

HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 28th November, 2022
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Ian Wilkes (Chair)

Councillors:	Adcock	Crisp	Reece
	Barker MBE	Dymond	Richards
	Brown	Northcott	Wright

Apologies: Councillor(s) S Jones

Substitutes: Councillor Mark Holland (In place of Councillor Simon Jones)

Officers:	Andrew Arnott	Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager
	Andrew Bird	Head of Sustainable Environment
	Denise French	Democratic Services Team Leader

Also in attendance:	Councillor Gill Heesom	Portfolio Holder - Community Safety and Wellbeing
	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

26. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Reece referred to references in some reports to Mental Health services and declared that he worked in Mental Health services.

27. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

28. **UPDATE FROM CABINET**

There was nothing to update from Cabinet.

29. **USE OF GRAZING ANIMALS**

The Committee considered a presentation on the use of grazing animals at St James Church in Audley. The initiative had arisen following an approach by the Vicar of St James and Councillor Wilkes to a local farmer seeking help to address an overgrown area of the churchyard. The churchyard was difficult for the Borough Council to manage due to the slope of the ground.

The farmer had offered 5 tame sheep to graze on the area over a 10 week period which meant the overgrown area was made much tidier as well as being an environmentally friendly solution. The sheep had attracted lots of positive attention and feedback among the village.

As the sheep grazed, various plastic items had been uncovered which were then removed by volunteers so that no non-biodegradable objects were present at the graveyard.

A further benefit was the discovery of 3 War Graves; the War Graves Commission had mapped graves but did not know the location of three at Audley which had been uncovered by the sheep grazing.

A wildflower garden had also been introduced in the graveyard.

The Head of Sustainable Environment explained how the area had been difficult to manage by council staff due to the uneven ground; the farmer's commitment had meant an improvement to the area and a sustainable solution. The council would consider whether this initiative could be replicated elsewhere.

Members commended the initiative and thanked Mr Farmer for attending.

Resolved: that the report be received and noted.

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30. TRI-SERVICES

There was no one present to update on the Tri-Services item.

31. TENNIS PROVISION IN THE BOROUGH

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Town Centres and Growth introduced the item which involved £100k investment in tennis provision in the Borough with general admission to courts remaining free of charge.

The Leisure and Bereavement Services Manager updated further. The Council owned 18 tennis courts across 5 sites. The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) had identified the Borough as a priority area to increase participation in tennis. The Council had been working closely with the LTA regarding investment in tennis courts and the LTA was to fund resurfacing and repainting works at the Westlands courts and repainting at Wolstanton. The cost was around £100k and would be fully funded by the LTA including any increased costs arising from cost of living pressures and inflation. The LTA would also fund a digital booking system. The Council was also working with the LTA to source a coaching company who would pay a fee to the Council and offer a comprehensive and inclusive tennis programme at Westlands and Wolstanton tennis courts initially and including both youth and adult coaching, tennis leagues and competitions. The coaching programme would commence in spring 2023.

Members raised the following queries and issues:

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- Would other tennis courts be considered for resurfacing and repainting? The committee was advised that the Council's Play Pitch Strategy was the guiding document but the proposals presented at the meeting were very much the start of the journey. The Strategy was reviewed every 12 months and all courts would be reviewed as part of that process.
- The courts at Bradwell were often locked and was there a reason for this? This would be investigated and feedback given outside the meeting.
- What demand was there for tennis courts from schools, young people, children? This would be identified through the coaching provision who would work to identify interest among schools and within the community.

Resolved: that the update be noted.

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32. WALLEYS QUARRY

The committee considered the latest update report on the odour issues at Walleys Quarry.

The report outlined the full details of the settlement that had been reached between the Council and the operators, Walleys Quarry Limited (WQL), which meant that WQL had withdrawn their appeal. This meant the Abatement Notice was now in place and legally enforceable. WQL had agreed to pay the council £400k towards the council's costs in responding to the appeal plus £60k towards future monitoring activities.

The committee was informed that council officers, including the Chief Executive, were working closely with the site operators, Walleys Quarry Limited.

Members raised the following queries:

- Details were sought about the Liaison Committee including membership and whether recordings of meetings were available. Answers would be provided outside the meeting.
- Were the 4 Air Quality monitoring stations in the most suitable locations? Members were advised the locations were carefully chosen and it was important to have consistent locations to manage fluctuations in levels arising from weather variations.
- Were the Jerome monitors a council scheme and would this monitoring continue? This monitoring was carried out by the council and would continue.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

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33. STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH AND CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The committee considered the regular digests from Staffordshire County Council outlining the work of the Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 and 17 October 2022.

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Members noted the discussion on workforce and were informed that there was a robust level of social work resource with low sickness levels and teams that were settled. A query was raised around where vacancies were occurring and the Chair agreed to raise this at a future meeting of the County Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

A Member raised a query around patients monitoring for respiratory issues in their homes and what training would be available to help with this and how would this be monitored. This would be taken away for clarification outside the meeting.

Resolved: that the updates be noted.

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34. MEETING WITH THE INTEGRATED CARE BOARD

The committee considered the notes of a meeting held between the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee and Tracey Shewan, Director of Communications and Corporate Services, Integrated Care Board. The notes included the latest position regarding Covid, staffing numbers and access to health services.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

35. STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL

The committee considered the reports from the recent meeting of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel held on 24 October.

Resolved: that the report be noted.

36. WORK PROGRAMME

The committee discussed the work programme. Members suggested topics including provision of allotments, Air Quality Full Business Case, modular housing and health in all policies for the Borough Local Plan. It was requested that should a new Ministerial Direction be issued relating to air quality that an item be submitted to this committee.

Resolved: that the Work Programme include the items suggested – provision of allotments, modular housing and health in all policies for the Local Plan.

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37. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no members of the public present.

38. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 6 MARCH 2023

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**Councillor Ian Wilkes
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 7.57 pm