

CABINET - 4 AUGUST 2011

Councillor R M Smith (Chairman)

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

Councillors:

- Mrs F Beatty - Planning and Regeneration Portfolio
- F A Finlay - Environment and Health Portfolio
- K S Williamson - Resources Portfolio

CAB17 THE LATE COUNCILLOR M CAREY

The Chairman reported that Councillor Mike Carey had recently died.

All present stood in silence as a mark of respect.

CAB18 MINUTES

Minutes of the Special Meeting held on 19 July 2011 submitted and signed.

CAB19 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P M M Farrington and M R Heenan.

CAB20 COUNCILLOR QUESTION TIME

Councillor Mrs C A Baron had submitted the following item for consideration by the Cabinet in accordance with paragraph 2.9 of the Cabinet procedures as follows:-

“Could the cabinet please explain why:-

- (1) We do not appear to have a Grounds Maintenance Specification;
- (2) Leisure have done a draft but no costing has come forward it appears to be lost in the pipeline;
- (3) why are we still carrying out grass cutting free of charge for large developers, (Persimmons and Henry Boot to name just two), when we are making cut backs everywhere else?”

Councillor Mrs Baron attended the meeting and explained the reason for raising the issues and handed in a petition from the residents of The Meadows, Stafford which the Chairman accepted.

Councillor R M Smith, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member, Leisure Portfolio responded as follows:-

- (1) A detailed grounds maintenance specification was in place during the years of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) when the contract was awarded to the Direct Services Organisation (DSO) and Sodexo. Following the end of CCT it was agreed that by taking the work back in house a better outcome could be achieved by the Council for the residents of Stafford. This did not need a detailed specification.

There were guidelines and good practice that were followed by Streetscene in relation to grounds maintenance and tree management and this was continually being developed further to enhance the quality outcome.

Following a rigid timetable of grass cutting made no sense if the weather was dry and the grass had not grown. It was decided to cut as and when needed.

- (2) Leisure had done a draft but no costing had come forward it appears to be lost in the pipeline.

As a separate exercise APSE (the Assoc for Public Service Excellence) have been requested to report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the operations within the whole of Streetscene. It was expected their report would review the necessity for a specification for grounds maintenance. Their draft report had been received and once the final report was available then consideration would be given to the need for a specification.

- (3) The land said to belong to Henry Boot was no longer owned by them and that illustrated the problem. Companies were taken over or merged and land was sold or transferred perhaps with little regard for its appearance to the general public. The public expect the land to be maintained and for the Council to do so.

An exercise had been undertaken by the Council over the last 8 months to identify each area of land and was trying to identify the owner. This work was near completion and the plan was to then contact all the land owners to inform them to either pay for the maintenance that we undertake, take on the maintenance themselves or transfer the land to us with an appropriate commuted sum for future maintenance.

Councillor Mrs Baron asked if the Cabinet Member would investigate alternative ways of managing grass cutting.

RESOLVED:- this matter be referred to the appropriate officers for further consideration.

CAB21 COUNCILLOR QUESTION TIME

Councillor W J Kemp had submitted the following item in accordance with paragraph 2.9(b) of the Cabinet Procedure Rules as follows: -

“I understand that Victoria Street which is off the Gaol Road is going to have double yellow lines down both sides of the very narrow road. However, there is a parking problem for the residents of Nos 1 – 10 Crooked Bridge Road in as much as the car park owned by the Borough Council at the rear of their properties is being used by people not living in the area for long term parking. I would ask the Cabinet Member, Planning and Regeneration, to consider making all or part of the land into a residents only parking area.”

Councillor W J Kemp attended the meeting of the Cabinet and explained the background to his request and added that the double yellow lines had now been introduced, and that Nos 11 - 17 Crooked Bridge Road were also affected by their introduction.

Councillor Mrs F M Beatty, Cabinet Member- Planning and Regeneration Portfolio responded as follows:-

“There were two informal unmade parking areas in addition to some remaining on street parking on Crooked Bridge Road and unrestricted parking on Sandyford Street - and some other local areas.

The Parking Strategy approved by full Council earlier this year recognises a problem in this area. Under item 13 of the Strategy’s Action Plan it was set out as a medium term priority and that a feasibility study will be completed by April 2013. Though no specific date has been set yet for the feasibility study to be started many of the short term actions in the Strategy were well under way or have been completed. Possible options were highlighted and could be found in the Strategy. These included turning the Borough Council land into formal car parks with parking charges and included looking at resident permits. Local residents may wish to put/make their views known when the feasibility study was commissioned. I suggest the ward member keeps in touch with the officers as to timetable.”

RESOLVED:- that Councillor Kemp liaise with the relevant Officers and the Cabinet Member regarding this matter.

CAB21 STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - THE PLAN FOR STAFFORD BOROUGH DRAFT PUBLICATION

Considered a report presenting the Stafford Borough Local Development Framework - The Plan For Stafford Borough Draft Publication as set out in Section 2 of Digest No 160 issued on 5 August 2011.

RESOLVED: - that the proposal of the Cabinet Member - Planning and Regeneration Portfolio be approved as follows:-

That the Plan for Stafford Borough Draft Publication be approved as a basis for public consultation in September/October.

THIS MATTER IS NOT SUBJECT TO THE CALL IN PROCEDURE AND WILL BE REFERRED TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON 16 AUGUST 2011

CAB22 RESTRUCTURE OF THE HOUSING SERVICE AND APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTARY EARLY RETIREMENT

Considered a report on the restructure of the Housing Service and application for early retirement as set out in Section 2 of Digest No 160 issued on 5 August 2011.

RESOLVED: - that the proposal of the Cabinet Member - Community Portfolio be approved as follows:-

- (a) the request for voluntary early retirement on the grounds of the efficient exercise of the Authority's functions without enhancement, be approved;
- (b) the Head of Human Resources in conjunction with the Head of Environment implement the early retirement in line with the wishes of the two employees and the exigencies of the service;
- (c) the post of Housing Policy and Performance Officer be made permanent.

CHAIRMAN