

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 24 OCTOBER, 2013 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Bottomer, B. (Chairman)
Toth, J. (Vice-Chairman)

Bernard, J.D.	Morgan, C.W.J.
Johnson, J.	Pearson, A.
Jones, R.	Sutton, Mrs. H. M.

12. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Bennett.

13. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restriction on Voting by Members

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

14. Minutes

Members raised the issue on Page 5 of the minutes regarding the next Poplars Liaison meeting. The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management informed Members that the next programmed meeting was on 12 December 2013. Staffordshire County Council as the Planning Authority had been invited to this meeting along with the Biffa Site Manager.

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 August 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

15. Environment Priority Delivery Plan 2013/14

Consideration was given to the Environment Priority Delivery Plan 2013/14 quarter one performance (Item 4.1 – 4.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management advised Members on

Item 4.5 and the reasons for full plans applications not being assessed within 15 working days which had been explained at Scrutiny Committee, 9 October 2013.

- That applications do not always contain all relevant information to make an assessment and have to be sent back to the applicant;
- The Building Control service was undergoing a period of change. The service competed with the private sector providers and there had been a drop in income. The service had to reduce expenditure as targets were not being achieved which had meant a reduction in staff. This had meant that the service was impacted when a member of staff was absent.

He informed Members that the Scrutiny Committee had considered that even if the application was not complete and did not contain the relevant information it had still been assessed and should be rejected. The Corporate Director had agreed to clarify this and advise Members on the Scrutiny Committee accordingly.

The Chair referred to Item 4.2, Place (Environment)² and the percentage of Household waste sent for re-use, recycling and composting – target 57.53 was incorrect and should be revised to 54%.

The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management highlighted Item 4.2 and that the percentage of household waste was an overall percentage for recycling. He would try to separate the targets for food/garden recycling and dry recycling for the remainder of this municipal year by putting them in brackets. The accuracy of the figures could be a problem as they were based on countywide targets.

Members queried Item 4.1, Undertake an information and motivational campaign to increase food waste and increase recycling. Members wanted to know had food waste been increased. The Head of Housing Services and waste Management noted that the target should read increase recycling and not increase food waste. He would ensure that this was removed from the Priority Outcome and amended for the next quarter update.

RESOLVED:

That the Environment Priority Delivery Plan 2013/14 quarter one actions and performance be noted.

16. Redbrook Lane

Members received a presentation from the Environmental Protection Manager regarding the investigation of, and action in relation to, a serious fly-tipping incident on Redbrook Lane in Rugeley.

The Environmental Protection Manager updated the Members on what had happened and what would continue to happen as a result of the fly-tipping incident in Redbrook Lane in Rugeley. He explained that although the owner

of the site had been duped into allowing who he thought was a prospective customer to have access to the site the owner was still culpable and had been served with an abatement notice. He explained that the Environment Agency who were taking the lead were still investigating the incident and were exhausting all avenues to find the culprit. The Environment Agency were of the opinion that this was not the first site that had been used to dispose of waste of this type illegally.

Members enquired as to whether it was possible to establish how many tonnes of paper and plastic had been fly tipped. The Environmental Protection Manager explained it would be difficult to estimate the tonnage but the cost to remove it would be approximately £250,000.

The Environmental Protection Manager explained that the role of Cannock Chase District Council had been to issue a consistent message to the media regarding the incident; to engage the pest contractor due to the odour and the fly infestation to dissipate these issues. There was continuous monitoring of the situation to ensure residents were informed and the level of complaints had reduced. As the weather conditions had changed it was expected that there would not be anymore complaints till Spring time next year. However, the site would be inspected regularly to monitor rodent activity.

Although residents would be kept informed where ever possible as the Environment Agency were the lead on this and the investigation is still on going information would be limited.

Members enquired as to whether any of the business premises nearby had any security footage that would assist with the investigation. The Officer reported that this fell within the remit of the Environment Agency and their investigation as the lead agency on this.

Members questioned as to who had ultimate responsibility for the fly tipping. The Officer explained that all of the people involved in the chain from the owner, to the bogus client, to the hauliers to the company who had wanted the waste disposing of. They were all culpable from a duty of care perspective to actually breaking the law.

Due to the fly tipped material being mainly paper the Members queried whether there were any addresses or clues on the paper that could identify the original source of the material. The Environmental Protection Manager explained that this fell with the auspices of the Environment Agency who would be investigating this.

Members queried who would bear the cost of the operation to remove and dispose of the material legitimately. The Environmental Protection Manager explained that it would be the owner of the site if the Environment Agency could not trace the real culprits. He informed members that the owner had contacted his local MP regarding the issue. Members asked whether there were any Government grants to help the owner as he had acted in good faith. The Officer remarked that the Environment Agency were not chasing costs yet. The site would remain in this state of abeyance whilst the Environment Agency

continued its investigation which meant that that material would not be removed. This would have repercussions for the owner as he could not advertise the site to prospective clients, it would also mean that the site's value may diminish and could remain like this for several months. Whilst this was happening a risk assessment that had been carried out would be updated regularly to minimise any impact on the local residents.

Members asked what the penalty was for fly tipping of this magnitude. The Environmental Protection Manager informed them that the maximum penalty for the offences was a fine of £50,000 fine and/or 2 years imprisonment.

RESOLVED:

That the report was noted.

17. Joint Municipal Waste Strategy Update

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 6.1 – 6.41 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management informed Members that Councillor Bennet was the representative from Cannock Chase District Council for the Staffordshire Waste Partnership. He explained that the Strategy had been refreshed as the original dated back to 2007 and legislation had been changed since then. It had been agreed with the Joint Waste Management Board to put the strategy out for consultation over an eight week period which would end just before Christmas 2013. Once all the comments had been received the revised strategy will be considered by Cabinet.

The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management highlighted the waste hierarchy that the strategy was seeking to implement. However, it was up to each waste collection authority to decide how to achieve this through their Partnership Action Plan. The Councils Partnership Action Plan would be prepared during the 2014/15 municipal year and a draft plan would be considered by the Environment PDC.

He explained that the Action Plan which accompanied the strategy included the formation of a Staffordshire wide Waste Prevention Plan. He welcomed this initiative as he believed more could be done to prevent households generating waste, although this will mean moving away from explaining to households how to recycle and instead how to reduce and prevent waste generation. When formulated, the draft Waste Prevention Plan will be submitted to the Environment PDC for consideration.

Members enquired as to when the Four Ashes site would be in use and if the target would change. The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management explained that the Four Ashes site was two weeks behind schedule due to delays in connection to the National Grid. It would be opening week commencing 28 October 2013 and with the Council first using it during the week commencing 4 November 2013. Once fully operational the Poplars site would not be used for the disposal of general waste by the Council. The

Strategy was not explicit about disposal targets as flexibility for the Districts was required.

Members enquired whether any pressure could be put on the supermarkets and the packaging that they used. The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management explained that there was a European directive regarding reducing the amount of packaging. It was acknowledged that some supermarkets do give food to food banks as the expiry date is near whereas other supermarkets send their waste to plants to help with energy costs.

Members questioned whether the 2% year on year carbon reduction had been accounted for. Members were assured that was the case. In addition to this Members enquired as to whether there would be any vehicle change. The Head of Housing Services and Waste Management explained that this would be considered as part of the Partner Action Plan which was to be formulated by the Council next year.

RESOLVED:

That the draft Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Staffordshire be noted.

18. Energy Recovery Facility Update

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 7.1 – 7.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the revised date of 04 November 2013 for the commencement of phased deliveries of residual waste collected by the Council to the Four Ashes Energy Recovery Facility be noted.

19. Review of Work Programme – 2013-14 Municipal Year

Consideration was given to the Environment PDC Work Programme 2013/14 (Item 8.1 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the updated Environment PDC Work Programme for 2013/14 be noted.

The meeting closed at 4.55pm

CHAIRMAN