

MINUTES
OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY GROUP
THURSDAY, 27 AUGUST 2020

Held virtually at 7.00 pm and live streamed on the
Rushcliffe Borough Council YouTube channel

PRESENT:

Councillors J Wheeler (Chairman), B Bansal (Vice-Chairman), G Dickman,
L Healy, R Jones, R Mallender, D Simms, R Walker and G Williams

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

| | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|
| D Burch | Service Manager - Neighbourhoods |
| D Hayden | Community Development Manager |
| S Maher | Strategic Human Resources Manager |
| L Webb | Democratic Services Officer |

16 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies.

17 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

18 Minutes of the meeting 23 July 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 July 2020 were agreed as a true record of the meeting.

19 Rushcliffe Equality Scheme

The Strategic Human Resources Manager presented the report of the Executive Manager – Transformation and explained that the existing Equality Scheme expired this year and that Cabinet had resolved to support a comprehensive review of the scheme and recommended the Communities Scrutiny Group to contribute to this review.

It was noted that many of the services the Council provided were there to support residents in their time of need for example, housing support and that it is extremely important that residents can access services in an equal manner. Additionally, it was explained that the non-statutory services, such as leisure provision, and parks and open spaces, should be delivered in such a way to welcome all residents.

The Human Resources Manager delivered a presentation to the Group, which covered:

- Rushcliffe Equality Scheme 2016 – 2020;
- New Context for a New Scheme;
- New Context – a Shift in Focus;
- Internal Focus;
- Workforce Demographics;
- Borough Demographics - Health/Disability;
- Ethnic Origin – profile of Rushcliffe;
- Age Profile of Rushcliffe;
- External Focus; and
- Next Steps.

Following the presentation the Group made suggestions about what could be reviewed in the updated Rushcliffe Equality Scheme. These included:

- Stopping the use of Chairman/Madam Chairman;
- Assumptions of gender preference; and
- Input from Black and Ethnic Minority and LGBT groups.

It was noted that contact centres had been closed during the initial Covid-19 pandemic in order to protect the health and safety of residents (Fountains Court re-opened on 1 June via appointment only) and that the majority of enquiries could be resolved either through the Council's website or over the phone.

It was also suggested that a review should be undertaken of the performance of the current equality scheme. It was noted that data about the meeting of targets, the use of equality impact assessments and diverse interview panels had to be taken into account before the production of a new scheme. The Strategic Human Resources Manager said that the Council was currently reviewing their recruitment policy so that application forms did not reveal a person's identity.

The Group agreed that the revised equality scheme should be a 'living' document and should reflect current social change such as the black lives matter movement, health inequalities with the impact of Covid 19 on black and ethnic minority groups and a greater awareness of gender identity. However, it was also noted that the equality scheme should also reflect the population of Rushcliffe who were mainly elderly.

The Group requested that an updated version of the Rushcliffe Equality Scheme be brought back to the Communities Scrutiny Group before being recommended for approval by Cabinet.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the report of the Executive Manager – Transformation be noted;
- b) the suggestions of the Communities Scrutiny Group help shape the revised Rushcliffe Equality Scheme; and

- c) a draft of the Rushcliffe Equality Scheme be scrutinised by the Communities Scrutiny Group before being recommended for approval by Cabinet.

20 Fireworks

The Community Development Manager presented the report of the Executive Manager – Communities that provided the Group with information to consider the future use of fireworks at Council events. It was noted that a motion was carried by Council in March 2020, which resolved to launch a public campaign to raise awareness of these impacts in the Borough, encourage advance advertising of planned firework events and promote alternative forms of activity such as quiet fireworks or other light displays. It also agreed to look at how fireworks are used at Council events with a view to move away from loud fireworks.

The Group were asked to consider three possible options:

- a) discontinue the use of loud fireworks at Council events (partial ban);
- b) discontinue the use of all fireworks at Council events (full ban); or
- c) no change to current events arrangements (no change).

The Community Development Manager delivered a presentation to the Group to help them inform their discussion. The presentation covered:

- Purpose of Review;
- Supporting Information;
- Considerations; and
- Recommendations.

Following the presentation there was a discussion about the impact of fireworks on wildlife, pets, the elderly and those with disabilities. It was noted that Rushcliffe Borough Council only used fireworks at the Christmas lights switch on in West Bridgford, the display lasted four minutes and that no residents had made formal complaints about the display. Some members of the Group therefore believed that no change was required to the use of fireworks at Council events. However, other members of the Group stated that if the Council stopped using loud fireworks it would set an example for residential displays. It was noted that a ban of loud fireworks would reduce noise from 120 decibels to 90 decibels and that other alternatives could be used such as light and drone displays and silent fireworks.

It was RESOLVED that:

- a) the report of the Executive Manager – Communities be noted;
- b) it be recommended to Cabinet that the Council stops the use of loud fireworks; and
- c) a public communications campaign be launched to encourage external event operators to adopt the Council's approach to the use of fireworks.

21 **Work Programme**

It was RESOLVED that the work programme below be noted.

7 October 2020

- Rushcliffe Nature Strategy
- Flooding and Drainage

28 January 2021

- Future of Edwalton Golf Course
- Rushcliffe Equality Scheme

29 April 2021

- Carbon Management Plan Update
- Dog Fouling, littering and fly tipping – part two

The meeting closed at 8.42 pm.

CHAIRMAN