commitments.
- The role of elected members.
- Community profiles in respect of the 2021 census and protected characteristics.

- Commitment to working with partners.
- A refreshed approach to social value (currently going through Cabinet)
- Review undertaken using LGA Equality framework and action plan.

Ms Isaacs noted that this was a big piece of work and advised that the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy for North East Lincolnshire would be referred to this panel for comment prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

The panel was invited to comment on the report specifically around:-

- Additional actions it would deem to be helpful in respect of the role of elected members.
- Any observations on our community profile.
- Any comments in respect of the equality objectives.
- Any comments or questions in respect of the action plan.

Ms Isaacs suggested members direct any questions to her to be taken forward with officers. Given that this was a very comprehensive report and topic, the panel suggested that this matter be discussed in more depth at a designated workshop.

A detailed discussion ensued with members seeking clarification on a number of matters within the report. In particular it was noted that the breakdown of data per individual ward was very informative.

A member referred to paragraph 5.32 within the officer's report and enquired with regard to the ages of the 357 children providing unpaid care in 2021, and asked whether there was any facility for respite care. Ms Isaacs would take this action away and provide a response back to the panel.

Another member referred to paragraph 5.39 within the report, noting that nearly half of 21-year-olds in contact with the criminal justice system had been in care and asked what work was being done around this. Ms Isaacs advised that the Head of Young and Safe had attended the panel recently to advise how the Council supported young people within the criminal justice system. Ms Isaacs would take this action away and provide further information back to the panel.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Heritage and the Visitor Economy felt the Council needed a more diverse group of people within the political groups and Council Chambers moving forward.

Further discussion took place around the need to reach out to more ethnic groups and those with disabilities within the local community. Members noted the need to ensure this was imbedded into the work the Council was undertaking with local regeneration projects within the borough. Ms Isaacs assured members that any work the Council

commissioned would include both inclusive design briefs and Equality Impact Assessments. Further work would be taking place with the wider community to inform future place shaping.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That further information be provided to the panel on the ages of the 357 children providing unpaid care in 2021, and whether there was any facility for respite care.
3. That further information be provided to the panel on 21-year-olds in contact with the criminal justice system who had been in care.
4. That a designated workshop be held on the Annual Equality Report.

SPC.40 WASTE ON PRIVATE LAND

The panel received a report from the Director of Economy, Environment, and Infrastructure detailing how the Council currently dealt with waste on private land.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport acknowledged that this issue would always be difficult to tackle. He further highlighted frustrations with the various levels of bureaucracy which acted as a barrier at times. The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport also made reference to a local case at Freshney Green. Mr Clark agreed to look at this in more detail outside of the meeting.

The Chair enquired how the Council worked with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP) around these issues. Officers would look into how they could work better with teams within the LHP around prevention.

A member suggested that all Elected Members receive some form of training/education on this topic in order to respond better to issues within their wards. Ms Jickells explained that the Clear-It scheme had been well publicised and was now open to support community clean ups.

Ms Richardson Smith advised that this could form part of the member training programme going forward.

Members highlighted the number of fixed penalty notices that had been recorded within the data, and asked what steps were being taken to improve this. Ms Jickells explained how the data figures were based on a mathematical calculation of the number served against the number of incidents. On a positive note, North East Lincolnshire ranked 83rd amongst 300 councils and members were assured that the borough was on par with other Councils.

Ms Jickells reiterated that this was about focusing on what was a priority for the team in terms of reaching the best outcomes.

The Chair raised concerns about potential prosecutions and evidence via CCTV. Another member was concerned that a recent personal experience with this issue was different to that of the process detailed in the officer's report. Ms Jickells explained that the reporting systems were going through a process of transition. Ms Jickells asked the member to contact her directly to follow this issue up outside of the meeting.

A further discussion ensued with members commenting on Appendix 1 (process for fly-tipping) in terms of keeping residents better informed and accountability within the process. Ms Jickells explained that the diagram detailed a more team approach, and recognised further work needed to take place within her team to review and improve the process.

The Chair enquired whether officers made face to face visits to respond to fly tipping incidents. Mr Clark explained that officers were predominantly office based, and assured members that officers did make face to face visits in hot spot areas, although he was mindful of the resource and number of enquires being managed.

A member raised a concern regarding the members portal noting that there was not a direct link anymore. Ms Paterson agreed to follow this up with ICT colleagues.

A brief discussion ensued around the Community Recycle Centres (CRC's) and how bulky waste was dealt with in the borough. It was felt that more flexibility was needed within the system. Further concerns were raised over specific incidents regarding residents becoming victims of crime through fly tipping on their properties. Ms Jickells explained that officers explored each case individually in order to understand the best approach to be taken.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities reiterated that the key to resolving fly tipping was to have proof of evidence. A member wished to clarify what was deemed acceptable evidence and understood some was not acceptable in building a case against this.

A member asked for an update on the status of Skip-IT events previously held within the borough. Ms Jickells advised that these had been discontinued due to a number of factors including their scale. However, the new Clear-it Scheme currently worked well within local communities.

Overall members considered that better communication was needed to resolve this difficult issue.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the specific examples raised by members be taken forward outside the meeting.
3. That further information be provided to the panel on the members portal.

SPC.41 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities at this meeting.

SPC.42 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from members of this panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 12.05 p.m.