

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member (Policing and Equalities) held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 22 January 2015

Present:

Members: Councillor P Townshend (Chair)
Councillor C Fletcher (Deputy Cabinet Member)

Employees (by Directorate):

People Directorate: J Bilen, Resources Directorate
M Fothergill, Place Directorate
Place Directorate: C Goodwin, Resources Directorate
Harwood
Resources Directorate: C Hickin, People Directorate
S Hutt, People Directorate
B Massey, People Directorate
S Nagra, Chief Executive's Directorate
M O'Brien, Resources Directorate
U Patel, Resources Directorate
S Roach, People Directorate
J Venn, Chief Executive's Directorate
M Watson, People Directorate

In Attendance: P McNamara (for item 71 below)

Apologies: Councillors N Akhtar, A Andrews (Shadow Cabinet Member),
J O'Boyle and D Welsh

Public Business

67. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

68. 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 reports referred to in Minute 68 and 69 headed "Magistrates' Court Building" and "Update report in relation to Planning Enforcement Action at the Old Hall, Tamworth Road" respectively on the grounds that they refer to information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

69. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet Member meeting held on 18 December 2014 were signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

70. **Progress Report on the Hillfields Community Safety Action Plan**

Further to Minute 13/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which outlined progress on the Hillfields Community Safety Action Plan.

During 2012-2013 the Council received a number of petitions which when reviewed collectively identified recurring themes in relation to public place nuisance behaviour and some problematic households across a number of locations within the Hillfields area.

Officers developed a strategy and action plan to address these issues to provide a more proactive approach to prevent the same taking place.

The report provided a performance update on the measures implemented from the action plan and progress against additional recommendations made by the Cabinet Member on 31 July 2014 (Minute 13 refers).

The action plan as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, would continue to be monitored, updated and revised via the St. Michael's Safer Neighbourhood Group.

Councillor O'Boyle, a St. Michael's Ward Councillor who was unable to attend the meeting, submitted written representation which was read out at the meeting. In summary, Councillor O'Boyle agreed with the main thrust of the report and noted the figures as this reflected the St. Michaels Ward Councillors' case work and postbag and the need to continue to monitor and tackle the issues. He added that the work undertaken should become an integral part of partnership working and delivery as the area continues to experience a high turnover of residents, but with the same recurring problems.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- (1) Notes the work of officers and agrees that this continues.**
- (2) Requests members of the St. Michael's Safer neighbourhood Group continue to deliver against, monitor and regularly review and update the action plan in accordance with local issues identified and reported incidents.**
- (3) Requests 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, should it become necessary implement the use of the current Section 60 powers or alternative new power when it comes into force.**
- (4) Endorses the monthly schedule of Community Payback work which has been developed with the Community Rehabilitation Service**

and request officers to review the effectiveness of this initiative; working alongside community representatives and City Council staff for implementing new ways of working.

71. Progress Report on Improvements made to the Environment and Security of the Hearsall Area of Coventry

Further to Minute 34/14, the Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of People which outlined progress made on improvements made to the environment and security of the Hearsall area of Coventry.

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

The petitioners highlighted issues including fly-tipping and obstruction caused by wheelie bins. In addition, 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 report provided further details of additional measures taken by Council Officers to address these issues as recommended by the Cabinet Member on 2 October 2014.

The Chair of the Hearsall Earlsdon Residents' Association attended the meeting and reported that the problems with the bins still remained on Melbourne Road and Sovereign Road and as residents on both roads were mainly students, no complaints had been registered and as a result the bins stayed out.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Requests that "wheelie bin etiquette" packs be reissued to all properties in Melbourne Road and Sovereign Road.**
- 2. Seven days after the packs have been issued, warning notices be distributed to those properties in Melbourne Road and Sovereign Road where the bins still remain on the street.**
- 3. That seven days after the service of such notices, the Head of Environmental Services be directed to consider the issuing of fixed penalty notices in respect of on-going breaches.**
- 4. Requests the Legal Services Department of the City Council identify by whatever means appropriate (HM Land Registry/office Copy Entry Searches) the owners of relevant properties in Melbourne Road and Sovereign Road and write to the owners of properties duplicating the issues referred to in recommendations 1-3 above.**

- 5. Requests a further report to be submitted to the Cabinet Member meeting scheduled for 23 April 2015. This report is to provide a short update in respect of the implementation of recommendations above and should incorporate advice from the Legal Services Department as to what action if any can, be taken in respect of breaches in relation to signage.**
- 6. Acknowledges and endorses the action taken by Officers since the last Cabinet Member meeting as detailed in section 2 of the report.**
- 7. Requests officers to:**
 - i. Continue to monitor the area to ensure that the progress made in removing wheelie bins from the street is maintained.**
 - ii. Continue to work with the local residents' group and support them when and where required.**

72. Fines Policy - Redress Schemes for Letting Agents and Property Management

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which provided information on the fines policy in relation to the Redress Schemes for Letting Agents and Property Management. This is a result of the Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) (England) Order 2014.

This means that a complaint could be made to an independent person about service provided by letting agents and property managers in the residential sector. The complaint can be made by tenants, prospective tenants, landlords dealing with lettings agents in the private rented sector, and leaseholders and freeholders. This would make it easier for tenants and landlords to complain about bad service and prevent disputes escalating.

The local authority is the enforcing body and would be required to set out its policy that would determine the level of fines to be imposed and to identify the reasons why. The report sought approval for the setting of these two criteria.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Approves the level of fines detailed in Section 2 of the report.**
- 2. Approves the criteria set out applicable to each level of fine.**
- 3. Requests a report back on the operation of the system to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities or Cabinet Member with responsibility for such matters on or before 30 September 2015.**

4. **Requests that there be a focused communications strategy to alert the public as to the implementation of the fines policy and the level of potential fines.**

73. **Equality Strategy - Half Year Progress Report 2014/15**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided information on the half year progress of the Equality Strategy 2014/15.

The current Equality Strategy was approved in March 2013 and outlined how the Council complied with the Equality Act 2010. It also set out the Council's equality objectives which were linked to the priorities of the Council Plan 2011-2014. The new Council Plan was approved by Council in January 2014 and sets out the aspirations and priorities for the Council for the next ten years and the equality objectives were revised to reflect the new priorities.

The report looked at progress made in the first six months of 2014/15 in relation to the equality of objectives. It also provided a high level of summary and gave an overview including where applicable, contextual information to describe what was happening in Coventry and how this compared nationally or regionally depending on the data available. The report also provided an overview of some of the work being done to promote equality for the different groups protected by the Equality Act.

The report was due to be considered by the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee on 4 February 2015 to identify any areas to be addressed in the work programme of the Scrutiny Boards.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities considered the progress made on the equality measures set out in the Council Plan and requested that the report and the Equality Strategy be circulated formally to all members of the Senior Management Board and all elected members of the City Council for information.

74. **Processing CCTV Footage for Investigating Alleged Employee Misconduct**

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Resources which provided an overview of the proposed Procedure for submitting and authorising applications for processing CCTV footage in respect of alleged employee misconduct.

From time to time, the Council's Audit and Risk Manager would receive requests from Managers for authorisation to view CCTV footage to investigate alleged employee misconduct. The proposed procedure and supporting documentation as attached at Appendices 1-4 of the report would ensure that in processing CCTV footage for this purpose, the Council complied with its duties under the Data Protection Act 1998, The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Human Rights Act 1998. The procedure only relates to CCTV equipment owned and managed by the Council.

In drafting the procedure, regard was given to the Information Commissioner's Data Protection Code of Practice for Surveillance Cameras and Personal Information 2014, the Information Commissioner's Guidance on the Employment Practices Code and the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013 to ensure that it promoted good practice.

In accordance with the legislation and Codes of Practice referred to above, employees would be made aware that their images are being overtly recorded by a CCTV camera by appropriate signage which indicates the presence of recording, the purpose of the recording, the ownership of the system and contact details.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Considered the draft Procedure and supporting documents.**
- 2. Approves the Procedure for processing CCTV footage in respect of alleged employee misconduct.**
- 3. Requests that the Monitoring Officer provide a report to the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities on an annual basis identifying the number of applications and any other relevant issues, the report will be considered in private if necessary where data and information about individuals is referenced in the report with the first such report to be presented on or before 31 March 2016.**

75. Evaluation of Local Democracy Week 13 - 19 October 2014

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Resource which reviewed and evaluated the programme of activities delivered during the Council's Local Democracy Week 2014.

Each year the programme would be adjusted to try new events and to improve other regular events. As a result of feedback and take-up levels in 2014, the report recommended that the following successful activities be repeated; the Year 12 schools debating competition, Lord Mayor for a Day, Lord Mayor's Quiz, Virtual Council, Question Time and the Democracy Day. The programme for Local Democracy Week 2015 would be improved and refined during the year and further activities may be added to those repeated from 2014.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:-

- 1. Notes the review of activities undertaken during Local Democracy Week 2014 and records his profound appreciation of the significant effort of Hugh Peacocke and Matthew Rossi in particular, and all of their colleagues in promoting these events and directs that a copy of this recommendation be sent to the Chief Executive of the City Council.**
- 2. Approves that, if resources permit, the successful events be repeated in 2015, including the Lord Mayor's Youth Quiz, Lord Mayor for a Day,**

the Year 12 School Debate, Virtual Council, Question Time and Democracy Day.

3. Approves the other actions relevant to future Local Democracy Week initiatives as set out in the report.
4. Approves that officers explore other avenues for democratic engagement amongst young people throughout the year.
5. Request that officers explore opportunities for income generation arising from democratic engagement activities.
6. Requests an interim report on progress made in relation to recommendations 2-5 above to be presented to the first meeting of the Cabinet member with responsibility for Democratic Services in the New Municipal Year.

76. **Authority for Attendance - Conference/Seminar**

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities gives approval for the Lord Mayor and senior support officers to undertake a Civic visit to Dresden, Germany for the commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the destruction of Dresden from 12-15 February 2015.

77. **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.

78. **Magistrates' Court Building**

Further to Minute 61/14, the Cabinet Member considered a further report of the Executive Director of Resources which provided an update as to the progress of the proceedings to date and considered the options going forward.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities notes the progress made since the last report dated 18 December 2014 and directs that a further report be submitted for consideration at the Cabinet Member meeting on 26 February 2015.

79. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of public business.

80. **Magistrates' Court Building**

Further to Minute 78 above, the Cabinet Member considered a corresponding private report of the Executive Director of Resources which provided confidential information on the Magistrates' Court Building.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member notes the progress made since the last report dated 18 December 2014 and directs that a further report be submitted for consideration at the Cabinet Member meeting on 26 February 2015.

81. Update report in relation to Planning Enforcement Action at The Old Hall, Tamworth Road

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Executive Director of Place which provided an update on enforcement action undertaken to date in relation to The Old Hall, Tamworth Road concerning the continuing wilful neglect of this Grade II Listed Building; under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended). The report outlined the actions taken to date and those that were available to the Council. The update on progress was requested by the Cabinet Member at his meeting held on 18 December 2014 (Minute 62(b) refers).

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Policing and Equalities:

- 1. Endorses the actions taken to date and notes those actions proposed.**
- 2. Requests a further progress report to be presented to the Cabinet Member meeting scheduled for 23 April 2015.**

82. Any Other Business

There were no other items of private business.

(Meeting closed at 3.40 pm)