

HEALTH, WELLBEING & ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 27th November, 2023

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

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Present: Councillor Ian Wilkes (Chair)

Councillors:	Adcock	Dymond	Reece
	Brown	S Jones	Richards
	Crisp	Northcott	Wright

Apologies: Councillor(s) Barker MBE

Substitutes: Councillor John Tagg

Officers:	Nesta Barker	Service Director - Regulatory Services
	Andrew Bird	Service Director - Sustainable Environment
	Anthony Harold	Service Director - Legal & Governance / Monitoring Officer
	Michelle Hopper	Mobile Multi-Functional Manager
	Craig Jordan	Service Director - Planning

Also in attendance:	Councillor David Hutchison	Portfolio Holder - Sustainable Environment
	Councillor Stephen Sweeney	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder - Finance, Town Centres and Growth

1. **APOLOGIES**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Northcott declared a non-pecuniary interest relevant to item 5 as Staffordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Public Health and Integrated Care Safeguarding.

3. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th September 2023 be agreed as true and accurate record subject to Cllr Richards attendance being recorded.

4. **UPDATE FROM CABINET ON ITEMS RAISED BY THE COMMITTEE**

There were no updates required from Cabinet members.

5. STAFFORDSHIRE HEALTH & CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

Resolved: That the update received from Staffordshire County Council Health & Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted.

6. WALLEYS QUARRY ODOUR ISSUES

The Service Director for Regulatory Services went through the latest report on Walleys Quarry odour issues as presented to Cabinet in November.

Members asked questions and responses were provided as follows:

- Cllr Adcock enquired about the reliability of the devices used by the Council to measure air quality. – These had been used over a period of 12 months and were good to provide back-up data to compare with what people had been observing and official figures.
- Cllr Brown asked about long term effects to residents' health. – The UK Health Security Agency recently updated their health advice which could be found on the Council's website.

Resolved: That the contents of the update report be noted.

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7. NEWCASTLE TOWN CENTRE - COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Deputy Leader introduced the report on the Community Safety Partnership which he found encouraging and a good example of all the agencies in Newcastle coming together to improve the town centre.

The Mobile Multi-Functional Manager went through the report.

Cllr Reece asked about street medics and if there was any data available yet on whether or not this had had an impact. – Indeed there was, shared with the County Council and the NHS towards getting additional funding so that the service could be prolonged post December.

Cllr Adcock welcomed the results and wished to pass on his thanks onto the volunteers involved. Cllr Northcott was also positive, adding that he was looking forward to seeing the CCTV implementation in place.

The Deputy Leader commented on how pleasant and friendly the town centre now felt when going out at night.

Resolved: That the report be received.

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8. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY & ROAD MAP TO NET ZERO

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment presented the report on the Review of Environment Strategy & Road Map to Net Zero which was brought to Cabinet in October.

Members asked questions and responses were provided as follows:

- Cllr asked about community centres and why they hadn't been included. – They were separate from the Council which net zero goal was for its own operation to carry out its statutory services. The community centres had been surveyed in a similar fashion and the Council could certainly support those structures going forward.
- Cllr Brown expressed concerns over the Minimising Waste objective and wondered if this may imply removing bins at street level when people were using them for domestic waste. – There was no such policy at the Council and antisocial behaviour were addressed liaising with the Mobile Multi-Functional team.
- Cllr Adcock wondered about the carbon offsetting and whether this was based on how many trees were planted or how many trees were expected to reach maturity. – This was calculated based on trees maturity and a management plan to achieve this objective would be built into the Sustainable Environment Strategy moving forward.

The Service Director for Sustainable Environment added that the plan was to bring back to Cabinet the new Sustainable Environment Strategy around April 2024 and members were invited to share suggestions of what they wished to be looked at.

Members commented as follows:

- Cllr Northcott asked about the risks of adopting certain technologies and notably whether the Council would want to go all electric or wait to see what the market would bring with hydrogen first. – The approach was to stick with HVO fuels for the time being and upgrade later when new technologies would be available to bring the emission to net zero with heavy good hydrogen vehicles being considered.
- The Chair asked whether the urban tree planting strategy would consider vegetation other than trees such as algae and bamboo. – These could be looked at indeed. Net Zero could not be achieved by just decarbonising and offsetting would need to be a priority when it came to open spaces.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

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9. **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members reiterated requests for the following items to be added to the work programme:

- Childhood Obesity and Leisure Centre Activities;
- NHS Dentistry Provision;
- Tennis – Resurfacing of ad hoc piecemeal courts.

The Biodiversity and Tree Management plan would be coming to the February meeting and an update would be requested from the Service Director for Regulatory

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Services regarding the A53 / Bus Gate. It was also confirmed that Walley's Quarry would be a standing item for future meetings.

The Chair indicated that additional items requested if taken forward may not all be covered off this municipal year and may need to go to future meetings.

Resolved: That the work programme be received.

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10. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no questions from members of the public.

11. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

12. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Resolved: That the next meeting be held on 26th February 2024.

**Councillor Ian Wilkes
Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.08 pm