

Minutes

Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee

11th May 2022 at 7.15pm



Present

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
J Abbott	Apologies	T McArdle	Apologies
J Baugh	Apologies	Mrs J Pell	Yes
G Courtauld (Vice-Chairman)	Yes	Mrs J Sandum	Yes
A Hensman	Yes (from 7.44pm)	Mrs L Walters	Yes
Mrs M Cunningham (Chairman)	Yes		

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

2 **MINUTES**

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee held on 17th November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

3 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

4 **SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES – DRAFT SCRUTINY REPORT**

INFORMATION: Members gave consideration to the draft report for the Scrutiny Review into 'Enforcement Procedures at Braintree District Council. Once finalised, the report would be presented at the next available Cabinet meeting for response to the recommendations.

During the discussion, Members were provided with the opportunity to bring forward any final, minor or administrative changes that they wished to make in respect of the report. The following amendments were subsequently requested:-

- There were two typos identified on page 9 of the report: under the fourth paragraph, the word "to" was included in error after the word "Authority." In the final line of the fifth paragraph, it was requested that the letter "a" after "... (the Scrutiny Review) should address" be deleted so that the sentence would read as follows: "... (the Scrutiny Review) should address specific areas of enforcement."

- On page 18 of the report, under the fourth paragraph, it was requested that the word “the” be removed before the word “necessary” so that the line would read as follows: “...the Enforcement Agents used by the Council were all certified with necessary training...”

Members were then asked to submit any further requests for minor amendments in respect of the report to governance@braintree.gov.uk.

DECISION: That the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee:-

1. Reviewed the draft report and finalised the content and draft recommendations to ensure that they were in keeping with the Terms of Reference of the Scrutiny Review and the evidence gathered.
2. Authorised the Chairman to finalise the draft report, prior to its submission to Cabinet and Full Council, and gave authority to Governance Officers to make any necessary administrative changes to the report.

REASON FOR DECISION: To finalise the draft report for the Scrutiny Review into ‘Enforcement Procedures at Braintree District Council’ prior to its submission to Cabinet and Full Council.

5 **SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO LITTER MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT – INTRODUCTION TO TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME (2022/23)**

INFORMATION: Members gave consideration to a report which introduced them to the latest topic for the purposes of Scrutiny Review, ‘Litter Management across the Braintree District.’ Miss J Mann, Governance and Members Officer, presented the report to Members and outlined the proposed Terms of Reference (TOR) and anticipated Work Programme for 2022/23 to the Committee.

The topic of ‘Litter Management Across the Braintree District’ was first submitted by Councillor J Abbott as a means of improving coordinated working with the Council’s partners in order to deter and manage littering, debris and unauthorised advertising along the trunk roads through the Braintree District. Following extensive discussions with Management Board and the Chairmen of the Scrutiny Committees, it was agreed that the topic should be allocated to the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee for the purposes of Scrutiny Review. In line with the TOR for the Committee, Members would need to focus their Scrutiny Review on how the Council engages with its partners and the effectiveness of those arrangements (e.g. with volunteer groups).

Members were also asked to be mindful that due to the District Elections in May 2023, the Scrutiny Review would need to be concluded by March 2023, which included the determination of any recommendations from the Review and composition of the final scrutiny report.

The Committee was then invited to consider any next steps that they wished to take in order to progress their Scrutiny Review. During the discussion, Members spoke of issues such as littering along national highways (e.g. A12). In response, Mrs E Wisbey, Governance and Members Manager, advised Members that they could submit questions on this issue to the key contacts identified within the TOR for the Scrutiny Review, which included Essex Highways. At this point, Members were reminded that they were required

to explore the issue of litter management and its effectiveness through the lens of partnership working, and to be the 'critical friend' of the organisation for the purposes of scrutiny. The only caveat for Members to be aware of was the availability of identified contacts who could attend future meetings of the Committee as witnesses for the review. It was therefore requested that if Members knew of any contacts who could potentially be invited to attend future meetings of the Committee, these details be forwarded to the Governance team for officers to make the approaches.

Members indicated that they would like to invite a representative from National Highways who could advise the Committee as to their procedure for delegating 'litter' issues to authorities such as County or District Councils. It was added that it would also be useful to learn more about how District Councils communicated with one another on cross-boundary issues and who was ultimately responsible for resolving them. Mrs Wisbey agreed that these issues fell within the TOR for the Scrutiny Review and thus could be explored in further detail by the Committee.

Another line of enquiry was to examine the definition of litter and what the distinction was between littering and fly-tips, as well as the duties and responsibilities of the Council in this respect. Members were advised that under the TOR, the definitions could be explored in conjunction with any historic awareness campaigns conducted by the Council. It was agreed that it would be useful for Members to be able to distinguish between traditional vs non-traditional littering. At this point, it was underlined that the purpose of the Scrutiny Review was not to explore enforcement action in regard to fly-tips.

In respect of invitees to the next meeting, Members indicated that it would be helpful to receive an overview of what different services across the Council did in terms of litter management. Other areas that could be explored included gathering a clearer understanding of what the 'triggers' were at the Council for new litter campaigns (e.g. if this was in response to factors such as national trends), as well as the Council's relationship with Parish and Town Councils.

Potential future witnesses for the Review that were identified included officers in the Marketing and Communications team and volunteer/community groups such as Braintree East Group, Halstead in Bloom, Green Heart Volunteers as well as volunteer litter pickers in Kelvedon and Feering. An understanding of the schemes that local businesses (e.g. McDonalds) might have in place in order to address issues surrounding litter could also be explored from the perspective of the Council's partnership arrangements. Lastly, Members were once again requested to submit any such contacts they had to the Governance and Members team for officers to make the approaches.

DECISION: That Members:-

1. Agreed the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review into 'Litter Management across the Braintree District;'
2. Noted the anticipated Work Programme of the Committee for 2022/23, and;
3. Considered the next steps that they wished to take next in order to commence the Scrutiny Review.

REASON FOR DECISION: To outline the Terms of Reference for the Scrutiny Review into 'Litter Management across the Braintree District,' which were agreed by the Chairmen of the four Scrutiny Committees together with the support of Governance Officers and

Management Board. The report also outlined the anticipated Work Programme 2022/23 for the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee.

To ensure that the Scrutiny Review into 'Litter Management across the Braintree District' is completed within a stipulated timeframe and this it is in compliance with the Council's procedural rules for Scrutiny.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.03pm.

Councillor Mary Cunningham
(Chairman)