

5. WALLEYS QUARRY ODOUR ISSUES

The Service Director for Planning presented an update on Walleys Quarry including the setting up of a Committee of Inquiry. A member working group was now in place and preparing for a public inquiry day scheduled for 23rd July.

The Chair invited members who wished to raise comments and ask questions to do so, and for responses to be provided by officers.

Cllr Whieldon commented that a lot of work and progress was being done by the Committee of Inquiry which she was a member of.

Cllr Jones asked what the best practical means were to address the odours in conjunction with the Environment Agency and what kind of impact legal settlements on the previous abatement notice would have on these.

– The best practical means were the defence against claims of illegal action through prosecution of the operator taking advice from lawyers; and liaising with the Environment Agency, which also implied taking advice from lawyers when there was a suspicion that they had not done their job properly. Further insights on this issue would be provided by the Service Director for Regulatory Services.

Given that an election had now been called and a response from the Secretary of State was still awaited, Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked if the request to pursue legal action would need to be resubmitted if a new Secretary of State was to be appointed.

– In the event of no responses being received from the government the issue would indeed be followed up with the next Secretary of State.

The Chair asked if more light could be shed on paragraph 2.15 of the report in relation to the latest correspondence from Walleys Quarry Ltd. Did the operator mean to convey the message that they had been acting to the best of their ability?

– More information would be sought from the Service Director for Regulatory Services.

Resolved: That the update report be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

6. J2 SERVICES TO REDUCE CHILD EXCESS WEIGHT

The Service Director for Commercial Delivery presented the report on services available at the Jubilee 2 leisure centre (J2) to reduce child excess weight.

Members raised questions and responses were provided as follows.

Cllr Wright wondered about how the outcomes would be measured.

– There was a list of measurable outcomes provided by the County Council and the Active Life Referral Programme included an hour consultation to go through the person's health and medical background. Reports were then issued over the year and going back to the County Council.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked about the Active Life Programme referral process.

– People could self-refer through the website and about 25 groups were signed up to guide them and/or directly proceed with the referral including the Primary Care Network, the hospital, GP surgeries, school nurses, and mental health prescribers.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt enquired about criteria and costs to join the programme.

– Children could join for free and some parts were chargeable for adults depending on whether they were a member or not and based on national prescription charges. A wide range of health conditions qualified encouraging a maximum of people to join in regardless of weight concerns.

Cllr Whieldon commented that from her experience as a teacher one swimming lesson a week was not enough to make a child fitter as excess weight had more to do with a poor diet; this was a delicate topic to address with parents which could be perceived as too intrusive.

– Once signed up children could come as many times as deemed appropriate and not just once a week and the classes were designed for people to also share their experiences and thus benefit from peer support.

Cllr Northcott wished to follow up on the former comment and asked if there were any mentions of educational programmes targeting parents in discussions with the County Council.

– A District led taskforce gathering participants from different agencies was working on an action plan to best advise parents on food choices for their children along with reviewing meal options in schools.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt enquired about provisions for children with disabilities.

– A chair had been purchased to enable access to the swimming pool and one to one sessions were available to help children struggling with specific activities.

Cllr Jones asked about children with complex mental health needs.

– Charities were involved focusing on walking in water to make people feel comfortable in the environment as a first step and then moving on slowly to swimming sessions at quiet periods.

Cllr Whieldon wished to pass on personal thanks to people in charge of warming up the smaller pool which had made a difference for her when she was recovering from a broken back and hip operation.

The Chair asked about swimming lessons at J2, if these were at full capacity and if there was scope to increase the provisions for schools.

– These were not at full capacity yet as some schools had replaced these with having a pool in the school yard in the summer months, one of the obstacles being the cost of transports coaches.

Resolved: That the information provided on the County Better Health Staffordshire programme be reviewed and any recommendations be made to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage.

[Watch the debate here](#)

7. CHIEF FIRE OFFICER UPDATE

The Chief Fire Officer provided background information on the three-person crew trial as discussed with the Committee in September 2023.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer then gave an overview of the outcomes of the trial and current situation.

Members asked questions and responses were provided as follows.

Cllr Whieldon enquired about training and job shadowing to gain experience.

– Training opportunities were open to everyone regardless of gender and it was possible to join three-person crews to assist, making it a four or five-person crew in practice. While standard training was provided to full time staff, different approaches were taken with on-call teams to adapt to local stations' requirements.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt wished for further insights in relation to the statement that attendance got worse since the beginning of the trial and full times crews weren't guaranteed to be available.

– This situation occurred at the beginning of the trial as on call-staff had to be dismissed following inappropriate behaviour. Filling the vacancies was taking time. The team was working hard to increase availability, showing passion and commitment for the job.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt enquired about alternatives to the three-person crewing system.

– The on-call team could decide to respond as a three-person crew or not, the system allowing to get to the site without delay.

Cllr Northcott asked if the process was meant to apply to all situations or if this was customised depending on specific cases as well as about cross border arrangements with other authorities.

– The new system allowed for more flexibility as opposed to how things were before and teams were recruited in coordination with multiple stations.

Cllr Reece enquired about firefighters' health checks.

– Fitness was indeed a priority and regular fitness assessments had to be passed on an annual basis. Any issues could be raised with no need to go through a hierarchy.

Cllr Heesom wondered about the possibility for members of the Committee to visit a fire station.

– This could be arranged.

Cllr Jones asked about breathing apparatus.

– It was recognised that two of these would need to be deployed to the fire location straight away along with other battery powered rescue gear.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt enquired about a recent incident where a member of the public allegedly had to assist the firefighters by putting up a ladder onto a property.

– It was stated that the feedback was inaccurate but a full investigation was underway.

Cllr Fox-Hewitt asked about the operating of devices by three-person crews.

– Battery powered apparatus was preferred as there was no reliance upon hydraulic hose; three-person crews may not fully resolve incidents but they would get things started through quicker interventions such as getting people out of a car and saving lives.

Cllr Whieldon congratulated the team on progress made and thanked them personally for when she herself got caught into a collision.

The Commissioner brought members' attention to a recent data breach and information distributed in Newcastle and other places in Staffordshire. The quality of information shared through the Council channels of communication was to be thoroughly checked in order not to induce loss of confidence in the service. Disciplinary action should be taken against individuals not complying with the guidelines.

Resolved: That the update be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

8. WORK PROGRAMME

In light of recent correspondence on the matter, Cllr Reece asked about the position with regard to the A53 Bus Gate.

– This item would be further discussed as soon as a concrete proposal was confirmed.

Resolved: That the work programme be noted.

[Watch the debate here](#)

9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on 16th September 2024.

**Councillor Rupert Adcock
Chair**

Health, Wellbeing & Environment Scrutiny Committee - 03/06/24

Meeting concluded at 8.20 pm