

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 7th October, 2015

Present:- Councillor David Allport – in the Chair
Councillors Braithwaite, Dymond, Hailstones, Reddish, Tagg, Welsh, Winfield and Wing

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Robinson and Tagg.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 29th June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

4. REVISED LOCAL BUS NETWORK IN NEWCASTLE

The Managing Director for First Midlands provided clarification into the closure of the Bus Depot at Liverpool Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme which occurred at the beginning of July 2015.

Twenty nine staff received voluntary redundancy, with the majority transferring to Baddeley Green depot. A few resigned from their driving positions.

The early signs from a financial point of view were successful. The two critical areas hit were reliability and punctuality, due to the number of road works within Hanley.

A decision was made to operate from a location to be decided, which would not affect services in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Routes 22, 72 and 97 had been dedicated.

Concern was raised of no bus route to Madeley and Audley schools.

Members were advised the 1985 Transport Act came into effect relating to road passenger transport; to make provision for the transfer of the operations of the national bus company to the private sector; to provide for the reorganisation of passenger transport in the public sector; to provide for local and central government financial support for certain passenger transport service and travel concessions. There was provision within the Act to go out to tender.

There was always the difficulty to provide a commercially viable school bus service as it would rarely cover expenses.

It was asked if there was an analysis of how often routes were being utilised.

Members were advised the ticket machine automatically defaults to the furthest part of the route. From a financial perspective there was no significance. It did recognise what route the passenger would be taking.

It was asked if a service was cut could it be reviewed and if the new route at Wedgwood Road, Talke Pits had been facilitated, as people liked continuity.

Mr Eggleton advised services that had been cut could be reviewed in the future and he would look into the bus route at Wedgwood Road.

The Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets requested information on what did the County receive in subsidies from the routes and were they being reinvested in Newcastle?

The Portfolio Holder advised that there had been a news release on the 7th October 2015 “Just the Ticket for Travellers” advising that customers using local bus services can now buy tickets at a town centre location for the first time. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council had joined forces with First Potteries bus company to provide this service from the Guildhall in Newcastle.

The Chair thanked Mr Eggleton, on behalf of the Committee, for attending and providing clarification.

Resolved:-

- (a) That Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Transport is invited to the next meeting.
- (b) Mr Eggleton advised he would provide Committee with the information on Staffordshire subsidies.
- (c) That the news release be circulated to Members.

5. ABANDONED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE BOROUGH

The Development Management Team Leader introduced the report that set out the Council’s policies in dealing with abandoned buildings, how many abandoned buildings there were in the Borough and a step by step process of what the Council would do if a member of the public reported an abandoned building.

There was an Environmental Health Strategy which brought long term empty dwellings back into use. The intention was to prepare a general enforcement policy, possibly including reference to abandoned buildings.

It was asked how many empty houses were identified within the Borough?

The Development Management Team Leader would provide Committee with this information.

Resolved:-

That the Development Management Team Leader provide Committee with how many empty houses had been identified within the Borough.

6. FLY POSTING POLICY

Presentations were carried out by the Community Manager and the Team Leader (Licensing Enforcement) on the processes involved with the management of fly posting within the Borough.

Members asked for further clarification, as only certain posters were allowed to advertise material on buildings and street furniture within the Borough.

Resolved:-

That when the Fly Posting Policy is due for renewal for it to be submitted to Scrutiny prior to approval.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION TIME

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities was unable to attend but circulated overview prior to the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling presented Committee with an overview of the work carried out within the portfolio from February 2015.

The Council discovered it was not responsible to provide allotments within the Borough. Discussions took place with the Chair and Vice Chair of Silverdale for the handover of Park Road. The lease was successfully signed and the Park Road Allotments was now being managed by the Allotment Association, in conjunction with the Parish.

Work subsequently commenced to do exactly the same with The Acre allotments. Allotment holders, who had life stock, had eighteen months to find alternative premises, with the notice expiring March 2016. Approximately five months ago the Association started to run the site themselves.

There had been a total refurbishment of Nelson Place roundabout. P M Training fabricated the leaping fish.

The Green Space Strategy and Association Action Plan underwent a review and were passed by Cabinet. These were reviewed annually to see if they were still fit for purpose for the future.

Phases One and Two of The Wammy Neighbourhood Park were completed. Approval from Cabinet was being sought for approval of Phase Three. For Phase Four the idea would be to provide a pavilion for changing facilities.

Questionnaires were being sent out to residents on how the Council could redesign the streetscene service. The Borough Council's Streetscene Managers would be carrying out talks at various LAP meetings. The consultation would finish December, with the service being re-evaluated in the new year.

The new waste service would come into operation from July 2016, transferring from a bag to a box system. Discussions had been held with Acumen, who was the current contractor, to start to develop a timetable to commence the insourcing of the recycling operation. Proposed changes to the depot have had to have planning permission.

A Member asked if a message could be sent out to residents making them aware why the service had to change and the potential savings.

Resolved:-

- (a) That the public are made aware of the savings the new recycling service would bring.
- (b) That the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities be invited to the next meeting to be held on Monday 23rd November 2015.

8. WORK PLAN

Resolved:-

That the Review of the Fly Posting Policy be added to future items

9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR DAVID ALLPORT
Chair