

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee
24 September 2013
Update on the Scrutiny Working Groups

Allotments Review Task and Finish Group

The last meeting of the Allotments Review Task and Finish Group took place on 11 September 2013 with consideration of demand and provision. The task and finish group undertook visits to a selection of allotment sites in the Borough in July, where they met allotment holders. Representatives from allotments associations, Audley Parish Council and Silverdale Parish Council are to be invited to meet the task and finish group at its next meeting on 24 September. The task and finish group is timetabled to conclude in December 2013.

Community Centre Review Task and Finish Group

The Chair of the Community Centre Review Task and Finish Group will be providing a verbal update at the meeting.

Constitution Working Group

The Constitution Working Group has recently changed its membership, with Cllr Jones replacing Cllr Snell. The date for the next meeting of the working party is currently being set and a review of the Health Scrutiny Committee's remit is at the top of their agenda for the meeting, which will also include substitute members and Chairs and vice-Chairs roles.

HS2 Working Group

The HS2 working group held a stakeholder event on 13 August where they considered the views of local action groups, local MPs, Staffordshire County Council and Parish Council's affected by the HS2 group. The group have met subsequently to meet with an officers from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and to form their views for submission to Cabinet. Cllr Stringer as Chair of the working group provided the Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a progress update at its meeting on 10 September. The working group's preliminary conclusions were that there was no economic benefit for Newcastle or North Staffordshire evident in the current proposals, and that the Council should join with Staffordshire County and Lichfield Councils in opposition to HS2. The working group also feel that if HS2 were to proceed there should be adequate compensation for those people affected. It was also to support agricultural land owners, the environmental impact mitigated where possible and contact must be maintained with National Rail. The money for HS2 could be spent on other rail

projects to greater effect. A draft report is being written by the working group Chair for consideration at the group's next meeting on 30 September, with the intention that the report will reach the 13 November Cabinet meeting.

Magistrates Court Move Working Group

The last meeting of the Magistrates Court Move Working Group took place on 24 July 2013 with discussion of statistics for anti-social behaviour and shop lifting. A representative from the Court was unable to attend the meeting, which was disappointing for those who attended. A number of actions were agreed at the meeting, one of which was that there would be a further meeting of the working group in three months to receive an update from the Police on their operations and crime statistics. The attendance of a representative from the Court at the next meeting was vital. The group did not feel they were ready to complete at the 24 July meeting, as they felt there were still areas of concern regarding the court move. Since the last meeting it has been agreed with the Chair of the working group that there will be more frequent meetings, with the Scrutiny Officer seeking to arrange the date of the next meeting.

Town Centre Car Parking Task and Finish Group

The Economic Development and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee (EDEOSC) were tasked by Cabinet to undertake a review of town centre car parking and a task and finish group was established by EDEOSC. The task and finish group members consisted of Cllrs Baker, Studd and Peers, the Town Centre Manager and the Roebuck Centre Manager. The recommendations of the EDEOSC were as follows: 1. That cashless parking be introduced. 2. Whilst Members support the introduction of a Pay on Foot system, they acknowledged the significant capital cost required and therefore recommend the scheme be implemented should capital funding become available. 3. That free parking should be introduced after 2.00pm on Thursdays in the Midway Car Park. The working group's recommendations were considered by Cabinet at its 17 July meeting where it was resolved that double-ticketing, cashless parking and more free parking days (for the Town Centre Partnership to determine themselves) be implemented on a six month trial basis, with officers to report back to Cabinet with an evaluation as soon as practically possible after the trial ends. It is intended that the task and finish group will meet at the end of the trial period, prior to the report to Cabinet being considered, in Spring 2014.

Louise Stevenson
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