

CORPORATE AND PUBLIC SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 October 2017 at 6.00pm at the Council House, Walsall

Committee Members Present	Councillor A. Andrew (Chair) Councillor C. Creaney (Vice – Chair) Councillor M. Bird Councillor S. Craddock Councillor B. Douglas – Maul Councillor M. Nazir Councillor G. Sohal Councillor M. Ward
Portfolio Holder	Councillor D. Coughlan Social Care Councillor L. Jeavons Deputy Leader Councillor C. Jones Clean and Green Councillor A. Nawaz Children's Services and Education
Member Present	Councillor Towe
Officers Present	Simon Neilson Executive Director (Economy and Environment) Barbara Watt Director of Public Health Paul Gordon Head of Business Change Irena Hergottova Corporate Consultation & Equalities Lead Mark Holden Head of Clean and Green Nigel Rowe Community Cohesion & Engagement Lead Officer Anna King Corporate Consultation Officer Steve Gittins Team Leader Community Protection Craig Goodall Senior Democratic Services Officer Matthew Powis Democratic Services Officer

209/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Chamber and Councillor L. Rattigan.

210/17 Substitution

Councillor Douglas-Maul substituted for Councillor L. Rattigan.

211/17 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whips.

212/17 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to consider in private session.

213/17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

214/17 Petition: Injunction for Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park to Stop Travellers Unauthorised Encampments

The Committee heard a petition in regard to unauthorised encampments on Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park which had received more than 500 signatures. The Chair outlined the format for the item and invited the petition organiser to introduce their petition.

Councillor Towe (Lead Petitioner) introduced the petition which had called for an injunction and additional security measures to be taken at Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park to prevent further unauthorised encampments. He informed the Committee that problems with unauthorised encampments were an UK wide issue and changes in legislation were needed. He added that the petition requested a prohibitory injunction in order to protect Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park from future unauthorised encampments.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education responded to the Lead Petitioner on behalf of the portfolio holder. He recognised activities that had taken place on Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park and the significance of Barr Beacon as a War Memorial. He highlighted that unauthorised encampments had reduced by 25 percent in 2016. However, the Council recognised that there had been a high number of unauthorised encampments and injunctions were being applied to a number of Council owned sites including Barr Beacon.

A Member thanked officers for assisting in the removal of unauthorised encampments and highlighted that large numbers of Council officers had been dealing with travellers on a daily basis with limited Police support. The Cabinet Member stated that the Council and Police had been working closely to ensure Council officers received the right support despite limited Police resources. The Director of Public Health informed the Committee that

unauthorised encampments had taken a significant proportion of Community Protection and Police resources. She informed the Committee that Police forces had different priorities every day, depending on the nature of incident. However, problems caused by unauthorised encampments had been a national one and had not been unique to Walsall.

The Chair highlighted that Walsall's three MPs had taken into consideration the problems that unauthorised encampments had caused in the borough and stressed the importance of officer and member comments in regard to changes with legislation in dealing with unauthorised encampments. The Community Protection Team Leader reiterated the cooperation between the Council and the Police. He confirmed that the Police bid for resources on a daily basis causing priorities of resources to shift depending on seriousness of incidences.

Members sought clarification in regard to a 25 percent decrease the numbers of unauthorised encampments in 2016 within the borough. The Director of Public Health confirmed that the decrease was in relation to cases of unauthorised encampments in 2016.

The Executive Director (Economy and Environment) informed the Committee that a future consultation from the UK Government on unauthorised encampments would allow the Council to look at the issue from a regional perspective and comment on future changes in legislation. The Chair requested that the unauthorised encampments consultation be presented at a future meeting once released.

A Member queried whether camera equipment had been considered to protect officers when working with unauthorised encampments. The Community Protection Team Leader confirmed that body cameras had been considered and would be introduced in the near future.

The Chair enquired whether sites with injunctions had a significant impact in deterring individuals. The Community Protection Team Leader confirmed that injunctions had been successful with only a small number of incidents on existing sites with injunctions. The Director of Public Health confirmed that that the injunction had been innovative and was one of the first in the country and the West Midlands.

A discussion was held in regard to effective injunctions and future transit sites. The Executive Director (Economy and Environment) confirmed that the Council did not have a list of transit sites in the borough. However, potential proposed transit sites were being considered in future.

Following the debate it was **moved** by Councillor Andrew and duly **seconded** by Councillor Craddock that:-

The Committee's gratitude be expressed to officers in regards to work carried out on unauthorised encampments;

The Cabinet be requested to approve a permanent injunction for Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park, Walsall to prevent further unauthorised encampments.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

Resolved:-

- 1. That the Committee's gratitude be expressed to officers in regards to work carried out on unauthorised encampments;**
- 2. the Cabinet be requested to approve a permanent injunction for Barr Beacon and Doe Bank Park, Walsall to prevent further unauthorised encampments;**
- 3. The Committee receive a further report to a future meeting in regard to the UK Government's consultation on unauthorised encampments;**
- 4. That, the report be noted.**

215/17 Community Cohesion Strategy – Update

The Committee considered an update report on the Community Cohesion Strategy.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education on behalf of the portfolio holder informed the Committee that the report followed an update on the recommendations of the Community Cohesion Working Group and the implementations of findings from community conversations. The Community Cohesion & Engagement Lead Officer thanked Members of the Community Cohesion Working Group for the work carried out in developing a strategy and engagement with stakeholders.

He highlighted that Brexit and the outcome of the Casey Review had influenced the methodology of the draft strategy. A Member highlighted that the working group worked efficiently and uncovered wide ranging community issues. He informed the Committee that following a meeting of Walsall's SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) only 48 percent of schools had provided religious education lessons. He stated that religious education was important to ensure a rounded view of different religions and assist with and myth busting of difference cultures. He suggested that a cross party motion could be presented at a future full Council meeting to discuss schools and academies legal responsibilities when delivering religious education.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education highlighted that there were distinct differences in Walsall demographic makeup and difficulties around integration of different groups.

A discussion was held around integration with different groups within the community. At this point, the Chair enquired how the strategy addressed left

wing extremism, anti – semitism, issues around cultural heritage and LGBT+ integration in communities. Following this a question and answer session took place. The session is summarised as follows:

- Anti-Semitism had been included within the hate crime strategy;
- Prejudice held by newly arrived communities had resulted in increased incident reporting through informal channels;
- LGBT+ persons were less likely to report hate crime and prejudice concerns to Police. Furthermore, hate crime reporting was low especially in faith, LGBT + and disabled communities;
- Cultural racism within different faith communities had been included within the action plan.
- Stronger links were needed between European communities to provide better education on cultural norms between cultural groups.

Resolved:-

That, the Draft Community and Integration Strategy be noted.

216/17 Twin Stream Recycling Collections

The Committee considered a report on twin streaming recycling collections.

The Cabinet Member for Clean and Green informed the Committee that following a review of the service and updated cost modelling, the potential for savings from twin stream recycling was limited due to market volatility and the likelihood of additional procurement costs. As a result, proposals to implement twin streaming were impracticable.

Members were informed that alternative savings to make up for those anticipated to be achieved through twin streaming had been identified.

Resolved:-

That, the report be noted.

217/17 Chargeable Garden Waste Collections

The Committee considered a report on changes to garden waste collection following a consultation on the Cabinet's approval for the introduction of charging for garden waste in October 2016.

Members were informed that a report on chargeable garden waste collection proposals would be considered by the Cabinet on 25 October 2017. The Cabinet Member for Clean and Green confirmed that the outcome of the consultation would be considered alongside potential future service proposals. A Member highlighted that 42 percent of respondents wished for a continuation of the current service with no change. The Cabinet Member

for Clean and Green responded that the continuation of a free service would not deliver any of the proposed £300,000 in savings.

A discussion was held around recycling centre provisions and reducing fly tipping costs. A Members highlighted issues around recycling centre hours and disposal costs for white goods. The Cabinet Member for Clean and Green informed the Committee that proposals on extended hours in the summer and reduced hours in the winter had been considered including a review into bank holiday opening times.

At this point, the Cabinet Member for Clean and Green informed the Committee that three weekly collections had been included within the recommendations to Cabinet including various collection period options. He stated that the options for an additional service could require further consultation. The Head of Clean and Green clarified that a high proportion of responses had indicated a preference for fortnightly collections.

A Member queried whether general waste bins and brown bins services could be merged into one general waste bin. The Head of Clean and Green confirmed that the cost implications would be significantly more expensive than the current proposals.

Following the debate it was **moved** by Councillor Andrew and duly **seconded** by Councillor Bird that:-

The Committee await the Cabinet's decision in regard to garden waste charging proposals and reserve the right to 'call in' and

- *receive a future report on waste services encompassing the following:-*
 - a. *fees and charges of landfill, recycling and garden waste disposal;*
 - b. *charges for bulky waste collections;*
 - c. *review of recycling centre hours;*
 - d. *disposal options for fridges and fridge freezers.*

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried.

A Member highlighted that uncollected bins which had increased in weight due to decomposition caused difficulty with trucks emptying bins. The Cabinet Member for Clean and Green confirmed that overly heavy bins caused issues for the mechanics of trucks and bin hangers would identify specific problems with individual collections.

Resolved:-

1. **The Committee await the Cabinet's decision in regard to garden waste charging proposals and reserve the right to 'call in' the decision;**
2. **Receive a future report on waste services encompassing the following:-**

- a. fees and charges of landfill, recycling and garden waste disposal;
- b. charges for bulky waste collections;
- c. review of recycling centre hours;
- d. disposal options for fridges and fridge freezers.

3. That the report be noted.

218/17 Areas of focus – 2017-18

The Committee considered its areas of focus and the forward plans of Walsall Council and the Black Country Joint Executive Committee.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The areas of focus 2017/18 be noted;
- 2. The forward plans be noted;

219/17 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 23 November 2017.

Termination of Meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.25 p.m.

Signed:

Date: