

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
WEDNESDAY 19 JULY, 2016 AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:
Councillors

Cooper, Miss J. (Chairman)
Pearson, A.R. (Vice-Chairman)

Allt, Mrs. A.	Sutherland, M. (substitute for Bowater, J.)
Dean, A.	Sutton, Mrs. H.M.
Dudson, A.	Witton, P.T.
Foley, D.	Woodhead, P.E.
Hoare, M.W.A.	

Also in attendance:-

Councillor J. Preece (Environment Portfolio Leader-observer)

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J. Bowater and Mrs. D. Grice.

Councillor M. Sutherland was in attendance as substitute for Councillor J. Bowater.

2. 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.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 April, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. End of Year Performance Report 2015/16

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance (Item 4.1 – 4.9 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Policy and Performance Manager led Members through the report highlighting the key issues. Members were advised that 67% of the projects had been completed on target and the other two projects were on target or progressing. The Committee noted that the end of year performance indicators were detailed at Item 4.6 and the indicator relating to the percentage of household waste recycled had exceeded the target that had been set.

A Member asked how the 50% target for the percentage of household waste recycled had been set. The Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that the targets were on a rolling programme and there was a gradual increase year on year. The Head of Housing and Waste Management confirmed that the target had remained at 50% this year (the same as for 2015-16) due to BIFFA taking over the refuse collection contract. This would enable the Officers to ascertain if there was any difference given the change in contractor. She also advised that there had been a slight decrease recently in the number of residents recycling and therefore a campaign was being launched in August to raise awareness of the importance of recycling.

A Member made reference to the recent changes to the way food waste was collected and had concern that it was now going into the green bins and being sent to Four Ashes for incineration rather than being composted. The Head of Housing and Waste Management commented that Cannock Chase Council was awarded recycling credits from the County Council and the brown bin disposal was included in the credits. Members considered that the Committee should be consulted when setting next year's performance targets. The Policy and Performance Manager confirmed that the Scrutiny Committee could be consulted on these proposals.

As there was a new refuse collection contractor a Member asked whether update reports could be submitted to each meeting thereby ensuring that quarterly updates were received. The Head of Housing and Waste Management confirmed the Work Programme for 2016-17 could be amended to include the Waste Contract update at each of the meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the performance information relating to PDPs as detailed at Appendices 1-6 be noted and the Work Programme be amended to include the Waste Contract update at each of the meetings.

5. Work Programme for 2016-17

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Housing and Waste Management (Item 5.1 - 5.5 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

The Policy and Performance Manager explained that to assist Members in their Scrutiny role a Scrutiny Toolkit had been developed and this was attached to the agenda at Appendix 2. The report outlined how to develop the Work Programme and gave suggestions of issues that Members should consider. A proposed Work Programme was attached at Appendix 2. This included a number of issues carried forward from last year and Members were encouraged to suggest any additional items they wished to include.

The Head of Housing and Waste Management advised that the provisional Work Programme had been developed in discussion with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. It was a suggestion of potential issues for discussion and the decision of what to include would be for the Committee to determine.

The Committee also noted that a summary of services and issues that fall within the Committee's remit was attached at Appendix 4.

The Head of Housing and Waste Management referred Members to the proposed Work Programme and explained that the following issues had been carried forward from 2015-16:

- Grass Verges
- Bins Left on Streets
- Implications following the closure of Rugeley Power Station

With regard to Grass Verges the Head of Housing and Waste Management reminded Members that an email had been sent to all Members of the Committee asking them to complete a proforma of areas within the District where parking on grass verges was a problem. Only one response had been received.

A number of Members considered that the parking on grass verges was still a problem throughout the District. The Head of Environmental Health explained that where vehicles were parked on the grass verges these formed part of the highway and the County Council would be responsible for any enforcement action. If the verges were being used to repair or sell vehicles then Members should advise the Head of Environmental Health as the District Council may have some powers to take action under certain legislation.

The Head of Housing and Waste Management agreed to circulate the email again to Members of the Committee for them to complete the proforma indicating where the problem areas were. She highlighted the importance of completing the proformas so that officers were aware of the problem locations. She asked that these be returned by mid August.

(At this point in the proceedings the meeting adjourned for 20 minutes due to a disturbance and reconvened at 4.40pm).

The Head of Environmental Health agreed that some research regarding the powers available in relation to the parking cars on grass verges would be undertaken and any information regarding the legal powers available would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

A Member raised concern regarding overgrown weeds/hedges along paths in the Rugeley area and within Rugeley town centre. The Head of Housing and Waste Management asked that the Councillor to speak to her outside the meeting and she would liaise with the Street Cleansing Team or refer the complaint to the County Council where appropriate.

A Member suggested that the Street Cleansing vehicles could carry a tank full of weed killer that could be used when undertaking their rounds. It was noted that this would have a cost implication but the Head of Housing and Waste Management commented that consideration could be given to this suggestion when procuring new vehicles.

Members made comments that within Cannock town centre and across the District there were areas which were overgrown and unsightly. Members noted that in certain areas the responsibility lay with Staffordshire County Council. The Head of Housing and Waste Management advised that there were regular liaison meetings with the County Council and any "hot spot" areas could be reported to them.

With regard to bins left on the street the Head of Housing and Waste Management explained that some discussion had taken place at the Council meeting regarding this issue. Members were advised that a soft approach would be taken in addressing the problem which involved a row of terraced houses in a specific location. Officers would work with the residents to come up with a solution and no enforcement action would be taken.

The final issue related to Rugeley Power Station and the Head of Housing and Waste Management explained that this did not fall under the remit of this Committee and therefore would not form part of the Work Programme. The Head of Environmental Health commented that land remediation would have to take place due to the site being contaminated and this fell under the remit of the Environment Agency. He would advise Members of the programme of works once available. The committee noted that a Working Group had been established and this would be looking at the plans for the future of the site.

The Head of Housing and Waste Management then went through the remainder of Work Programme and Members noted the proposed items for each of the meetings. With regard to the Waste Management Contract Officers had been in regular contact with Biffa and monthly contract meetings had been held. Any operational issues following the takeover had been dealt with and the contract was delivering well and staff were relatively happy. Biffa had reduced the number of refuse vehicles from 6 to 5 in June and this would be monitored. A change in collection dates for a number of residents had taken place and this had been handled smoothly. She confirmed that the Work Programme would be amended to include an update on the Waste Contract each meeting.

A Member raised the issue of the number of log burners now being used in the District and had concern of the potential for a pollution issue. The Head of Environmental Health confirmed that he would produce a separate briefing

paper on this matter and circulate this to Members outside of the meeting.

A Member asked whether the Countryside Review would be included on the Work Programme as it had been suggested as a possible item at the previous meeting. The Head of Housing and Waste Management confirmed that this fell under the remit of the Head of Commissioning and she would ask for a briefing note to be circulated to Members of the Committee detailing the review that was being undertaken.

She then referred Members to Appendix 4 and suggested that Members may wish to select 3 issues to add to the Work Programme (1 item per meeting).

A Member made reference to the workshop at the Hawks Green Depot and he asked whether the Council promoted the fact that MOT's were undertaken by the mechanics. The Head of Housing and Waste Management explained that this service was not promoted on the Council's website at present. There was an opportunity to increase business and thereby increase revenue for the Council should this activity be promoted. It had not previously been promoted as the team used to maintain the refuse wagons. However, there was some spare capacity to undertake additional MOT's now they were not doing this function. She was currently undertaking a review of the Hawks Green Depot and a significant sum of money would need to be spent on the workshop.

Members suggested that Bus Shelters and Car Parking Management were issues which should be on the Work Programme.

A Member made reference to water courses/flooding hotspots and considered this should form part of the Work Programme. He referred to the flooding issues within Norton Canes to which he was having difficulty in establishing who was responsible. The Head of Housing and Waste Management advised that she had some information about who was responsible and she would arrange for the appropriate officer to forward this to him.

Members discussed Air Quality Management and made reference to the A5 corridor and he asked whether air quality had exceeded safe levels. The Head of Environmental Health advised that this area was monitored to establish air quality and an Action Plan was produced. He confirmed that information on this would be included under the Air Quality Management item which was scheduled for the meeting on 4 April, 2017.

Following a discussion on the suggested issues it was agreed that the three additional items for the Work Programme would be:-

- Bus shelters – 15 September 2016
- Water Courses/Flooding – 4 April 2017
- Off Street parking – 6 December 2016

RESOLVED:

- (A) That an email and proforma be circulated to all Members of the Committee asking them to indicate areas where parking on grass verges

was a problem.

- (B) The Head of Environmental Health produce a separate briefing paper on the use of log burners and this be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- (C) That the Head of Commissioning be asked to produce a briefing note on the Countryside Review and this be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- (D) The Head of Environmental Health undertake research regarding the powers available in relation to the parking of cars on grass verges and any information regarding the legal powers available be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- (E) That the Work Programme as detailed at Appendix 2 be agreed subject to the Waste Contract Update being included on each meeting.
- (F) That Bus Shelters, Water Courses and Off Street Parking be identified as the 3 additional items to be added to the Work Programme as indicated above.

The meeting closed at 5.15pm.

CHAIRMAN