

HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 6th March, 2023
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Ian Wilkes (Chair)

Councillors:	Adcock	Crisp	Northcott
	Barker MBE	Dymond	Reece
	Brown	S Jones	Richards

Apologies: Councillor(s) Wright

Substitutes: Councillor Sue Moffat (In place of Councillor Ruth Wright)

Officers:	Dave Adams	Executive Director Sustainable Environment
	Nesta Barker	Head of Regulatory Services
	Roger Tait	Head of Neighbourhood Delivery

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Wilkes declared a non-pecuniary interest relevant to Item 9 as Portfolio Holder for the County Council Integrative Care Systems, Safeguarding and Public Health.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28th November 2022 be approved as a correct record.

4. **UPDATE FROM CABINET**

There was no update from Cabinet.

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5. **URBAN TREE PLANTING STRATEGY**

The Head of Neighbourhood Delivery presented his report on the Urban Tree Planting Strategy highlighting progress made with the strategy including consultation responses and the 850 Lyme Forest proposal to plant trees at the former Keele Golf Course site to celebrate the anniversary of the Borough's Royal Charter.

Members were also invited to propose further planting sites in the urban wards of the borough for inclusion in future phases, subject to the parameters of the strategy and consultation responses.

Questions were asked and responses were provided as follows:

- Cllr Brown requested a clarification about the choice of the boundary of Keele Golf Course as a location for the 850 Lyme Forest rather than the golf course itself. The Head of Neighbourhood Delivery responded that a lot of mature trees being already on the golf course it was felt that a commemorative forest on the boundary would be a better environmental option compared to filling gaps in areas already populated.
- Cllr Adcock asked about the maintenance of trees and what the Council would be doing to make sure that trees have the best chances of growing and reaching maturity. The Head of Neighbourhood Delivery responded that this would be done through species selection (native lime having good chance of success), the choice of the size of the tree stocks (smaller whips establishing quicker), weed control, tree shelters in certain areas and tree thinning after a period. Cllr Adcock also wished to know if the community would be invited to help with both the planting and maintenance, which the Executive Director confirmed in the event the community is indeed interested.
- Cllr Dymond asked if the Council would be responsible for the long term maintenance of the trees and how this would be done. The Head of Neighbourhood Delivery responded that indeed the Council would be responsible to maintain the trees and this was about planting the right trees at the right place with a proper tree management system in place. Cllr Sweeney commented that in woodlands trees tend to look after themselves after a while once established.
- Cllr Richards expressed concerns about tree roots damaging the pavement and becoming a trip hazard. The Head of Neighbourhood Delivery confirmed the trees would be planted on the field.
- Cllr Barker asked about who undertook the consultation. The Head of Neighbourhood Delivery responded that the consultation was done online and publicised through the Council's website.

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- Resolved:**
- (i) That progress made on the Urban Tree Planting Strategy be noted, including consultation responses on Phase 4.
 - (ii) That progress on the proposed 850 Lyme Forest, consisting of 850 lime trees and other associated tree planting at the former Keele Golf Course site, to celebrate the forthcoming 850th anniversary of the Borough's Royal Charter be noted, including consultation responses.
 - (iii) That Members be invited to propose further planting sites in the urban wards of the Borough for inclusion in future phases, subject to the parameters of the strategy and consultation responses.

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6. WALLEYS QUARRY UPDATE

The Head of Regulatory Services introduced the report on Walleys Quarry's odour issues previously presented at Cabinet meeting providing background information about both the abatement notice served by the operator and the settlement agreement.

Progress have been made and operational plans were published by the company. The Walleys Quarry Liaison Committee also met as required and a recording is now available. The Council was finally consulted on their landfill gas management plan and site visits have been scheduled.

The Head of Regulatory Services went through complaints received and levels of hydrogen sulphide recorded by monitoring stations. Portable units that were installed inside and outside people's homes are now being used for officers' visits.

The gas extraction rate and hydrogen sulphide concentrations reported by the Environment Agency are constant.

Cllr Adcock expressed his satisfaction over the report and yet frustration that the Environment Agency investigations' outcomes had still not been communicated. Cllr Moffat was also pleased by the progress made although wished to highlight that lessons needed to be learnt from the past so that things continue to go in the right direction.

A question was asked about data collected from portable devices and why these were removed from people's homes. The Head of Regulatory Services responded that different thresholds being used by the devices compared to monitoring stations, the data collected was not showing significant levels nor any additional information that would justify the cost of their installation and keeping them running.

Resolved: That the content of the report be noted.

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7. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER REPORT

The Chief Fire Officer having sent his apologies the item was deferred to the next meeting.

8. CLOUGH HALL PARK COMMUNITY GARDEN

Cllr Dymond introduced a presentation from local resident Simon Beckett about converting the disused bowling green at Clough Hall Park Kidsgrove into community allotments. The Council's permission is requested.

Mr Beckett highlighted the fact that the park had deteriorated over the past ten years and was severely underutilised. The project has a committee composed of Cllr Dymond, Mr Beckett and a horticultural consultant. Benefits would include being community oriented, supporting mental and physical health, eradicating eyesore in the park and improving security. A disabled access would be provided and giving priority to veterans is being considered.

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 06/03/23

The budget required would include £14,000 for fencing, £10,000 for a community shed, £500 for soil and an additional £2,500 for various features required such as tools, locks and taps i.e. a total of £27,000. Management costs would also need to be taken into account including water costs and whether or not rent would be collected.

Mr Beckett has been investigating sources of funding and does not seek the Council's financial contribution at the moment. More information about the project can be obtained by emailing cloughhallparkallotments@gmail.com.

Members expressed their enthusiasm about the project and wishes of success although funding would need to be secured. How to select people and manage the allotments will also need to be considered. Social prescribing was suggested as a source of funding as well as County Councillors' funds.

A 12 months' timescale was given in response to a question from the Vice Chair. This would include looking for funding which is estimated to take a minimum of 6 months.

The Executive Director for Sustainable Environment commented that the concept was well thought and suggested that Council's officers get in touch with Mr Beckett as a next step to see how to push this forward.

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9. STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Cllr Northcott reported on the latest meeting of Staffordshire County Council Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee, highlighting the importance of receiving the document and for councils to take responsibility for their communities' health, one way being by taking into account the impact on health when formulating their policies as they do for climate change.

With the local plan for example this would be about limiting the development of fast food outlets next to schools.

Resolved: That the report be received.

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10. WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Dymond asked that officers look into whether the Council had signed the Charter for Safer Places for Women and Girls.

Cllr Richards wished to get a better understanding of programmes developed within the leisure centre to reduce risks of obesity in children and for this to be added as an agenda item after the summer. The Operational Services Executive Director confirmed that a report could be provided by officers within the municipal year.

Cllr Northcott advised that health inequalities and how to include healthier communities in District Councils' work plans was something the County Council could advise on and that links in policies could be added.

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 06/03/23

Cllr Adcock asked if the Chief Fire Officer could attend next meeting and if an update on tree planting could be provided at the end of the year.

Cllr Moffat wished to draw attention to the Love Parks programme and asked if projects around Homelessness, mental health and wellbeing could be discussed in September. The Head of Regulatory Services confirmed that these could be included in Homelessness item in September. The Head of Neighbourhood delivery suggested that park related community led projects get in touch to see how the Council can support them.

Resolved: That the work programme be received and items for upcoming meetings be discussed.

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11. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

12. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on the 14th June.

**Councillor Ian Wilkes
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.30 pm