

**MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 19 JANUARY 2023**

Held at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Rushcliffe Arena, Rugby Road, West
Bridgford

PRESENT:

Councillors G Williams (Chairman), J Murray (Vice-Chairman), G Dickman,
L Healy, Mrs C Jeffreys, R Jones, R Mallender, F Purdue-Horan and R Walker

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Amy Beckworth

Youth Services Officer, Nottinghamshire
County Council

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

D Burch

C Caven-Atack

Maizie Housden

E Richardson

Service Manager – Neighbourhoods
Service Manager – Corporate Services
Electoral Services Officer
Democratic Services Officer

33 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies of absence.

34 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

35 Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 October 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2022 were agreed as a true
record and were signed by the Chairman.

36 Establishment of a Youth Council

The Service Manager Corporate Services presented the report of the Director
Neighbourhoods in relation to the Establishment of a Youth Council. She noted
that this proposal was originally submitted as a Motion to Full Council by
Councillor Jones which resulted in this scrutiny item today.

The Service Manager Corporate Services explained that Rushcliffe had a
fledgling Youth Forum supported by the Youth Services Team at
Nottinghamshire County Council.

The Youth Services Officer explained that the Youth Services Team supported
Youth Councils across Nottinghamshire's seven districts. She said that Gedling
Borough Council and Bassetlaw District Councils also supported their Youth

Councils by organising logistics such as travel and transport and meeting facilities.

The Youth Services Officer said that Nottinghamshire County Council paid to be a member of the British Youth Council which enabled it to nominate Youth Members of Parliament. Elections for the Youth Members of Parliament took place every two years for nominees aged between 11 and 18 years of age. The Youth Members of Parliament chaired the District Youth Council meetings and attended the six yearly British Youth Council meetings, along with any additional meetings for specific campaigns and key interests such as in relation to the cost of living and the environment.

The Service Manager Corporate Services said that research had highlighted that Rushcliffe had a Youth Forum in place which operated as a Youth Council and which was chaired by the Member of Youth Parliament for Rushcliffe. This Youth Forum was supported by Nottinghamshire County Council Youth Services Team.

The Service Manager Corporate Services said that it had been difficult to engage young people and schools following the pandemic and due to its remit, the County Council was better placed to engage with them than the Borough. She added that whilst many primary and secondary schools had school councils these were often more inwardly focused on school life. Findings suggested that introducing a separate and additional Youth Council for Rushcliffe would be in competition with the existing Youth Forum and would not benefit from the support of the Youth Services Team or the Youth Parliament for Rushcliffe.

The Service Manager Corporate Services said that the proposal was for Rushcliffe Borough Council to support the existing Youth Forum, by offering a venue for them to use and through providing officer assistance and knowledge, with potential for Portfolio Holder and Councillor attendance and support in providing guidance and insight. The Council could assist the Youth Forum in enhancing its online presence and promote it through the Council's media channels where appropriate. The Council could also support holding a Young People's Summit to promote involvement in the Youth Forum and encourage engagement and discussion of topics of importance to young people.

Councillor Jones asked about the successful model in Gedling and Bassetlaw. The Service Manager Corporate Services confirmed that Rushcliffe Borough Council was proposing to use the same terms of reference and to mirror the model that they used.

Councillor Jones referred to the Member of Youth Parliament for Rushcliffe and noted that he and the members of the Youth Forum were all from the same school and the same year, and thought that having members from a range of years would bring some continuity.

Members of the Group expressed surprise at the lack of interest from pupils and the lack of response from local schools and expressed concern about how to invite interest. The Group asked how the existing Youth Forum came into existence and whether this could be replicated to harness involvement. It was acknowledged that covid-19 had had an impact on youth involvement.

Councillor Murray asked whether there were occasions where Head Teachers from local schools came together and whether this provided an opportunity for collective discussion about the Youth Forum.

The Service Manager Corporate Services said that the aim of a Young Persons Summit would be to bring young people of different ages and from different schools together to engage with them and to encourage interest and she would contact Nottinghamshire County Council for information about possible Head Teacher group meetings.

It was **RESOLVED** that Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) Considered the information about youth councils in the report and provided by officers at the meeting
- b) Recommended to Cabinet that the Borough Council supported the existing Rushcliffe Youth Forum for the next two years to help expand membership, increase awareness and increase opportunities for collaboration.

37 **Corporate Enforcement**

The Monitoring Officer updated the Group about the Council's Corporate Enforcement Policy.

The Monitoring Officer explained that the Council's Enforcement Policy was last reviewed in 2019 and as such it was appropriate to review it again now to ensure that the Council had an up to date policy which accurately reflected the Council's corporate approach to enforcement and linked with the enforcement plans which sat below it. She thought it important for Members to have opportunity to understand the enforcement powers of the Council and the frameworks within which they operated.

The Monitoring Officer confirmed that Officers had reviewed the Enforcement Policy and had proposed amendments, some of which were required to due to changes in legislation or changes in the Council's procedures and some of which were to add more information and context about enforcement powers and appropriate actions.

The Monitoring Officer said that information had been added to clarify the stages of enforcement undertaken by the Council. She said that stage one action was prevention, including publicity about appropriate and inappropriate activity. Stage two action involved control where appropriate, for example through licence, approval or planning conditions. She said that Officers had updated the policy to clarify that whilst individual enforcement teams had their own powers and procedures, enforcement was very much a collaborative process and teams worked together across the Council.

Councillor R Walker referred to paragraph 3.7 of the Policy relating to proportionality of action and said that he was aware of situations where residents believed that enforcement action was required but where there was a difference between their assessment of seriousness versus that of Officers. Cllr

R Walker asked whether subsections of the policies could give an indication of the levels of seriousness, perhaps with a RAG rating or some examples as to what activity would constitute differing levels of breach and appropriate action.

The Monitoring Officer referred to section 3.11 of the Policy which gave example of the types of factors that would be taken into account when assessing non-compliance but said that further breakdown would be contained within the policies themselves which sat underneath this overarching policy.

Councillor Jones and Councillor R Mallender referred to planning and thought that the Council sometimes took too soft an approach to enforcement and did not give enough weight to the existing character of an area when assessing applications.

Councillor Jones suggested that wording be included in paragraph 3.7 to say that the Council 'would also consider the impact on the character and way of life of an area'.

It was **RESOLVED** that Communities Scrutiny Group:

- a) Considered and commented on proposed amendments from officers in respect of the review of the Corporate Enforcement Policy and put forward any further suggestions, including adding wording to paragraph 3.7 that the Council 'consider the impact on the character and way of life of an area'
- b) Agreed that the refreshed Corporate Enforcement Policy be presented to Cabinet.

38 **Work Programme**

The Chairman presented the report of the Director - Finance and Corporate Services, which detailed the proposed Communities Scrutiny Group Work Programme for 2022/23.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Group consider its Work Programme and that the following items for scrutiny were agreed.

16 March 2023

- Carbon Management Plan
- Environment Policy
- Work Programme.

The Chairman agreed to raise the functionality of the scrutiny matrix at the Corporate Overview Group to ensure that it was working as intended and that appropriate items were coming forward for review.

The meeting closed at 7.39 pm.

CHAIRMAN