

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 6 DECEMBER, 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK
PART 1

PRESENT: Councillors

Bernard, J. D. (Chairman)

Brown, G. C.	Rowley, J.
Green, M. R.	Sutton, Mrs. H. M.
Kraujalis, J. T.	

16. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A. Williams.

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

No declarations of interests were submitted

18. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 October, 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19. Home Office, Street Level Crime Maps

Prior to giving a demonstration on the Street Level Crime Maps, Anthony Small, Consultation Manager, Staffordshire Police gave an overview of the website.

He explained that you accessed the website through www.police.uk where you entered the postcode, town or street to obtain the relevant information relating to crime and policing relating to that particular area. The website had the following 5 principal functions:-

Overview

This gave a summary of the website

Crime Maps

Listed grouped crime types for particular months/years and crimes were mapped to an anonymous point on or near where they had occurred.

Meet the team

Gave contact details for the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the areas they covered.

Get involved

Listed upcoming events that people could attend.

Information and advice

Provided information on what people could do to protect themselves from crime.

Also on the website were 4 other functions

- Help
- Feedback
- Data
- Police applications

20. Anti Social Behaviour Consultation

The Local Strategic Partnership Manager gave an update on the anti social behaviour consultation exercise that had recently been carried out by Members and Officers.

It was reported that in total 57 people had been interviewed over the 6 wards and of these 35 had said that they would be prepared to be contacted again regarding community safety issues. Of those responding, 58% had said that they had not felt concerned over the last 12 months about the possibility of becoming a victim of crime. 74% reported that they had neither been a victim of, or witness to a crime in the 12 months and similarly 75% did not have a close friend or relative who had either.

Only 4 people (7%) reported feeling unsafe when out in their local area during the daytime, two suggesting that more support and reassurance was required. 19 people (33%) reported feeling unsafe after dark in their area with 11 referring to youths hanging around as being the reason for this. The Chairman reported that Out Reach Workers from the County Youth Service did go out and talk to groups that congregated and successful work was being carried out. However, older people could feel intimidated. There was an element of those that did cause trouble but often it was the young people that were the victims of crime when meeting their friends and they considered that there was 'safety in numbers'. The need for improvements to street lighting was mentioned by 3 people.

Of those responding 26 (46%) had seen information on community safety in the last 12 month period, 16 people indicating a desire for more police presence and information and 11 suggesting more information was required from the Council. Concern was expressed that 10 people had considered that the police and the Council did not seek out and act on local views relating to anti social behaviour. However, there was a positive response to the question in respect of the police and partnership.

It was considered that the initiative had been worthwhile and that feedback should be provided to those that had taken part. The Committee suggested that it may be useful to speak to young people at some future date to seek their views on anti social behaviour and to endeavour to address the fear of crime.

The Local Strategic Partnership Manager reported that a number of positive initiatives were being undertaken.

21. Place Priority Delivery Plan – 2nd Quarter

The Head of Environmental Services provided an update on what had been achieved on the Priority Delivery Plan during the second quarter. He explained that most of the actions were on target. However two actions had been delayed and were scheduled to be carried out in later quarters.

Concern was expressed regarding those that went around the area collecting scrap metal. The Head of Environmental Health explained that stop and search exercises were carried out to ensure that they had the correct documentation and the vehicles were examined and tested. The use of loudspeakers was not allowed. If descriptions of the vehicles and the dates and times they were seen, were provided to the Environmental Health Department, they would investigate the matter.

AGREED:

That the Place Priority Delivery Plan – 2nd quarter be noted.

22. Food Waste Recycling in Cannock Chase

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Services. It was explained that Anaerobic Digestion and In vessel Composting were two ways of disposing of food waste. Cannock Chase Council used In vessel Composting as the Anaerobic Digestion system required separate collections of food and garden waste.

Cannock Chase Council was in the top quartile for both waste collection service performance and costs and was the cheapest run service in Staffordshire. The current three bin system for residual/landfill (green); food and garden waste (brown) and dry recycling (blue) were collected on alternative weeks. In 2010/11 approximately 8,700 tonnes of garden and food waste was collected and this was taken to an 'In vessel Composting Facility' at Shareshill. The In vessel process consisted of placing the waste into garage type units where it 'cooked' itself naturally in controlled conditions. Each pile was monitored under strict Environmental Agency regulations to ensure safety. This was then taken outside and placed in rows and allowed to compost down naturally and it was then sold on as garden compost.

The Committee requested that a visit to the Jack Moody In vessel Composting site be arranged.

It was considered that a move back to weekly refuse collections would reduce recycling levels dramatically. The Government had intimated that they would provide funding for local authorities to revert back to weekly collections, but no detailed information was currently available. Should the Council go to weekly collection a further 5 vehicles and crews would be required at a cost of approximately £100,000 per vehicle per year.

The Four Ashes plant when operating would turn waste to energy and no waste would be taken to landfill.

AGREED:

That a visit to the Jack Moody In vessel Composting site be arranged.

23. Air Quality within Cannock Chase

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Health.

It was explained that historically Cannock Chase had been a coal mining and heavy industry area, with miners getting concessionary coal, resulting in poor air quality. However, Air Pollution Control Legislation had dramatically improved the air quality. Progressively more stringent and all-encompassing pollution control legislation had been introduced and overall air quality in the UK had improved, there were however localised problems. Pollution had risen from increasing traffic volumes and congestion, although engines were becoming cleaner and more efficient. Particular problems had arisen with nitrogen oxides (NOx) and fine particulates (PM10).

An Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) had been declared along the A5 between the rail bridge at Churchbridge and Walkmill Lane traffic lights in June 2006, effective July 2006, due to elevated NOx levels. The AQMA was extended on the A5 to cover the length of the road to the boundary at Longford. South Staffordshire District Council also had declared AQMAs and a Joint Steering Group had been set up where radical ideas were discussed and deliverable ideas pursued. Potentially there could be a further AQMA from Churchbridge to the Turf Island stretch of the A5. The Council was continuing to work with the Highways Agency and Staffordshire County Council's Highways Department regarding road improvement schemes.

The Environment Act 1995 placed a duty to review and assess air quality across the district. Local Air Quality was managed by –

- Monitoring air quality and taking action to improve it
- Regulating businesses that contribute to air pollution – foundries, industrial processes etc.
- Input into the planning process
- Input into Local Transport Plans
- Offering help and advice where appropriate

This work was undertaken by the Council and Environment Agency.

It was reported that monitoring of pollutants had continued and the Council had a duty to produce an Action Plan. A further review and assessment was completed in December 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011. The draft Action Plan was awaiting agreement with the Highways Agency and would undergo full public consultation and would need to be adopted by Council.

A Member expressed concern with respect to a periodic potent acrid smell which residents had made complaints about, mainly in Cannock south. The Head of Environmental Health agreed to investigate the matter.

CHAIRMAN

The meeting closed at 5.55 p.m.