

AT A MEETING  
- of the -  
**GREEN SPACES WORKING  
GROUP** held at the Council  
House, Walsall on  
**25 July 2006** at 6.00pm

PRESENT

Councillor Towe  
Councillor Beeley  
Councillor Bott

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Sam Mills (Leisure & Culture)

SCRUTINY SUPPORT

Stuart Bentley (Scrutiny Officer)

1/06. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for this meeting.

2/06. KEY DISCUSSION ITEM

Councillor Towe welcomed everyone to the meeting and invited Sam Mills to guide members through the document and the purpose of the meeting.

Sam Mills tabled a letter to be circulated to all elected members, which gave an overview of the consultation document and asked members to complete a small questionnaire that would include their top five priority recommendations. He then explained that this meeting was part of a series to ascertain the priorities of a number of stakeholder groups.

Councillor Bott expressed his concerns over the current condition of the parks and green spaces in the borough with a particular emphasis on the cleanliness of certain parks. He stated that there should be a minimum standard for parks and if some parks could get it right, why couldn't others.

Councillor Towe agreed that there needed to be action to raise the standard of all parks to a minimum acceptable level, but as this meeting was focused on seeking to set priorities for the future of the green spaces in the borough, it was not necessarily the appropriate forum to discuss the issue. However, he agreed to raise the issue of minimum standards for parks at the next meeting of the full neighbourhood scrutiny and performance panel.

Sam Mills then asked members to rank the recommendations at the back of the draft consultation document into high, medium and low priorities before asking each member for his top five.

Following the exercise members asked that a report detailing the outcomes of the consultation process be brought before scrutiny before cabinet approval was sought.

### Resolved

That the issue of minimum standards for parks should be addressed at the next full meeting of the neighbourhood scrutiny and performance panel.

That a report on the outcomes of the consultation be brought to scrutiny prior to any report being submitted to cabinet for approval.

That the members of the Green Spaces Working Group indicate the following recommendations as highest priority;

- B6 The council will ensure that green spaces are safe and attractive places for children and young people to play and socialise.
- E8 The council will produce clear maintenance schedules with demonstrable outputs and communicate these to staff, friends groups and the wider community
- D5 The council will produce clear service standards so that friends groups and local people know what to expect from grounds maintenance works and also levels of support in developing new projects.
- B7 The council will review the role of frontline staff and their location.
- A4 The council will consider how new investment in parks and green spaces can be sustained in the long term to a high standard.
- C5 The council will develop models of good practice and make everyone aware of them.
- B13 The council will continue to provide dog bins and signage on green spaces and promote the message of responsible dog ownership and use its powers to enforce the current legislation.
- E3 The council will review the structure of the Greenspaces Service especially in relation to creating opportunities for development, policy and strategic planning.
- E7 The council will consider management and maintenance planning at the earliest stage of developing new capital projects and it should do this with other partners, service providers and stakeholders.

- B2 The council will continue to provide a range of opportunities for local people to take part in practical conservation activities that encourage participation and physical activity.
- B7 The council will review the role of frontline staff and their location.
- B4 The council and its partners will continue to promote the health benefits of allotments.
- A13 The council will put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that up to date and accurate GIS data is shared across directorates.
- A2 The council will review its expenditure on green space maintenance linked to the management planning process

TERMINATION OF MEETING

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 8:15 pm.