

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for City Services held at 3.00 pm on
Monday, 12 March 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor J Innes (Cabinet Member)
Councillor T Sawdon (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Members: Councillors

Employees (by Directorate):

C Archer, Place Directorate
Goodyer
G Hood, Place Directorate
L Knight, Resources Directorate
R Parkes, Resources Directorate

Apologies: Councillor

Public Business

41. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th January, 2018 were signed as a true record.

Further to Minute 33/17 headed 'Petition - To Request that Coventry Council Landscape the Land at Whitley Common/ JLR Bridge over A444', Councillor Sawdon, Shadow Member asked whether Costain had been removed from the Council's list of contractor's and the Cabinet Member asked for this to be investigated and reported back at the next meeting.

43. Petition - Request for the Clearance of Land at the Rear of the Properties in Alfriston Road, Finham

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) concerning a petition, bearing 15 signatures, which had been submitted by Councillor Sawdon, a Wainbody Ward Councillor, who attended the meeting along with the petition organiser Mrs Stanley and they spoke on behalf of the petitioners. The petitioners were requesting that the Council cleared up the land in their ownership to the rear of the properties in Alfriston Road, Finham.

The report indicated that the area of land the subject of the petition was defined as Stonebridge Highway Spinney within the Council's Greenspace Strategy and included a range of mature trees including ash, pine, lime and poplar.

The Cabinet Member was informed that the Council owned and maintained 40 woodland areas and spinneys covering an area of approximately 296 hectares. This made up 22% of all park and open space managed by the Council's Park Service. Characteristically these woodland and spinney areas supported an understory of vegetation including a range of plant species classified as semi-rural and were typical for sites like Stonebridge Highway Spinney. The understory was a food source for bees and wild animals.

The woodland and spinney areas were extremely popular and well visited by the City residents providing a range of recreational opportunities such as walking, dog walking and jogging as well as bringing people into contact with nature. A network of informal pathways was maintained through these areas allowing and encouraging access.

The report referred to the 2015 25% reduction to the Council's Greenspace and Streetpride Service budget. This reduction restricted the Services' ability to be able to undertake any additional low priority operations which were outside essential routine and scheduled maintenance works. Works to clear and dispose of the spinney understory were estimated at £6,000 and would need to be undertaken annually and would take both financial and staff resource away from more essential operations such as grass cutting and street cleansing.

The Cabinet Member was informed that previous requests to clear vegetation from other woodland and spinney sites had been rejected.

Mrs Stanley drew attention to the problems caused by nettles and brambles encroaching onto the paths, the issue of fly tipping and to the state of some of the trees which had been neglected. Councillor Sawdon informed that the petitioners wanted the paths to be cleared and were concerned about tree branches growing over resident's fences.

Councillor Innes requested that residents report issues of fly tipping to the Council so that the rubbish could be removed in line with the normal procedures.

RESOLVED that:

(1) The large number and area of similar woodlands and spinneys owned by the Council be noted.

(2) The resource implications of clearing the spinney at the rear of Alfriston Road be noted.

(3) The valuable wildlife habitat and resource provided by the spinneys and their undergrowth be noted.

(4) Officers be requested to investigate the state of the footpaths in the spinney and to undertake any necessary works to allow local residents to be able to use these footpaths.

44. Objection to Proposed Waiting Restrictions - Ashington Grove Hill Fray Drive

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) concerning an objection that had been received to a Traffic Regulation Order advertised on 17th August, 2017 relating to proposed new waiting restrictions for Ashington Grove/ Hill Fray Drive. The objector was invited to the meeting but was unable to attend. Councillor Bailey, a Cheylesmore Ward Councillor, attended and spoke in support of the proposal. A copy of the objection was set out at an appendix to the report along with the Council's response and the origin of the proposed waiting restriction.

The report indicated that the objections received to the Traffic Regulation Order advertised last August were considered at the Cabinet Member meeting on 18th September, 2017. Unfortunately this objection concerning Ashington Grove/ Hill Fray Drive was not included in the process.

The request for double yellow lines at the Ashington Grove/ Hill Fray Drive junction had been received from local residents concerned about parking at the junction. The objector was concerned about the installation of double yellow lines in front of his dropped kerb. It was clarified that the no waiting at any time restriction would not restrict vehicular access to a driveway. It would prevent a vehicle being able to park across a driveway. The objection also referred to the issue of bin collections in the street.

RESOLVED that, having considered the objection to the proposed waiting restriction, the restrictions as advertised at the junction of Ashington Grove/ Hill Fray Drive be approved.

45. Petitions Determined by Letter and Petitions Deferred Pending Further Investigations

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place) which provided a summary of the recent petitions received that were to be determined by letter, or where decisions had been deferred pending further investigations and holding letters were being circulated. Details of the individual petitions were set out in an appendix attached to the report and included target dates for action. The report was submitted for monitoring and transparency purposes.

The report indicated that each petition had been dealt with on an individual basis, with the Cabinet Member considering advice from officers on appropriate action to respond to the petitioners' request. When it had been decided to respond to the petition without formal consideration at a Cabinet Member meeting, both the relevant Councillor/petition organiser could still request that their petition be the subject of a Cabinet Member report.

Members noted that where holding letters were being sent, this was because further investigation work was required. Once matters had been investigated either a follow up letter would be sent or a report submitted to a future Cabinet Member meeting.

RESOLVED that the actions being taken by officers as detailed in the appendix to the report, in response to the petitions received, be endorsed.

46. **Outstanding Issues**

There were no outstanding issues for consideration.

47. **Any other items of Public Business**

There were no additional items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 3.30 pm)