

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2019 AT 4:00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:

Councillors

Woodhead, P.E. (Chairman)

Jones, B. (Vice-Chairman)

Davis, Mrs. M.A.

Newbury, J.A.A.

Dudson, A.

Smith, C.D.

Freeman, Miss M.A.

Sutton, Mrs. H.M.

Hewitt, P.M.

Thompson, Mrs. S.L.

Layton, Mrs. A.

Todd, Mrs. D.M.

Muckley, Mrs. A.M.

Also in attendance:

- Councillor J.T. Kraujalis, Housing Portfolio Leader (*Invitee*)
- Councillor Mrs. A.A. Fitzgerald, Shadow Housing Portfolio Leader (*Observer*)

9. Apologies

None received.

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

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

11. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

12. Community Scrutiny Committee 2019/20 Work Programme Update

Correspondence – Chief Superintendent Moore

The Chairman advised that following the last meeting held in July, a letter had been sent to Chief Superintendent Moore summarising the comments and questions from the Committee regarding the proposed changes to the partnership

working structure and other matters, and that a broadly positive response to letter had been received from the Chief Superintendent. A Member commented that it was felt not all of the issues raised in the meeting had been addressed by the Chief Superintendent, but it was nonetheless pleasing that he had taken the time to attend.

The Managing Director advised that a new Chief Inspector would be starting in Cannock Chase shortly following the promotion of the current post-holder to a Superintendent position.

The Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV Manager advised that the new Harm Reduction Hub was in place, working locally with the Council's Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Some of the work previously undertaken by the Hub was now being carried out by neighbourhood policing teams. Additionally, the former Partnership Manager for the Cannock Chase Local Policing Team (LPT) had commenced employment with the Council at the beginning of September as maternity cover for the Senior Partnerships Officer.

A Member suggested that a review of the new working model be undertaken at a later stage once it had had the opportunity to become fully active.

Another Member raised that parking issues occurring at night needed to be addressed as it was a District-wide problem. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager advised that civil parking enforcement was the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council, but he was aware that night-time enforcement action had previously taken place. Another Member commented that in respect of police powers, the only parking related issues they would deal with were cars parked dangerously or obstructing the Highway. The Manager Director further commented that this was a difficult matter for this Council as it didn't have the required powers available to tackle such issues.

New Partnership Working Model Task & Finish Group

The Chairman advised that the task & finish group had met with the Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV Manager in October regarding the proposed new partnership working model in Staffordshire Police.

A Member requested that the flowchart presented in that meeting be circulated to the whole Committee for reference. The same Member also raised that at that meeting, the specific role of the Chairman at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) had been queried. The Partnerships, Community Safety & CCTV Manager advised that the role had not yet been defined, but the CSP had earlier in the day agreed the proposed new working model structure.

Members of the task & finish group then raised the following points they had put forward in their October meeting:

- All those involved with the MARAC needed to be fully capable and qualified to support vulnerable people;
- Concern had been raised about the expertise of the Chair, given that it was proposed the position would be rotated amongst those bodies represented on the MARAC;

- The rotation of the Chair position was intended not to place additional burdens on just one individual;
- Need to be conscious of the impact the MARAC work may have on the mental health of those staff involved with it;
- Ensure the Council's Partnerships Team was being supported in its work.

It was then agreed that a further meeting of the task & finish group would take place early in 2020, in advance of the next meeting of the Committee.

Carbon Neutrality Task & Finish Group

The Chairman advised that two meetings of this group had been held, the first to discuss and agree what issues should be looked at, and the second one to consider the provision of 'carbon literacy' training for Members and Officers, the outcome of which was the proposed recommendations for the Committee to consider as detailed in item number 4.1 of the agenda. A Member of the group commented that this training would be a good starting point to help Members and Officers grapple with the difficult issues involved in the Climate Emergency work. The Managing Director advised that active discussions were taking place with regards to the provision of the training, with a view to it being delivered as early as possible in 2020. Clarification was also provided about which body (i.e. Cabinet or full Council) would be responsible for approving each of the individual recommendations proposed.

The Managing Director further advised that the first meeting of the Officer group for the Climate Emergency work had taken place, with a view to having a 'carbon baseline' in place for the Council by February 2020. The specifications for the Citizens' Assembly and action plan were being worked on, with a view to procurement taking place in early 2020. The task & finish group would be involved in seeing the full specification work.

Visit to the Biffa Materials Recycling Facility (MRF) in Aldridge

The Members who went to the MRF commented that the visits were very interesting and useful, and thanked the Officers in Waste & Engineering Services for making them happen. One of the Members specifically noted surprised that not all of the recycling collected by the Council was sorted at the Aldridge site. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that all materials used to be sorted locally, but market changes meant this only applied to plastic recycling now. When the contract was due for re-tender, the Council would be looking to ensure that all materials could be sorted locally.

A Member noted that it was pleasing to see that Biffa wanted to sort as much waste in the UK as possible, rather than sending it overseas. More could be done locally however to combat contamination of recycling bins, as instances had occurred of bins not being checked before being emptied into the recycling collection lorries. The Waste & Engineering Manager replied that it would be useful to know where this had occurred, as during October, 3,600 recycling bins had been tagged for including non-recyclable items, and 8 collection loads rejected at the MRF due to contamination.

Another Member noted that when they attended the MRF visit, 8 tonnes of collection had been contaminated with straw, so asked whether areas that were causing these problems were being targeted. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that this was the case, both through door knocking at specific properties, or putting advice/guidance out through the Council's social media channels.

Another Member queried if bins were also being specifically stickered with the waste and recycling information. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that bins were last stickered approximately twelve months ago, with stickers being applied to both bins as some people were using the recycling bin as an additional waste bin.

Another Member then queried if 'tagged' bins were followed up. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that this did happen, but the Council only had one Officer available to do so. If however a property became a repeat offender for contamination then as a last resort their recycling bin could be withdrawn, but this was not something the Council wanted to do. The issue of contaminated/rejected loads was not just affecting this District, as a number of other local authorities in Staffordshire were also experiencing this problem on a regular basis.

(The Head of Housing and Partnerships arrived at the meeting at this point.)

The same Member then queried if the Council incurred any costs for loads being contaminated or rejected. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that as part of the 2016 contract the costs were handed to the contractor, but as a result, the Council would lose out on recycling credits from the County Council.

Another Member then queried if work was undertaken with local schools to educate them on waste and recycling matters. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that this did happen, and in 2020 an initiative called 'bin world 2' would be launched at primary school level in conjunction with a local drama group. More information about this would be provided to Members early next year.

The Chairman then suggested that a visit take place to incinerator plant at Four Ashes so Members could better understand the whole process. The Waste & Engineering Services Manager replied that a visit could be arranged to a different MRF site located near Birmingham, which would help to give Members a better understanding of the challenges faced by Officers in dealing with waste and recycling issues. He also advised that a 'waste composition analysis' of residual waste bins in Staffordshire had been undertaken through a research project led by Keele University, the results of which could be reported to the next meeting for Members' information.

RESOLVED:

That the following recommendations in respect of 'climate literacy' training be submitted to Cabinet and/or full Council as appropriate, for consideration:

- (A) Source and promote the training opportunity as presented, with a preference that this be attended by all senior managers and Council Members.
 - (i) Depending on the availability of the free training and the timing, key officers should be prioritised, but in all cases this should be completed urgently.
 - (ii) If the organisational need for training is greater than the capacity of free training accessible by the Council, that Cabinet considers the costs and available budget to ensure all appropriate staff, all Members and ongoing induction requirements are fully funded.
- (B) The principles of this training be established within the organisation to ensure institutional memory is preserved and incorporated into the induction programme for all new staff at senior manager or above, and new Council Members.
- (C) The status of the knowledge and understanding of Climate Literacy be considered of equal importance as equality and diversity training.
- (D) The knowledge acquired from the training be used to introduce an additional parameter in section 6 of Council reports '6.10-Climate Emergency'.
- (E) That only Members who have received the Climate Literacy training, or equivalent through the new Member induction be permitted to vote on Council decisions which have a Climate Emergency implication.
 - (i) If this is not legally possible, then each vote having a Climate Emergency implication be a named vote, and each Member identified as having completed Climate Literacy training or awareness.
- (F) That the Council uses its resources to promote externally the Climate Literacy of its staff and Members as a positive commitment towards aiding the Council in the challenges ahead.

13. Passivhaus Housing Issues

The Chairman reported that the Housing Portfolio Leader and the Head of Housing & Partnerships had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on 'Passivhaus' housing issues. This item had been included on the agenda due to the Council having a large housing stock and the associated energy efficiency implications that came with that.

The Housing Portfolio Leader advised that an organisation called the 'Sustainable Housing Action Partnership' (SHAP) was working with the West Midlands Combined Authority to help local authorities in building new homes and renovating existing properties that would meet the Government's requirement of carbon neutrality by the year 2050. In respect of refurbishment schemes, methods such as thermal retro fitting and green heating were being looked into, but the SHAP was best placed to advise the Council on the most appropriate way forward.

The Head of Housing and Partnerships advised that available options would be researched over the next few months, with all aspects of the housing sector being looked into. A visit had been undertaken recently to a housing scheme in Halesowen. Consideration was being given to using a small former garage site in the District as a pilot scheme and Officers were actively working to increase their knowledge in this area. Planning applications submitted for new house building schemes met current planning obligations, and a ten-year approach to this work was being undertaken to fit in with the Council's Climate Emergency work.

The Housing Portfolio Leader further advised that it was important for the Council to look at all systems available on the market, not just Passivhaus schemes. A visit was being arranged to a site in Redditch that may provide an alternative approach, along with a visit in the new year to a factory that was focussed on modern methods of construction. This may be a visit that the Carbon Neutrality task & finish group wished to also attend.

(The Housing Portfolio Leader and the Head of Housing & Partnerships left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.)

14. Quarter 2 2019/20 Improving Community Wellbeing (Environment, Partnerships and Community Safety) PDP Performance Update

Consideration was given to the latest performance information (Item 6.1 – 6.7 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Managing Director reported that some actions were behind schedule, but it was not expected that any would not be completed by year end. Work on delivering a new cemetery for the District was progressing. Linked to this, a new crematorium was due to be built by a company called Horizon, and the Council was working with them operationally to benefit the public. The provision of these new facilities would be a significant additional resource for the District. A construction partner was due to be procured in 2020, but preparatory work was already underway onsite. Some elements of the originally proposed scheme had had been removed to ensure delivery within the fixed budget (e.g. the provision of a residential premises at the cemetery), but these changes would have no adverse impact on the public. Market testing was being undertaken to ensure delivery of the project within budget, as issues could arise if this wasn't achievable. The Council was exploring with Horizon ways to share costs on some aspects of the scheme, such as site access.

A Member noted the site being developed was adjacent to Five Ways island in Heath Hayes, at which high carbon monoxide levels had been monitored due to car fumes, so queried if any action was being taken to bring the level down and would it be further affected by this scheme. The Managing Director replied that he was not aware of any active measures in place to reduce the levels. The issue had been looked at by the County Council but nothing taken forward. There would be additional traffic as a result of the new scheme, but its impact limited as visits to the crematorium would be by appointment only. A Member further replied that Norton Canes Parish Council had received a presentation from Horizon on their proposed scheme, and they had advised that appointments would be held outside of rush hour so as to minimise impact on local traffic levels.

The Chairman noted that the Committee may wish to look at air quality management issues in the District at a future date. The Managing Director advised that this had been looked at by a previous Scrutiny Committee, but the information considered as part of that review could be circulated for reference.

A Member then queried if a project manager had yet been appointed for the delivery of priority S106 projects and the new cemetery scheme. The Managing Director replied that an internal candidate had been recruited and was already in post, covering both of these areas.

The meeting closed at 5:25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN