

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
HEALTH, CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 6 NOVEMBER, 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)

Crabtree, S.K.	Smith, C.D.
Freeman, Miss. M.A.	Stretton, Mrs. P.Z.
Johnson, J.P.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Johnson, T.B.	Tait, Ms. L.
Martin, Mrs. C.E.	

By invitation:

Staffordshire County Council Co-Opted Member, Councillor P. Hewitt

Prior to the meeting the Chairman requested that an update be circulated to all Members of the Committee in respect of Item 5 on the Agenda.

10. Apologies

No apologies received.

11. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

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

12. Minutes

A Member referred to Page 2, Minute 7 and the parking situation outside the new development and asked if parking on the football field had been explored.

Mike Edmonds, Head of Environment and Healthy Lifestyles indicated that discussions had been held but had proved unsuccessful; therefore alternative ideas were being considered.

A Member referred to Page 2, Minute 7 and asked for an update with regard to the Green Flag accreditation as there were issues at some of the parks.

Mike Edmonds indicated that he would discuss the Green Flag accreditation issue under item 6 and any parks issues under item 8.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Health, Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee held on 10 July, 2017 be approved as a correct record.

13. Healthwatch Staffordshire - Update

There was no update for Members of the Committee as the representative from Healthwatch Staffordshire was not in attendance.

14. Staffordshire County Council's Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee - Update

The Chairman gave an update from the following meetings:

- 7 August, 2017
- 18 September, 2017
- 13 October, 2017
- 6 November, 2017

A Member referred to the meeting held on 7 August, 2017 and expressed concern with care packages being offered to patients. She indicated that there had been failings within the District as some patients had been sent home either without a care package, or the incorrect one.

Members discussed this and expressed the same concerns indicating that sending patients' home was more about freeing up beds and whilst social care funding was being cut, the situation would not get any better.

A Member then referred to the meeting held on 6 November, 2017 with regard to community beds being reduced and the lack of focus on the South of the County. She felt this area needed to be addressed in much more detail.

However, County Councillor P. Hewitt recalled that he thought there were more community beds. The Chairman of the Committee would check the number of beds for both the North and South of the County and report back.

15. Quarters 1 and 2 Performance Report 2017-18 – Health, Culture and Environment PDP 2017-18

Consideration was given to the Quarters 1 and 2 Performance Report 2017-18 – Health, Culture and Environment PDP 2017-18 (Item 6.1 – 6.10 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Achieve a Green Flag for Hednesford Park – This was successfully achieved

A Member reported that the Green Flag status had been awarded for Cannock Park in July; however she asked if the pole would remain in the park as there was no flag being displayed due to a problem with the flag plate and there was no certificate on display on the public noticeboard in Cannock Park.

Mike Edmonds indicated that the 2017 green flags had not been displayed in any of the parks as new flag poles were currently on order, and although the Council had consulted on the location of the flag pole in Cannock, the location of the flag pole would remain in the park.

Tom Walsh, Parks and Open Spaces Manager reported that in addition to some of the Green Flag poles some of the war memorial flag poles also needed to be renewed and therefore the Council had to obtain quotes for this work. He also advised that all of the Green Flag certificates would be renewed.

“Start Peddling” – Cycle Sessions will be provided in Hednesford Park, including inclusive cycling

In response to a question raised by a Member concerning moving the cycling initiative from Cannock Park to Hednesford, Mike Edmonds advised that he would need to liaise with the leisure provider, however he understood that there was no intention to move it from the park, however delivery may need to be rotated across other sites - within the district.

16. Update on New Cemetery Proposals and Agree Core Requirements

Tom Walsh gave a presentation on the New Cemetery Proposals.

Background

- No new burials at Cannock since 2005
- Stile Cop extended in 2011-12 – burials until 2025
- The Council has been looking at other site option since 2000
- Investigation into 15 sites, eventually Norton Road purchased in 2016
- Planning permission obtained and further investigations in 2016
- Capital shortfall to deliver current proposal

Cabinet August, 2016

- Agreed to procure a private sector partner to address the funding shortfall in the Capital

PDP Actions 2017-18

- Determine core requirements for new cemetery before exploring delivery options
- Explore delivery options and review way forward

New Cemetery Site

- 50 ac site burying into 6 Ha
- 1 ha at 1750 graves
- Green belt and adjacent to SSSI
- Accessed from underneath highway

- Pylons/flooding on part of site
- Burials will be on tiers

Suggested Core Requirements of the Service

- Council's minimum standards must be met
- Opening hours and cemetery layout
- Exclusive rights of burial proof
- Hours of internment 9am-3pm Monday to Friday
- Lawned sections
- 915mm (3') Ht*width*455mm
- Depth on base >(18')
- NAMM fixings

Core Requirements of the Service

- Provide affordable choices for the community – costs of burial
 - Increases in line with annual CCDC % unless agreed with CCDC
 - CCDC rate including multiplier?
 - Children/stillborn free of charge
- Investment strategy
- Pre-purchase strategy – should we allow?
- Woodland/natural burials

Way Forward

Private Sector Partnership

- Soft market testing
- Advert in specialist journal
- Bidders day
- Develop questionnaire
- Shape the service through open dialogue
- No commitment

Risk

Risk: There may be no interest and the Council may need to consider other options

- Release required capital to deliver scheme
- Reduce scheme
- Commercial opportunity

Members of the Committee were then given the opportunity to ask questions.

Mike Edmonds commented that he was seeking to gauge what was considered important to both Members and the Council. He explained that the purpose of agreeing the core requirements was to test the market and see what was viable for those that may invest capital in the site. He indicated that if procurement was an option, then this could be explored.

A Member commented that if the Council was managing the site, the aesthetic aspect of the site would need to be pleasant.

Mike Edmonds responded and suggested that something could be included in the requirements; however discussions would need to take place first with potential operators.

A Member commented that if an operator was maintaining the site, there was a risk that they would try and profit in some way. She also referred to those that had lived in the District most of their lives but may have been living away as a consequence of being in a care home and asked what impact it would have on these people.

Tom Walsh advised that allowances would be made, for example an allowance of 4 years would be made for someone who had resided in a care home and 2 years generally, where they had left the District and passed away. This would need to be built into the core requirements and he added that there was a multiplier applied to charges if the person had resided outside of the District.

Members also discussed other areas including green burials and purchasing of plots, where a Member asked about the core requirements for block purchases of plots as he expressed concern that third parties could sell these on.

Tom Walsh explained that historically there were some difficulties with third parties selling on plots; however they would be required to have the relevant documents to prove they had exclusive rights of burial at the time of booking the burial. Where the person(s) could not demonstrate the Exclusive Right of Burial, the family would be required to fill out a Statutory Declaration to indemnify the Council.

Mike Edmonds reported that he would feed information back to Members of the Committee in March following the bidder's day.

Members of the Committee were happy to accept the core requirements provided the multiplier was included and green burials as discussed.

17. Update on Review of Parks Proposal

Mike Edmonds explained that the service would be brought back in-house as of 1 April, 2018. Discussions were ongoing and the service would be monitored over the next 12 months.

A Member asked if Members of the Committee could view documentation of what the setup was likely to be and how the contract would operate, given that she expressed concern that she had never seen a copy of the current contract and operating arrangements. She also questioned whether it was providing value for money particularly for Cannock Park.

The Member expressed concern that she had requested information about the contract at the last meeting in July and nothing had advanced since then. She commented that the Committee should be in a position to scrutinise the new arrangements before the contract is brought back in-house in April, 2018.

Tom Walsh explained the process with the tendering exercise and advised that

Members were fully involved and had helped to interview and shortlist prospective businesses.

He also responded to the issue concerning Cannock Park which was included in the staffed park contract and advised that this was one of a number let as part of the Streetscene contract. He indicated that the current terms and conditions would not apply to an in-house team in any event.

A Member of the Committee also expressed concern that there was only one meeting of the Committee in March and that a meeting was needed in between in order to discuss this issue.

Mike Edmonds advised Members of the Committee that there would be no changes to the way the contract was currently run when brought back in-house, although it had been agreed to carry out a review in 12 months. He agreed that he would circulate the information requested to Members by the end of January, 2018 and then make the necessary arrangements for an additional Committee meeting, if needed.

A Member reported that he had received many complaints regarding the poor state of play equipment in Cannock Park. He circulated pictures of the equipment and asked if it was condemned or still accessible to the public as he was concerned that a child could suffer an injury and commented that the state of the equipment did not put the Council in a good light.

A Member also commented that the climbing net play equipment at Cannock Park appeared to have been taped up and was not acceptable. She expressed concern that elected Members were trustees and a meeting had been held last year with officers to discuss the non-submission of returns to the Charity Commission; however it appeared that the Council was in the same position again.

The Member expressed concern that there was no up to date management plan and no park protocol in respect of anti-social behaviour across the District. She reported that she was approached by the local Police asking about the park protocol; however it was out of date which was not ideal considering the training that people had undertaken in order for it to be used.

Tom Walsh in responding to the pictures advised that the play area received a weekly inspection and the inspector would carry out running repairs. He referred to the two pieces of play equipment and advised that the taping up of the climbing net was due to steel core being cut through and excessive wear. With regard to the other piece he discussed the wearing of the wooden laminate with Members.

Mike Edmonds advised that there would be a full inspection of this play equipment tomorrow. He would circulate a copy of the current Parks contract, management plans, Park Protocol and schedule of playground inspections to all Members of the Committee and following this, if Members still felt that another meeting was required, he would organise this. He would also ensure the Charity Commission returns were submitted.

18. Update on Task and Finish Group – Hot Food Takeaways

Dave Prosser-Davies, Food Safety and Licensing Manager reported that the Task and Finish Group had met today and agreed the Terms of Reference and Action Plan with completion of the project by March, 2018.

He indicated that the Group would engage with stakeholders and look at lines of inquiry with a view to holding an enquiry day where a brief presentation would be given and views sought. A final report would then be submitted to the Health, Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 5.35 pm