

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY 4 APRIL, 2017 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**  
**PART 1**

PRESENT:  
Councillors

Cooper, Miss J. (Chairman)  
Pearson, A.R. (Vice-Chairman)

Allt, Mrs. A.	Hoare, M.W.A.
Bowater, J.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Dean, A.	Witton, P.T.
Foley, D.	Woodhead, P.E.
Grice, Mrs. D.	

Also in attendance:-  
Councillor J. Preece (Environment Portfolio Leader-observer)

**27. Apologies**

No apologies for absence were received.

**28. Declarations of Interests of Members and Officers in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members**

No further declarations were made in addition to those already confirmed by Members in the Register of Members Interests.

**29. Minutes**

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager referred to Minute 24 on page 21 and explained that the figure in the table indicating the number of fly tipping incidents in 2016-17 may be incorrect. He would clarify this with the Environmental Protection Manager and advise Members accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the above figure being clarified.

**30. Quarter 3 Performance Report 2016/17 – Cleaner and Safer Environments Priority Delivery Plan (Environment Section)**

Members noted the latest performance information (Item 4.1 – 4.4 of the Official Minutes of the Council). The Head of Housing and Partnerships outlined the current position in relation to the objectives.

### **31. Air Quality Presentation**

The Senior Environmental Health Officer provided Members with a presentation on Air Quality. The presentation covered a number of issues, including:-

#### ***Local Air Quality Management***

The Committee noted that the Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities to review and assess air quality within their Districts and to produce an Air Quality Annual Status Report. Two Air Quality Management areas have been identified in the District and action plans produced to address the issues.

An Air Pollution Monitoring site is located on the A5190 Cannock Road, Heath Hayes near Five Ways Island and this shows that annual levels of nitrogen dioxide exceed the national levels. An Air Quality Management Area will be required for this area and will be effective from 1 May, 2017. In addition the District Council also undertakes “diffusion tube” monitoring which provides monthly average results for a number of sites within the district.

The District Council has monitored for nitrogen dioxide over a number of years, which has identified hotspot areas where national objectives are exceeded. These are at locations next to the A5 Watling Street in Bridgtown and between Churchbridge and the Turf Island. Levels at these hotspots have shown some decrease in recent years and it is hoped that, if pollution levels are sustained, the designation of “Air Quality Management Area” assigned to the A5 can be revoked.

Members were advised that new businesses and housing, which has an incremental impact on traffic and pollution, was a concern for the District.

Reference was made to the Eco Stars scheme which was a fleet recognition scheme to assist in providing efficient and cleaner operations for HGV’s, buses, coaches and vans that will improve air quality on local roads. Funding for the scheme would finish at the end of the year. It was intended to continue running the scheme if alternative funding becomes available.

In respect of partnership working the Officer commented that the A5 Partnership Transport Group was a scheme which had been running for a number of years. It includes local authority areas and agencies along the A5 corridor between Staffordshire and Northampton. A current action plan is in place which incorporates traffic management, public transport, signing and junction improvements.

Members noted that it was essential to ensure that the planning system enables developer contributions towards mitigation schemes to be required as a key means to delivering air quality improvements.

## ***Environmental Permitting***

Members noted that the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2016 requires certain types of industries to be regulated in order to reduce pollution and improve air quality. Permits are issued which set controls and emission standards to minimise pollution from certain industrial activities. Once permits have been issued the activity is routinely inspected and those with higher pollution potential are inspected more frequently. The activities are split into three categories – A1, A2 and Part B activities. The operators of these installations must obtain a permit to operate and the District Council can charge a fee under DEFRA's charging scheme. DEFRA was currently consulting on permitting charges and suggesting to increase the level of fees and charges by 4.5%, ending a 6 year charging freeze. The Officer explained that the income from the permits was not covering the costs and for 2015 and 2016 the Authority has been out of pocket.

Reference was made to Norton Aluminium Liaison Committee which was held twice a year and was attended by representatives from Environmental Health and Norton Aluminium along with Parish Councillors and residents. It provides a forum for any issues regarding the site. The next meeting was scheduled for 21 September, 2017.

## ***Particulate Matter PM 10/2.5***

The Officer outlined the issues regarding exposure to particulate matter along with the ways it was measured. Particulate matter was the cause of 5% of deaths in Staffordshire and had an estimated cost of £20 billion per annum.

## ***Slitting Mill Fire***

Members noted the current position with regards to the fire at Oak Tree Farm in Slitting Mill. Air Quality Monitoring was undertaken during the period 21 September until 6 December. The air quality results were found to be consistently low throughout the monitoring period. The Council and a number of organisations are still actively involved in dealing with this incident and the situation will be kept under review.

## ***Government Air Quality Inquiry***

The Committee was advised that the Government has set up a Joint Inquiry involving 4 Select Committees to consider evidence on the health and environmental effects of toxic air. In addition, the Government has consulted upon the implementation of Clean Air Zones in certain areas in England. The European Commission has issued "reasoned opinion" which requires action to tackle 16 UK zones exceeding EU Air Quality standards. There are 16 air quality zones including London, Birmingham, Leeds and Glasgow which exceed air quality standards.

### ***National Clean Air Day***

The Officer advised that a National Clean Air Day was a new initiative taking place on 15 June, 2017. It was being coordinated through Global Action Plan (GAP) and it was an opportunity for the whole country to come together and improve air quality through collective action. There were 40,000 deaths in the UK per annum which were attributed to air pollution. The event was being supported by 50+ institutions and everyone was encouraged to get involved.

Following the presentation Members were afforded the opportunity to ask questions.

A Member asked whether air quality monitoring was undertaken by the BIFFA landfill site. The Senior Environmental Health Officer advised that air quality was usually monitored if there were residents in the area – such as along the A5 Watling Street. There were no residents in the close vicinity of the BIFFA site and he was of the opinion that air quality was not monitored in this area. However, he would clarify this and advise the Member accordingly. He confirmed that internal monitoring of the site was undertaken by BIFFA and the type of waste being taken to the site was mainly construction waste which did not affect air quality.

Another Member referred to pollution from log burners and the Committee was advised that the Environmental Protection Manager was preparing a Briefing Note on this issue for consideration at the next meeting.

In response to a question the Senior Environmental Health Officer advised that monitoring air pollution was more accurate than when records first began 10 years ago. He confirmed that complaints regarding Norton Aluminium had reduced over recent years as their performance had significantly improved. Any complainants were questioned to ensure that the complaint related to the site.

A Member referred to a scheme run by Friends of the Earth where the public could get a “Clean Air Kit” for a small fee in order to investigate air quality in their area. He provided the following link <https://www.foe.co.uk/page/national-air-pollution-map>

The Officer was not aware of this scheme and advised that consideration would be given to promoting the scheme on the Clean Air Day initiative.

The Member asked whether any strategies were in place to aid the promotion of better air quality in the District. The Officer commented that the main strategy was to ensure the planning system enabled developer contributions towards mitigation schemes to deliver air quality improvements. In addition the Eco Stars Scheme assisted in improving air quality on local roads.

Concern was expressed regarding the charges for permits under the Environmental Permitting Regulations where the cost of monitoring was exceeding the income. The Senior Environmental Health Officer advised that charges applied for A1, A2 and Part B activities and installations were risk

rated by the Local Authority based on a number of factors. The level of charge increased with higher ratings. He confirmed that the charges were set by the Government.

**(At this point in the proceedings Councillor P.T. Witton left the meeting).**

### **32. Flooding Presentation**

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager provided a presentation on Flooding. He advised that the Lead Authority responsible for flooding was Staffordshire County Council, who had taken over from the Environment Agency. There were no major flooding issues in the district but flooding incidents had been due to a number of things:-

- heavy localised rainfall causing highways gullies to surcharge
- culverts/streams overflowing due to maintenance issues/debris
- burst water mains
- surface water sewers
- rivers

Members noted that flooding incidents had occurred in the following areas of the District:-

- Wolverhampton Road – 2016 (Water Main)
- Norton Canes – 2015/16 (Crane Brook)
- Herondale – 2012/13 (The Ridings Brook)
- Hazel Slade – 2007 (Bentley Brook)
- Rugeley – 2007 (The Rising Brook)
- Bridgtown, Cannock – 2005 (Golly Brook)
- Stile Cop Road – 2016 (SCC Highways)
- A460 Rugeley Road – 2016 (SCC Highways)
- Horse Fair, Rugeley – 2016 (SCC Highways)

Members were then shown photographs of some of the flooding incidents in the District and the Waste and Engineering Services Manager outlined the action taken.

The Officer then referred to riparian ownership in relation to flooding on Council owned land/private land. Flooding was the land owners responsibility but residents had an expectation that the District Council would deal with all flooding issues. Sand bagging was not a duty of the District Council it was the responsibility of the County Council. However, the District Council did provide sandbags in certain circumstances as a goodwill gesture. It was the landowners duty to keep water courses clear and maintained.

Members noted that the District Council offered advice and guidance in response to flooding issues. Officers would undertake site inspections and investigations and deal with land water course/ownership enquiries. With regard to major flooding incidents the Civil Contingencies Unit would be involved. Neighbouring Local Authorities provided assistance to each other in such circumstances (Mutual Aid). In the event of a large scale flooding incidents

the Civic Contingency Unit may be required to set up rest centres and provide support for residents and businesses in the area.

The Officer advised that the Planning Team had a major part to play in ensuring that Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDs) were provided within new housing and business developments. He commented that where there was a lot of hard surfaces the water ran quicker and therefore there was less chance of water soaking into the ground.

Following the presentation Members were offered the opportunity to ask questions. A Member referred to Brindley Heath Road where leaves falling from trees were blocking drains and causing the road to flood during heavy rainfall. The Officer confirmed that Staffordshire County Council was responsible for this and he would contact Mark Keeling, Staffordshire County Council Highways to advise of the problem. In addition, following the recent bad storm, a number of trees had been blown down along the cyclepath in Brindley Heath Road and they still remained there. The Officer would advise Staffordshire County Council as they were responsible for this.

A Member asked whether any other materials were used, other than sandbags, to help in flooding incidents. The Officer confirmed that "flood sacs" were used in addition to sandbags. The Member advised of another product that could be used and would speak with the Officer about this following the meeting. In response to a further question the Officer confirmed that Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDs) were not monitored as there were too many of them.

The Member had concern about flooding, particularly in the Norton Canes area, and asked who to phone in an emergency. The Waste and Engineering Services Manager advised that he and his Team were responsible for responding to calls regarding flooding. His Team monitored flood sites and following heavy rain they would go out and inspect the hotspot areas. He confirmed that there was also a National Flood helpline which residents could ring if they wished.

Another Member asked whether the Council was insured for major flooding incidents. The Officer confirmed that the costs of a major flooding incident would come out off the Civil Contingencies budget. The County Council was the lead authority but the District Council would cover the costs of providing a rest centre. Rest centres could be established in Cannock Leisure Centre, Rugeley Leisure Centre and at a number of other locations in the District in the event of a major incident. Assistance via Mutual Aid could be called upon if necessary.

A Member then referred to the Council owned car park in Rugeley by Morrisons where flooding had recently occurred. She had some photos which she would show to the Officer following the meeting. Another Member commented that flooding was also an issue at "The Arches", Rugeley and should be added to the hotspot areas.

**(At this point in the proceedings Councillor Mrs. A. Allt left the meeting).**

### **33. Fly Tipping Update**

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager provided the Committee with an update in relation to Fly Tipping. He advised that there were two types of fly tipping – Illicit and small scale. Illicit waste was where large scale waste was dumped on ground. Following the fire at Slitting Mill a list of illicit waste sites had been put together and a multi agency response was being provided in order to reduce the number of these illicit waste sites and to raise awareness. A press release would be issued in respect of this before Easter. In addition there were also small scale fly tipping incidents in the District.

He advised that when fly tipping occurred on private land there was an expectation that the District Council would remove it. Unfortunately there were no resources to remove it. The incident was referred to the Environmental Health team for them to find out the land owner who would then be responsible to remove the waste.

He explained that fly tipping incidents had increased and he outlined the statistics, as follows:-

Between Jan – March 2015/16 – 103 incidents

Between Jan – March 2016/17 – 145 incidents

Since the Tipping charges were introduced he outlined that:-

Between Nov – March 2015/16 – 162 incidents

Between Nov – March 2016/17 – 215 incidents

The Officer considered that this issue should remain on the Committee's Work Programme given that fly tipping incidents had increased.

Members were then asked if they had any questions. A Member commented that fly tipping was on the increase and asked whether the Team had the resources to clean up the incidents quickly. The Officer responded by saying that the current team were struggling to cope with responding quickly to fly tipping incidents. Contractors were only used where there was a big incident.

In response to a question the Officer explained that the team sifted through the waste to try and identify the culprits, i.e. paperwork with an address. The Environmental Health team would then visit the address and in an attempt to get a prosecution.

Members considered that the increase in fly tipping was a concern and if it was left there too long it attracted further fly tipping at the same location. It was important that the team had the resources to deal with incidents and that funding was available to ensure fly tipping was removed quickly. The Committee requested that the Environment Portfolio Leader liaise with the Leader of the Council to ensure that the appropriate number of resources and funding was made available to deal with fly tipping incidents quickly within the District.

The Senior Environmental Health Officer advised the Committee that there had been two successful prosecutions recently in relation to fly tipping incident and he outlined these for Members information.

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager referred to the amount of litter that was associated with fast food outlet. He considered that the provision of cleaning/litter patrols should be taken into account during the planning process when applications for fast food restaurants were submitted. A Member, who was currently on the Planning Control Committee assured the Officer that the Committee took this into account when considering Planning applications of this nature.

AGREED:

The Committee requested the Environment Portfolio Leader to liaise with the Leader of the Council to ensure that the appropriate number of resources and funding be made available to deal with fly tipping incidents quickly within the District.

**(At this point in the proceedings Councillor D. Foley left the meeting).**

#### **34. Waste Update**

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager provided the Committee with an update on Waste Management. He advised that the first year of the Waste Contract had been completed and there were no major issues with the Contract. A large Contamination Campaign had been undertaken and this had been successful with the last contaminated load being rejected in August 2016. In addition, during the last year food waste had been taken out of the garden waste. There was improved customer information and data capture and CCTV had been installed on the refuse vehicles, thereby leading to a safer operation.

He outlined the priorities for 2017/18, as follows :-

- Increasing recycling
- Bin replacement after collection (improved)
- Reducing missed bins
- Reducing the amount of residual waste
- Difficult to access bins (private roads and new builds)

Members thanked the Chairman, Councillor Miss J. Cooper, for chairing the meetings during the 2016/17 Committee cycle.

The meeting closed at 6.10pm.

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CHAIRMAN