

**Minutes of the Community Wellbeing  
Scrutiny Committee held at the Civic  
Centre, Riverside, Stafford on Thursday  
12 September 2019**

Chair - Councillor J Hood

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

C A Baron

R J Barron

A G Cooper

A P Edgeller

A D Hobbs

L Nixon

M Phillips

Cabinet Member - Councillor J K Price - Environment Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor J M Pert - Community and Health Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor R M Smith - Resources Portfolio

Cabinet member - Councillor C V Trowbridge - Leisure Portfolio

Also Present:-

Councillors W J Kemp, A M Loughran and G P K Pardesi.

Officers in attendance:-

Mrs T Redpath - Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager

Mr R Simpson - Interim Head of Operations

Mrs E Fullagar - Chief Accountant

Mrs V Cooper - Community Safety Lead

Mrs L Harvey - Regulatory Services Group Manager

Mr A Bailey - Scrutiny Officer

**CWB11 Minutes**

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 31 July 2019, as published in Digest No 259 were submitted and signed.

**CWB12 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, A R G Brown, R M Sutherland and M J Winnington (Substitute M Phillips).

## CWB13 Councillor Session

Councillor G P K Pardesi had submitted the following item under Paragraph 2.7(c)(i) of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

"Can the Cabinet Member confirm how many public toilets have been permanently closed since 2003?"

Can the Cabinet Member also confirm how many public toilets there were in existence when the borough was formed in 1974 and how many now remain?"

In response, the Interim Head of Operations made the following statement:-

"Lavatory humour is rife in British culture, but the provision of public toilets is no laughing matter: public toilets matter to everybody, regardless of their age, class, ethnic origin, gender, mental ability or physical ability. They are even more important to certain sections of our society, including older people, disabled people, women, families with young children and tourists. The first public toilets were introduced in 1852 and some of the finest surviving architectural examples date from this Victorian heyday. However, while the Public Health Act 1936 gives local authorities a power to provide public toilets, it imposes no duty to do so, and this lack of compulsion, together with a perception of nuisance associated with them, has arguably resulted in a steady decline in the provision of public toilets nationally in recent years.

There are distinct areas in which toilets for the public are provided in Stafford Borough:

### **Stafford Borough Council - Public Conveniences**

The information relating to 2019 is correct as of 5 September 2019. The information relating to the Late 80's and 2003 is correct to the best of our knowledge. There are no records for 1974 and 2003, and the information is from local knowledge of officers employed since the late 80's.

Name	Location	Late 80's	2003	2019
Lammascote Road	Stafford	Yes	No	No
Prospect Road	Stafford	Yes	No	No
Sandon Road	Stafford	Yes	No	No
Stone Road	Stafford	Yes	Yes	No
Marston Road	Stafford	Yes	No	No
Rising Brook	Stafford	Yes	Yes	No
Tesco's	Stafford	Yes	Yes	No

North Walls	Stafford	Yes	Yes	No
Market Square	Stafford	Yes	No	No
Doxey HGV	Stafford	Yes	Yes	No
Broad Street	Stafford	Yes	Yes	Yes
Barlaston Common	Barlaston	Yes	Yes	No
Station Road	Stone	Yes	Yes	Yes
Crown Street	Stone	Yes	Yes	Yes
Stone Road	Eccleshall	Yes	Yes	Yes
Brocton Lane	Milford	Yes	Yes	Yes
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>

### **Public conveniences in public places**

In addition to these public conveniences, there are also facilities at many public places in the Borough including:

Civic Offices, Stafford Castle, Victoria Park, Stafford Railway Station, Rowley Park etc.

### **Commercial Premises**

Section 20 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 states that a local authority may require an owner or occupier to provide sanitary appliances of such kinds and numbers as are so specified. This Council has adopted the powers and uses the legislation to require establishments that allow their customers to consume food and drink on their premises to provide toilets for their customers, following the relevant British Standard BS6465 and the Council adopted Staffordshire toilets standard for smaller premises.

This has resulted in supermarkets, public houses, takeaways, and restaurants having to provide toilets for the public.”

Councillor G P K Pardesi responded by making the following comments:-

- A significant proportion of the population would think twice about leaving their homes due to a lack of public toilets, which leads to social exclusion
- 43% of the population had a medical condition that required the necessity for a toilet and a lack of public toilets would affect their wellbeing
- Many people felt uncomfortable using toilets in commercial premises
- Requested the Committee to agree the following:-

- Publicise and encourage the use of toilets in commercial premises
- Approach the Local Government Association to support a national campaign for commercial premises to provide the use of their toilets free of charge

In response, the Cabinet Member (Environment Portfolio) explained that the Council would be writing to the Local Government Association in order to seek further clarification of when the Non-Domestic Rating Public Lavatories Bill would be passed as law and the effect upon business rates. He added that the use of toilets in commercial premises could be raised through the Town Centre Partnership and the Council's website could signpost available facilities.

At this point, 10 minutes had expired since the consideration of the item and the following motion was moved by Councillor A D Hobbs and seconded by Councillor L Nixon:-

“that it being convenient and conducive to the conduct of the business, the matter be considered further at this meeting.”

On being put to the vote and following the Chair's casting vote, the motion was declared to be carried.

Discussion of the Councillor Session item then continued, during which the following issues were raised:-

- The Council should publicise the free use of toilets in commercial premises
- There were many support groups that could help people with medical conditions to locate toilets in the town, including Radar keys
- Urged the Committee to Publicise and encourage the use of toilets in commercial premises and request the Local Government Association to support a national campaign for commercial premises to provide the use of their toilets free of charge

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Councillor Session Item be noted.

#### **CWB14 Members Items**

Councillor L Nixon had submitted the following items under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

- (i) What is the post Brexit food strategy? GPs are dealing with malnutrition and advising people to go to foodbanks. There is an over reliance on foodbanks. Will is coping remarkably presently but perhaps we need something a little bigger now?

In response, the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio) made the following comments:-

- The Brexit Food Strategy was a national issue
  - The Council had a Brexit Strategy Group that was considering the implications of Brexit upon the Borough
  - There was no evidence to suggest widespread malnutrition across the Borough
  - Confused by the term “Will”
  - There were already a significant number of foodbanks provided by the Voluntary Sector across the Borough
  - There was additional support provided for the northern part of Stafford Town
  - Councillors did have a role to play and highlighted the work of the Food Bank Forum and the Trussell Trust
  - Valued the work of Foodbanks
- (ii) There is now a lot of people doing voluntary work. Who is responsible for making sure that everyone has DBS clearance and has safeguarding training and how is that working in practise?

In response, the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio) made the following comments:-

- The Borough was blessed with the work of volunteers that should not be taken for granted
- The Charities, Voluntary Sector or informal group each had a responsibility to ensure that they were run responsibly
- A group of trustees for each organisation should ensure the safe running of the organisations and bodies such as SCIVYs and Support Stafford could help to provide advice
- The Charities Commission was the first port of call in these circumstances
- Staffordshire Police should be contacted if criminal activity was suspected
- The Council had a designated Safeguarding Lead
- Councillors had a role in assisting to signpost volunteer opportunities

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Members’ Items be noted.

#### **CWB15 Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee**

Considered the report of Councillor A P Edgeller on matters considered by the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee at their previous meeting held on 15 July 2019.

The Committee discussed aspects of the meeting with the Clinical Commissioning Group held on 15 July 2019 with the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio).

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be noted.

#### **CWB16 Final Accounts 2018/2019**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance in relation to the Final Accounts position for the Community, Environment and Leisure Portfolios for the financial year ended 31 March 2019.

The Committee were informed that the 2018/2019 final accounts for the Portfolios revenue budget showed that the net spending in that year was £7.366 million compared with a budget of £7.165 million, a variation of £0.201 million. The capital budget showed that net spending in that year was £8.593 million compared with a budget of £9.314 million, a variation of £0.721 million.

The Committee discussed the reasons behind the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio), the Chief Accountant and the Interim Head of Operations:-

- The additional net cost of homelessness bed and breakfast
- The additional Leisure Management Contract costs
- The additional staff costs in relation to Houses in Multiple Occupation
- The additional Glover Street costs
- The additional Pest Control costs
- The slippage to Disabled Facilities Grants
- The variance for the CCTV upgrade
- The slippage for Private Sector Housing Assistance

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Final Accounts position for the year ended 31 March 2019 be noted.

#### **CWB17 Performance Reporting 2018-21**

The Committee considered the performance and financial management details for those areas within the remit of the Committee for the quarter 1 period up to 30 June 2019.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio), the Interim Head of Operations and the Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager:-

- LI13 - Empty Homes brought back into use following officer interventions
- LI18 - No of Disabled Facilities Grants completed
- 2.1.1 - Investigate appropriate enviro crime complaints within 72 hours of receipt
- 2.1.2 - Deliver high quality Neighbourhood Services to ensure that town centres, parks and open spaces are clean, tidy and attractive
- 2.1.6 - Provision of new, accessible and safe taxi ranks

- 2.1.5 - Encourage households to increase recycling and minimise residual waste because this will be good for the environment and will reduce collection and disposal costs
- 2.2.1 - Deliver the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) project to restore Victoria Park
- 2.3.2 - To implement and co ordinate Stafford in the World
- 2.4.1 - Support partners to set up initiatives to enhance the Health and Wellbeing of residents

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee:-

- (i) The Committee send a vote of thanks to Streetscene for their delivery of high quality neighbourhood services that ensured that the Borough's town centres, parks and open spaces were clean, tidy and attractive;
- (ii) the performance management data relating to areas of activity within this Committee's remit be noted.

**CWB18 Work Programme - Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee**

Considered the report of the Interim Head of Law and Administration, which presented the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme for the forthcoming meetings up to February 2020.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme be approved.

CHAIR