

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY, 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Preece, J. (Chairman)
Witton, P. (Vice-Chairman)

Foley, D.	Lea, C.I.
Gamble, B. (substituting for Dudson, Miss M.)	Pearson, A.
Grice, Mrs. D.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Johnson, T.B.	

Also in attendance:-

Councillor A. Dudson (Environment Portfolio Leader-observer)

16. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss M.J. Dudson, A. Dean and M.R. Grocott.

(Councillor B. Gamble was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Miss M. Dudson).

17. 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.

18. Minutes

With regard to Minute No.10 a Member asked for an update on the progress of free microchipping of dogs. The Environmental Protection Manager advised that the Council's kennel operator had provisionally agreed to offer free microchipping and negotiations were continuing.

A Member asked for an update with regard to lobbying the LGA suggesting that the Secretary of State consider allowing Fixed Penalty Notices to be issued as part of the Regulations. The Environmental Protection Manager advised that the Government considered that as Local Authorities had the power to seize dogs, microchip them, recharge the owner and to prosecute the owner if they resisted, sufficient powers were in place and there was no reason for the introduction of Fixed Penalty Notices.

With regard to Minute No. 14 a Member raised concern regarding the continuing problem with parking on grass verges. The Committee noted that there had been one reply in response to the email Members had received asking for areas within their Wards where they were concerned about parking on grass verges. This had been forwarded to Staffordshire County Council for consideration. Another Member agreed that inconsiderate parking in general in the District was a problem, not only on grass verges but at other locations. The Committee agreed that this issue should be referred to the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December, 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.
- (B) That the Community Safety Scrutiny Committee be asked to give consideration to the problem caused by inconsiderate parking in general in the District, not only on grass verges but at other locations.

19. Quarter 3 Performance 2015-16 – Cleaner and Safer Environments

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Governance (Item 4.1 – 4.8 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The report provided Members with the progress on the performance of the Council in relation to the “Environment” actions and indicators set out in the “Cleaner and Safer Environment” Priority Delivery Plan for 2015/16.

AGREED:

- (A) That the Environment Scrutiny Committee notes the performance information relating to the Environment section of the Cleaner and Safer Environment in Quarter 3 as detailed at Appendix 1.
- (B) That the Committee notes the actions and indicators which are rated Yellow, Orange and Red and the associated commentary/remedial action proposed by the Lead Officer.

20. Waste Containers Left on Streets

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager provided Members with a presentation which outlined the following:-

Historically there have been no issues with residents leaving their waste containers on the streets. However, over the last 18-24 months there has been an increasing issue with waste containers (bins) left on the street after/between collections.

Residents are asked to remove their waste containers the same working day and those who do not comply are given a polite verbal / written request. The "Love Your Streets Campaign" focused on this issue when joint visits from Officers and PCSO's were made to the worst areas. No enforcement action was currently undertaken.

In some cases the polite notices do not seem to be working. Some residents are getting frustrated at the perceived lack of action by Council with regard to this issue. Leaving waste containers on the streets does not help the 'look and feel' of the district.

The problem is worse when it is difficult to access the rear of properties. In particular, problems exist in terraced houses and also in new properties. The design of both old and new estates can also cause problems.

Enforcement of this issue is difficult. Section 46 of the Environment Protection Act was explained. The responsibility for enforcement depended on the location, for example:-

- pavements (responsibility of highways)
- Service Strips (responsibility of highways)
- Private / No-Mans Land (difficult to ascertain responsibility)

There was a statutory requirement on the Council to undertake refuse collection so removal of refuse bins was counter productive.

Members were shown a number of photographs of different locations in the district where the problem with leaving waste containers on the streets was at its worst. These locations were Cannock Road in Chadsmoor where there were no rear entrances to these terraced properties. Cambrian Lane in Rugeley where bins were being left on a service strip behind the fencing to the rear of the properties and Eaton Road in Rugeley where bins were left on a strip of land adjacent to some fencing.

Members noted what other local authorities were doing to address this problem:-

- Nothing
- Polite Requests
- Remove & Replace Bins
- Section 46 Notice – Fixed Penalty
- Remove & Replace Bins for a fee

Members were asked to consider whether Officers should continue to issue polite notices or whether enforcement action should be taken. The Officer explained that should Members support enforcement action a report would be

brought back to the Committee and any recommendation would then be referred to Cabinet.

Members discussed this issue and agreed that should the polite notices have no effect then enforcement action should be taken against the offenders.

AGREED:

That a report be prepared for consideration at a future Environment Scrutiny Committee indicating that Members were of the opinion that polite notices continue to be issued to residents who continue to leave their waste containers on the street and should these notices have no effect, enforcement action should be taken.

21. Waste Collection Contract

The Waste and Engineering Services Manager provided the Committee with an update regarding the Waste Collection Contract.

A briefing note had been sent out on 22 January, 2016 outlining what waste to put in each bin. Following the discussion at the previous meeting the disposal site had clarified what type of food waste would be allowed to be placed in the brown bins. All residents had been asked not to place any food waste in their brown bins as from 1 February, 2016. The changes had been advertised on buses, in press releases, on stickers placed on the bins and in leaflets.

He also advised that a new "Bin Calendar" booklet was due to be delivered to residents in the next few weeks. In addition to the information regarding bin collection dates the booklet clarified the changes to the brown bin collection, contained information on what should go in each of the bins along with some general information regarding recycling. There was also a link to the website for even more information.

He confirmed that 498 composters had been ordered so far and these would be delivered to residents in March. He explained that there had been a few complaints regarding the changes to the food waste collection. However, residents were satisfied once the reasons for the changes had been explained and they had been informed that the green waste collection did not go to landfill but an incinerator.

Members noted that the refuse collection team would transfer to Biffa on 2 April, 2016 and Biffa were getting prepared for this.

A Member asked whether the interest in the home composters was as low as expected. The Waste and Engineering Services Manager advised that the interest had been lower than expected.

Members asked for clarification over what would happen if the wrong items were placed in the bins. The Officer confirmed that a tag system was in place. Amber tags would be placed on brown bins if they contained any food waste and a notice would be attached asking the resident not to do it again. A red tag

would be placed on the bin if it happened again and the bin would not be emptied. Some leniency would be applied in certain circumstances (ie. for older persons etc).

The Committee noted that recycling placed in the blue recycling bins should be loose and not bagged in black bin bags. A number of residents had been placing items such as nappies or food waste in black bin bags and attempting to dispose of these by placing the black bin bag in the blue recycling bins.

Arising from the discussions a Member asked whether bins could be tagged if they were left out on the streets following the collection. The Officer confirmed that this could be considered as part of the polite warnings which would be issued.

The Chairman agreed that Councillor A. Dudson, the Environment Portfolio Leader could speak. He asked for confirmation of the transfer date of the refuse collection team to Biffa and whether there was any cost to the authority. The Waste and Engineering Services Manager confirmed that the transfer date was 2 April, 2016 and an agreement had been reached making it cost neutral.

22. Other Items

“Clean for the Queen”

The Committee noted that during the weekend of 4 – 6 March a campaign to clear up litter would take place across the Country in time for the Queen’s 90th birthday. The areas in the District that would be litter picked were:-

- Hednesford Park/Gaskins Wood
- Heath Hayes
- Coulthwaite Way, Rugeley

Volunteers from various groups including Friends of Hednesford Park, the Council and local businesses were to be involved in this event. It was hoped that this would be rolled out throughout the year and not just this weekend.

Members were asked to advise Officers if there were any areas within their Wards that would benefit from a litter pick.

“ECO Stars – Fleet Recognition Scheme Award”

The Committee was advised that the Council had won an ECO Stars Fleet Recognition Scheme Award. This Scheme aimed to help fleet operators improve efficiency, reduce fuel consumption and emissions and make cost savings. It was originally set up in Yorkshire and had been rolled out across Staffordshire. It aimed to tackle local air quality issues caused by transport, focusing on HGV’s, buses, coaches and vans.

Members of the scheme are awarded an ECO Star rating ranging from 1 Star to 5 Stars. The Council’s refuse fleet had been awarded 3 stars.

New participants (from the transport industry) were welcome to join the scheme.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm.

CHAIRMAN