

Chair - Councillor J Hood

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

Councillors:

C A Baron	P W Jones
R J Barron	L Nixon
A R G Brown	R M Sutherland
A G Cooper	M J Winnington
D Holbrook-Summers	

Cabinet Member - Councillor J K Price - Environment Portfolio

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

Also Present:-

Councillors A T A Godfrey, A M Loughran, G P K Pardesi and M Phillips.

Officers in attendance:-

Mrs A Nevin	-	Health and Housing Manager
Mrs T Redpath	-	Corporate Business and Partnerships Manager
Mr R Simpson	-	Interim Head of Operations
Mrs V Cooper	-	Community Safety Lead
Mr A Bailey	-	Scrutiny Officer

CWB5 Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee held on 16 July 2019, as published in Digest No 258 were submitted and signed.

CWB6 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A P Edgeller (Substitute P W Jones), A D Hobbs (Substitute D Holbrook-Summers) and Councillor C V Trowbridge (Leisure Portfolio).

CWB7 **Members Item**

Councillor A D Hobbs had submitted the following item under Paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules:-

“I would like to ask the Cabinet Member for Environment if they would consider a green project involving tree and hedge planting to reduce carbon emissions, wildflower patches to increase insects and pollinators, and planting of orchards and vegetables to encourage a more sustainable way of living.”

In Councillor A D Hobbs' absence, Councillor D Holbrook-Summers outlined the reasons and rationale behind the Members' Item.

In response, the Cabinet Member (Environment Portfolio) made the following comments:-

- Welcomed the Members' Item
- Champion for green space in the Borough
- Was proactive in the provision of sustainable habitats
- There were 15 sites of Special Scientific Interest around the Borough
- There were many other sites of biological importance including:-
 - Chartley Moss
 - Motley Meadows
 - Crown Local Nature Reserve
 - Ferndown Orchard
 - Stafford Crematorium
 - The Mayor's Honey
 - 20 new trees to be planted at Victoria Park
 - Areas at Holmcroft and Tillington
 - Borough Allotments
 - Burley Fields and Meece Brook
- There were strategies including the Eco Schools Network and the Tree Strategy
- Encouraged Members to visit local nature reserves and explore the information on the Council's web site

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the Members' Item:-

- Stafford Borough was a Green Borough
- Green awards highlighted the outstanding work achieved
- It was important to plant the right trees in the right place
- Encouraged Members to visit Derrington Woods
- Important to work with Parish Councils on green projects
- Important to reduce the use of pesticides to encourage wildlife

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

CWB8 Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee

Considered the report of Councillor A P Edgeller (V1 22/7/19) on matters considered by the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee at their previous meetings held on 19 March and 10 June 2019.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio):-

- An explanation of the merger of the Clinical Commissioning Groups and that the provision of Hearing Aids for non complex hearing loss should not be on the list of their excluded and restricted procedures
- An outline of the discussion between the University Hospital of North Midlands and the Healthy Staffordshire Select Committee on 10 June 2019

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

CWB9 Empty Homes Strategy and Release of Funding - Called-In Item

The following matter had been published in the Members' Digest No 256 of 14 June 2019 and had been called in to this Committee by Councillors A T A Godfrey, A D Hobbs and G P K Pardesi for the following reason:-

"Methods of making the policy more effective."

Councillors G P K Pardesi and A T A Godfrey discussed the following reasons behind their call-in of this matter:-

- There was little evidence in the report of how many homeless families had been rehoused
- The policy appeared to appease existing home owners and help them bring existing homes back into use at a profit
- There was little information on the number of empty homes

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

- The purpose of the report was to launch the consultation on the Empty Homes Strategy and to agree to spend funding
- The report did highlight the data on empty properties
- The scheme was to specifically look at long term empty properties
- There were plenty of housing providers that provided housing for individuals
- The Council's response was pragmatic in relation to empty homes
- Empty homes tended to drag down communities
- This was intended as targeted intervention

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Community and Health Portfolio) and the Health and Housing Manager:-

- An explanation of the conditions imposed on loans to bring empty properties back into use
- An explanation of the reason for the gap between Empty Homes Officers
- A written answer would be provided in relation to the numbers of properties brought back into use by Council Tax band
- It was important to bring empty properties back into use, loans were repaid and do not profit homeowners
- There were no significant issues with squatters in the Borough
- The need to recruit an Empty Homes Officer on a long term basis

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the decision of the Cabinet in relation to the Empty Homes Strategy and Release of Funding as set out in Minute No CAB10/19, be noted.

CWB10 Performance Reporting 2018-21

The Committee considered the performance management details for those areas within the remit of the Committee for the quarter 4 period up to 31 March 2019.

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

- LI32 - % of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting - an explanation of the seasonal performance in this area and the forthcoming promotional campaigns
- LI53 - Reported incidents of domestic abuse (crime only) and LI54 - Reported incidents of anti social behaviour - an explanation for the performance in this area and preventative measures in place
- 2.3.2 - To implement and co-ordinate Stafford in the World - Congratulations to the officers that organised this event
- 2.3.5 - Support community groups who wish to undertake litter picks - The success of litter picking in the Borough

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the performance management data relating to areas of activity within this Committee's remit be noted.

CWB11 Business Planning Report

The Committee considered the report of the Interim Head of Law and Administration (V2 22/7/19) which presented Members with a review of the programme of business considered by the Committee in 2018/19.

The Committee were informed that during the last year they had considered a wide variety of issues in support of the Council's Corporate Business Objective to improve the quality of life of local people by providing a safe, clean, attractive place to live and work and encouraging people to be engaged in developing strong communities and promote health and wellbeing.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be approved and submitted as the Annual Report to the Council.

CWB10 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 (V1 22/7/19) for the forthcoming meetings up to February 2020.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme (V1 22/7/19) be approved.

CHAIR