

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON THURSDAY 13 MARCH AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

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

Jones, R. Snape, P.A. (substitute for Johnson, J.)
Pearson, A. Sutton, Mrs. H.M.

29. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C. Bennett, J.D. Bernard, J. Johnson and C.W.J. Morgan.

30. 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.

31. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2014 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Councillor R. Jones queried if there had been any further updates regarding Redbrook Lane? (Minute No. 22 refers).

The Environmental Protection Manager replied that as with the last meeting, no updates had been received from the Environment Agency; however the Council continued to monitor the site.

32. Environmental Enforcement Action Plan

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environmental Health (*presented by the Environmental Protection Manager*) (Item 4.1 – 4.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Environmental Protection Manager advised that the Action Plan detailed the key areas of work for the Environmental Protection team over the forthcoming year, also reporting that the outcomes of the 2013/14 Action Plan would be presented to the Committee in August 2014 for review.

Councillor Snape queried whether all inspections of waste/scrap metal carrying vehicles and licensed scrap metal sites were carried out in conjunction with the Police?

The Environmental Protection Manager replied that this was not always the case as both authorities had the power to instigate enforcement action separately, but joint investigations took place where necessary.

Councillor Pearson raised concern about rubbish collected in skips either overflowing or not being adequately covered, and requested that an article be published in the Council's residents' magazine to remind about the problems of dog fouling.

The Environmental Protection Manager replied that the skip rubbish issue had been addressed last year, as relevant businesses in the District had been written to reminding them of their responsibilities, but the issue tended to arise with businesses located outside of the District. In respect of dog fouling, an article could be included in future editions of Chase Matters and Hometalk magazines.

RESOLVED:

That the proposals detailed within the action plan be noted and endorsed.

Reasons for Decision

The Plan is prepared annually and seeks to identify current and upcoming issues related to environmental crime that falls within the Council's remit.

The Council's resources are limited and in view of the current and anticipated budget and staffing constraints imposed on local authorities generally, it is considered imperative that the resources are targeted to achieve maximum benefit.

The Plan details the measures to be adopted and actions to be taken both in preventing incidents and pursuing those responsible for environmental crime.

33. Energy Recovery Facility Update

Consideration was given to the Briefing Note of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (*presented by the Senior Technical Officer*) (Item 5.1 – 5.2 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Senior Technical Officer gave the following update:

- There had been problems experienced at the Plant over the past 48 hours which had negatively impacted on delivery times, but it was hoped services would return to normal by the end of the week;
- The last full capacity test of the Plant took place on Wednesday 12 March, but the final phase of testing had to be complete before the Plant could be formally handed over to the operator;
- The recent problems had been raised with Staffordshire County Council, and a meeting arranged along with other district authorities to discuss the problems in more detail.

Councillor Pearson asked when the Committee would be able to visit the Plant?

The Senior Technical Officer replied that Veolia were to commence a visit programme starting with the Staffordshire Joint Waste Board on 14 April 2014. Arrangements would then be made for the Committee to visit although this was likely to be in the new municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That

- (A) The current position regarding the disposal of waste collected by the Council at the Four Ashes Energy Recovery Facility be noted.
- (B) Arrangements be made for the Environment Policy Development Committee to visit the Four Ashes Energy Recovery Facility during the 2014-15 Municipal Year.

34. Provision of Additional 'On-Street' Litter Bins

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 6.1 – 6.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Councillor R. Jones queried if additional litter bins could be provided when big events were happening in the District to allow for the increase in litter produced?

The Senior Technical Officer replied that this could be achieved using freestanding temporary bins which had been salvaged when the old litter bins were replaced in the town centres.

RESOLVED:

- (A) That Cabinet, at its meeting to be held on 17 April 2014, be recommended that:
- (i) The installation of additional 'on-street' bins be preceded by the provision of a 'trial litter bin' for a six month period.
 - (ii) Where weekly usage of the trial litter bin during the six month period:-
 - Exceeds 25% of the bin capacity, a permanent on-street bin be subsequently provided.
 - Is below 25% of the bin capacity, the trial litter bin be removed and no permanent replacement bin be provided.
 - (iii) Where the usage of existing 'on-street' litter bins falls below 25%, the litter bin be removed or re-sited, following consultation with Ward Members.
- (B) Adhesive signs be provided on all 'older type on-street' litter bins to show that dog waste can be disposed of in the bin.

Reasons for Decisions

The number of requests for additional 'on-street' litter bins exceeds the number which can be provided (following the provision of replacement bins) from the agreed £3,000 annual budget).

It is therefore proposed that before an additional bin is installed on a permanent basis, that it should be preceded by the provision of a 'trial bin' for the period of six months. Where weekly usage exceeds 25% of bin capacity, a permanent litter bin would be provided, but in cases where weekly usage was below this threshold the trial bin would be removed and no permanent bin provided.

Whilst the majority of the existing litter bins are well used, the usage of a small number may also fall below 25% weekly capacity. In these circumstances it is proposed that following consultation with Ward Members, the litter bin is removed or re-sited.

Whilst the Council's 'new' standard litter bins include signage that dog waste can be disposed of in the bin, this is not incorporated into older bins. It is therefore suggested that adhesive signage is provided to all older type litter bins.

35. Maintenance of Public Open Space and Walkways

Consideration was given to the Joint Briefing Note of the Head of Housing and Waste Management and Head of Commissioning (*presented by the Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer*) (Item 7.1 – 7.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

Councillor J. Toth arrived at the meeting at the start of this item and gave apologies for his late arrival.

Councillor Pearson queried where the mechanical sweeping of alleyways etc. occurred?

The Senior Technical Officer replied that areas in town centres were swept on a daily basis, but as the locations referred to in the Briefing Note were primarily residential, they were swept less frequently.

Councillor R. Jones commented there had been confusion in the past about the cleaning of alleyways etc. in residential areas as it wasn't always clear who owned the land.

The Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer replied that the District Council had an electronic mapping system to identify its own land ownership, so the confusion was usually because of Staffordshire County Council not cleaning areas for which it was responsible.

RESOLVED:

That the service standards for the maintenance of Council owned public open space and walkways be noted.

36. 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).

Councillor Pearson raised an issue of drivers parking their vehicles on grass verges meaning the verges could not be cut and were left in a poor state.

The Head of Housing and Waste Management replied that the majority of verges in the District were owned by Staffordshire County Council, which meant the District Council could not take enforcement action, but did regularly write out to residents reminding them about where they should park.

Councillor Pearson then raised a further issue about businesses primarily based on industrial estates blocking pathways and grass verges with advertised boards.

The Senior Technical Officer replied that enforcement action could be taken under the Highways Act; however this was also a county council issue.

The Principal Parks and Open Spaces Officer further replied that this had been raised with the County Council, but they had been taking a cautious approach by not removing signage so as not to upset business owners.

Councillor Toth commented that enforcement action should be taken where possible, and as the majority of issues raised were related to the County Council, they should be providing answers about how the issues were going to be resolved.

The Chairman requested that thanks be formally recorded to officers who had helped to clear a pathway in Rugeley, as they had worked hard to fix the problem and the residents who made the initial complaints were very happy with the outcome.

RESOLVED:

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

The meeting closed at 4:35pm

CHAIRMAN