

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

Present:

Members: Councillor Townshend
Councillor A Andrews (Shadow Cabinet Member)
Councillor R Auluck (Deputy Cabinet Member)

Other Members: Councillor O'Boyle (for item 7)

Employees (by Directorate):

People: S Chantler, C Donnelly, M McGinty, I Merrifield, L Nagle

Place: H Simmonds

Resources: C Goodwin, U Patel

In attendance: D Ali (for item 8)
P Evans (for item 7)
Alderman Gazey
Inspector Mason (for item 7)
R J Wilsen (for item 7)

Public Business

5. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet Member meetings held on 23 April and 18 June 2015 were signed as true records. There were no matters arising.

7. Report in response to a petition regarding street drinking and drug taking in Hillfields

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which responded to a petition regarding street drinking and drug taking in Hillfields and detailed action being taken to address the issues highlighted.

A petition containing 70 signatures was submitted to the City Council by Councillor O'Boyle on 17 June 2015. The petition outlined residents' concerns in relation to street drinking and drug taking in the Hillfields Area and of individuals harassing local residents and businesses. Additional reports of discarded needles and drugs paraphernalia had been found in locations across Hillfields.

Councillor O'Boyle and the petition organisers attended the meeting and spoke in support of the petition. They described the problems being experienced and how long they had gone on for and outlined their concerns for their own safety and that of residents in the area.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Notes the work of officers and partners to date and requests that such work continues.**
- 2. Acknowledges that officers have increased engagement with local businesses and community groups to continue to deliver action, monitor and regularly review incidents related to street drinking and problematic individuals in the Village Square and surrounding area; but recognises that there is still significant work to be done to additional underlying problems.**
- 3. Requests West Midlands Police to continue to dedicate patrols to hotspot locations within the Hillfields area, responding swiftly to any issues raised or identified, and to exercise their powers to obtain identities and disperse individuals in groups that are likely to cause public nuisance and/or offending behaviour.**
- 4. Requests that all agencies ensure that problematic individuals and households are identified, challenged and provided with appropriate treatment and support to address issues, needs and change behaviour.**
- 5. Requests Council officers to ensure that multi-agency case management through relevant forums should continue to monitor behaviour and effectiveness of interventions to support change and enforcement action taken where engagement is refused.**
- 6. Notes that as a result of an initiative brought about by the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities, and ratified by the Coventry Police and Crimes Board, that there will be an intake of ten special constables for St Michaels Ward in September 2015. These officers will be tasked to assist in measures to combat street drinking, crime and associated problems in the area.**
- 7. Requests that the three metal benches around the tree in Hillfields Square be removed and relocated in consultation with the three St Michaels Ward Councillors.**
- 8. Officers to consult with the three St Michaels Ward Councillors as to how to deal with the retaining wall surrounding the tree and to bring forward recommendations to the next meeting.**
- 9. Requests that officers work with the Police and Crime Partnership to ensure that street signage in Hillfields Square is allocated as a priority and in time for the next meeting to identify a time-frame for the location of the street signage in the Hillfields area.**

10. Requests officers from the City Council Licensing Team to write to all premises holding off licences in the Hillfields area reminding them of their obligation not to sell alcohol to intoxicated and problematic individuals.
11. Requests the Police Licensing Team to visit all off licences in the Hillfields area to remind them of their obligation not to sell alcohol to intoxicated and problematic individuals.
12. Requests that the new special constables coming in September be engaged in problematic areas addressed in this report.
13. Asks the Executive Director of People to suggest any immediate strategies or engagement to address the social issues that underpin the issues in this report.
14. In the absence of a Safer Neighbourhood Group, requests that a standing item be created for the St Michaels' Ward Forum on the issues identified in this report and give consideration to the formation of a time limited group if necessary.
15. Requests the Community Safety Officer (or appropriate officer) to provide an update report as to progress of the Hillfields action Plan.
16. Requests a further report as to progress of all the recommendations made and all other related matters to be submitted to the Cabinet Member meeting on 24 September 2015 (the Strategic Lead for Offender Management to coordinate the production of this report). Inspector Mason, Community Safety Officers, Licensing Officers, the three St Michaels Ward Councillors (Councillor O'Boyle lead member), representatives of Watch charity and the petition organiser be invited to the meeting for the consideration of this item.

8. Update report in response to a petition concerning a property in Earlsdon Ward

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which provided an update on progress made in response to a petition concerning a property in Earlsdon Ward.

A resident-led petition bearing 71 signatures was received on 3 July 2014 requesting the City Council to take action in relation to concerns regarding the poor condition of a property in the Earlsdon Ward.

The Cabinet Member had previously endorsed action taken thus far i.e. service of a statutory notice under Section 215 of The Town & Country Planning Act requiring the owner to carry out improvements to his property. Furthermore, he requested officers to issue a 14 day warning letter as to Notice of Intended Prosecution on 6 March 2015 in the event of non-compliance and use their best endeavours to commence prosecutions no later than 28 March 2015.

The report provided an update on actions taken since the Cabinet Member meeting held on 26 March 2015.

Councillor Andrews and the petitioner organiser attended the meeting and thanked officers for all their efforts and progress made. However, the petition organiser reported that recently several hundred bricks had been stacked up against a fence which could pose a danger to pedestrians if it was to collapse. Officers undertook to investigate this and possible actions available to the Council in dealing with this.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Endorses the action already taken and planned to address the conditions at the property.**
- 2. Requests a further report to be submitted to the Cabinet Member meeting on 10 December 2015 detailing progress made on resolving the issues.**

9. Community Grant Fund - Round 1 2015/16

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive People which proved details of the Community Grant Fund – Round 1 2015/16 award process and recommendations on applications received.

The Community Grant Fund is managed by the City Council's Community Development Service within the People Directorate. The application process followed was the same as that used for 2014/15 whereby Groups were invited to apply for a maximum grant of £5000, with a restriction of one award per round. Applications for round 1 opened on 1 April 2015 and closed on 31 May 2015.

The Community Grant is a valuable resource for local community and voluntary sector groups and supports the Council's Asset Based Working Strategy "Active Citizens, Strong Communities". The Strategy makes a series of commitments to support the growth of community led activities and support and the Community Grant Fund is a valuable means of providing important one-off funding to a number of community organisations to enable their work to continue.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities approves the award of grants as identified in section 2.3 of the report, within Table One.

10. Gambling Act 2005 - Revised Statement of Licensing Policy 2016-19

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which sought Members' views and approval to consult on the draft revised Statement of Licensing Policy 2016-19 under the Gambling Act 2005.

Under the terms of the Gambling Act 2005, the Council's Statement of Gambling Policy has to be renewed every 3 years. As the current Statement of Gambling Policy came into effect on 31 January 2013, a review must be undertaken and a revised statement published by 3 January 2016.

The review required licensing authorities to carry out a wide consultation process. In addition to those it must consult by law, the Council has the authority to include in the process any individuals or organisations it deemed appropriate.

The general principles of the Gambling Policy remain the same and the document was still centred around the Gambling Act's 3 licensing objectives, namely:

- (i) Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime;
- (ii) Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way;
- (iii) Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

A draft copy of the revised policy was attached as an Appendix to the report. The public consultation would last for a 7 week period starting on 5 August 2015.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities having considered the draft revised Statement of Gambling Policy authorises the Executive Director of Place to carry out the consultation as detailed in the report.

11. **Outstanding Issues Report**

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

12. **Any Other Business**

The Cabinet Member noted that Steve Chantler, Carole Donnelly and Christine Goodwin were attending their last Cabinet Member meeting and thanked them for all their work and support over the years and wished them every success for the future.

(Meeting closed at 3.45 pm)