

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities) held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 23 April 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor Townshend

Employees (by Directorate):

People: M Fothergill, C Hickin, G Hood, S Hutt, M Lynn, B Massey,

Resources: C Goodwin, S Lal, U Patel

Apologies: Councillor A Andrews, C Fletcher, B Singh (for items 103 and 104 below)

In Attendance: Alderman Gazey
D Keegan (for item 103 below)
P McNamara (for item 104 below)

Public Business

100. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

101. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 in relation to the private report referred to in Minute 109 below headed "Further update report in relation to Planning Enforcement Action at The Old Hall, Tamworth Road" on the grounds that the report contains information relating to an individual, information relating to the financial/business affairs of any particular person and information in respect of which a claim to legal profession privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

102. **Minutes**

- (a) The minutes of the Cabinet Member meeting held on 26 March 2015 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.
- (b) The minutes of the Joint Cabinet Members for Business Enterprise and Employment and Policing and Equalities meeting held on 25 March were noted as a true record.
- (c) The minutes of the Joint Cabinet Members for Strategic Finance and Resources, Business Enterprise and Employment and Policing and Equalities meeting held on 25 March 2015 were also noted as a true record.

103. Further progress report on action taken to improve security to open land at rear the of 2-66 Brookside Avenue

Further to Minute 59/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which provided a further update on progress against additional recommendations made at the Cabinet Member meeting held on 18 December 2014.

A petition containing 11 signatures, from 6 households, was submitted to the Council on 25 March 2014 by Councillor B Singh. Reports in response to the petition were presented to the Cabinet Member on 3 July, 2 October and 18 December 2014 and detailed the action taken by officers in response to residents' concerns about environmental and nuisance behaviour on the open space at the rear of properties 2-66 Brookside Avenue, Whoberley, Coventry.

Since the last Cabinet Member meeting there had been no reported incidents to either the Police or the City Council.

The open space is owned by the Council and managed by the Parks Service of the Place Directorate.

The petition spokesperson attended the meeting and reported that incidents of youths hanging around causing nuisance, fires being started and antisocial behaviour had been reported to the police. Residents were concerned that a combination of good weather and longer evenings and the lack of police presence would encourage more antisocial behaviour in the area.

The Cabinet Member requested officers to look into this and ensure that the CCTV that is due to be installed in the area be positioned in such a way that it could not be damaged, but would capture incidents clearly. In addition, the Cabinet Member encouraged the petition spokesperson to report any further incidents to the Ward Councillors and also to Council officers.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Endorses the additional actions taken by officers as outlined in the report and thanks officers for their efforts in this respect.**
- 2. Requests officers to liaise with the Police and request that they continue to patrol the area and to respond to any issues raised or identified and, if appropriate, to exercise their powers to obtain identities of and disperse groups of individuals that are likely to cause nuisance or offending behaviour, and that a letter be sent by the Cabinet Member to the Local Police Commander Chief Inspector Bell requesting that the presence of police officers be reinforced in the area. A copy of the letter to be sent to Councillors Innes and Singh, Whoberley Ward Councillors and the petitioner for information.**
- 3. Endorses the continued efforts of the Community Development Service to work with the community in tackling local issues including litter and environmental issues.**

- 4. Request officers to continue to monitor incidents of crime and nuisance together with the effectiveness of their action and to respond appropriately to any such issues.**
- 5. Requests an updated report detailing any further issues or incidents to be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities or his successor on or before 31 October 2015.**

104. Progress report on improvements made to the environment and security of the Hearsall area of Coventry

Further to Minute 71/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which provided details of additional measures taken by officers to address recommendations made at the Cabinet Member meeting held on 22 January 2015.

A petition bearing 184 signatures was originally submitted on 25 March 2014 by Councillors Howells and B Singh, Whoberley Ward Councillors. The petition requested the Council to implement measures to address environmental issues which if addressed were likely to improve the security of the Hearsall area of Whoberley Ward.

The petitioners outlined issues including fly-tipping and obstruction caused by wheelie bins. Additionally they requested that estate/letting agency signs should be removed and that all alleyways and entryways should be gated and any existing gates be repaired to a good working order.

The petition organiser attended the meeting and reported that bins were still being left out on the streets and presented a list detailing locations. In addition, he mentioned that a Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer had advised him that enforcement would not be taken until a bin had been left out for four consecutive weeks.

The Cabinet Member expressed disappointment that Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers did not know the rules and regulations and accepted the list as submitted by the petitioner and that the problems still remained.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Acknowledges and endorses the additional work of officers since the last Cabinet Member meeting as detailed in section two of this report.**
- 2. Requests officers to:**
 - (a) Continue to monitor the area to ensure that the progress made in removing wheelie bins from the street is maintained.**
 - (b) Continue to work with the local residents' group and support them when and where required.**

3. **Directs that the Assistant Director, through appropriate officers investigates the schedule of properties provided at the Cabinet Member meeting by the petition spokesperson and to report by way of a briefing note to Cabinet Member within 28 days as to the extent, if at all, any refuse bins remain on the streets are in breach of the relevant regulations and/or law and where there is evidence of continued breaches to take enforcement action.**
4. **Directs that the Assistant Director puts in place a focused programme of additional training and instruction to Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers as to their relevant enforcement powers in the area, such programme to have been implemented and concluded within 28 days of this meeting (23 April 2015).**
5. **Requests that a further updated report be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities or his successor on or before 31 October 2015. Councillor Singh and the petition spokesperson to be invited to the meeting for the consideration of this item.**

105. **The work of the England Illegal Money Lending Team in Coventry**

Further to Minute 86/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which provided additional information requested by the Cabinet Member at the meeting held on 26 February 2015.

At that meeting, the Cabinet Member renewed authorisation for the England Illegal Money Lending Team officers employed by Birmingham City Council to investigate illegal money matters that may arise in Coventry and elsewhere.

The Cabinet Member had requested further information on the following:

- (i) How many cases had been investigated by the England Illegal Money Lending Team involving people based in Coventry?
- (ii) How many prosecutions had been taken by the team against Coventry based people?
- (iii) How many convictions had there been against Coventry based people involved in illegal money lending?

It was reported that there were 3 pieces of intelligence received which identified 8 potential loan sharks operating in Coventry. As a result 3 operations were conducted. However, all 3 operations were classified as not sufficient to proceed to enforcement action on the basis that the information could not be verified. Details were recorded and would be held for intelligence purposes and could be re-opened should further information be received.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member:

1. **Acknowledges the information contained in the report in response to 3 specific questions raised at the Cabinet Member meeting held on 26 February 2015.**

- 2. Requests that a copy of relevant report from the Cabinet Member meeting held on 26 February 2015 and a copy of this report be sent to the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson and to the local Police Commander Chief Superintendent Bell for information.**

106. Progress report on the change to the Constitution: Appointments to Appeals Committee

The Cabinet Member considered a progress report of the Executive Director of Resources on the change to the Constitution in terms of appointments to Appeals Committee.

The Appeals Committee Procedure Rules at Part 3J of the Constitution did not allow Cabinet Members to sit on the Appeals Committee. While certain aspects of employment matters may not be the responsibility of the Cabinet, Cabinet Members may lawfully participate on a committee determining an employee appeal.

Due to the limited pool of trained Councillors it became increasingly difficult to arrange appeal hearing dates due to the lack of availability of panel members, resulting in delays in hearing appeals.

The Cabinet Member on 2 October 2014 recommended that paragraph 1 of Part 3J of the Constitution be amended to remove the prohibition on Cabinet Members sitting on the Appeals Committee in connection with appeals by employees only, subject to them receiving appropriate training beforehand (Minute 39/14 refers). The new arrangements would be reviewed in the New Municipal Year to ensure the amendment was delivering the anticipated improvements.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Acknowledges the amendment of paragraph 1 of Part 3J of the Constitution removing the prohibition on Cabinet Members sitting on the Appeals Committee in connection with appeals by employees only, subject to them receiving the appropriate training.**
- 2. Requests officers to continue with the operation of the new arrangements.**
- 3. Requests the Assistant Director for Resources to report to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities or his successor on or before 30 June 2015 as to those Cabinet Members who have not undertaken the relevant training.**

107. Outstanding Issues Report

The Cabinet Member noted a report of the Executive Director of Resources that identifies those issues on which further reports had been requested and were outstanding, so that progress could be monitored.

108. Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no other items of public business.

109. Further update report in relation to Planning Enforcement Action at The Old Hall, Tamworth Road

Further to Minute 81/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which provided an update in relation to Planning Enforcement action at the Old Hall, Tamworth Road.

The report detailed enforcement action take to date concerning the continuing wilful neglect of the Grade II Listed Building under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member:

- 1. Endorses the actions taken to date and notes those actions proposed.**
- 2. Refers the report to the private business at the first full Cabinet meeting in the New Municipal Year. The report, if necessary to be updated to include any further developments.**

110. Any other items of private business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 3.05 pm)