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Coventry City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport held at 2.00 pm on Monday, 12 February 2018

Present:

Members: Councillor K Caan (Cabinet Member)
Councillor M Lapsa (Shadow Cabinet Member)

Other Members: Councillor D Skinner

Employees (by Directorate):

People L Gaulton

Place M Andrews, N Chaplin, L Knight

Apologies: Councillor R Ali

Public Business

11. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

12. Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th September 2017 were agreed and signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

13. Petition - Coventry City Council To Carry Out Air Quality/Pollution Surveys In and Around Tile Hill Village

The Cabinet Member considered a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Place), which responded to a petition requesting that the Council undertake air quality surveys in and around Tile Hill Village and for proposed developments not to go ahead should air pollution prove to be above acceptable levels.

A petition bearing 29 signatures had been submitted by Councillor Skinner, a Westwood Ward Councillor, who attended the meeting along with Mrs Sprouse, the petition organiser. Both Councillor Skinner and Mrs Sprouse spoke in support of the petition. The petitioners were concerned about the air quality in and around Tile Hill Village following large housing developments that had taken place over recent years and in view of the proposed large new housing developments planned for Westwood Heath Road, Cromwell Lane and Burton Green. In addition they were concerned regarding the impact of planned heavy works connected with HS2 over the next few years. They felt it was important that the current air quality be measured and then consistently measured over the next 5-10 years. If the current air quality proved to be above acceptable levels and a danger to public health, the petitioners wanted the above mentioned proposed developments to not go ahead until such time as the air quality improved and could be maintained.

The report indicated that the Council recognised the impact of air pollution on health and wellbeing and was committed to taking action to improve air quality in the City. It was recognised that air pollution could have effects on health throughout life, contributing to the development or exacerbation of a range of health conditions, as well as to mortality at a population level. In this respect, matters of health and wellbeing (including air quality), formed an integral part of a range of Council Plans and strategies, including the Council's new Local Plan.

It was noted that the new Local Plan, adopted by Council on 5th December 2017, included a range of policies and site allocations and contained a new policy (Policy EM7) specifically on air quality. In addition, the Council were working on developing a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) on air quality, which would provide technical guidance and support to those submitting planning applications. The new Local Plan also contained a monitoring commitment to ensure ongoing monitoring of air quality across the City with an overarching aim of removing parts of the city from the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), which the city was designated in 2009.

As part of the AQMA designation, the area around Tile Hill Village was, at the time, not deemed of sufficient concern to justify regular monitoring. Although there had been higher levels of development in the area over the last decade, much of this had focussed on the Bannerbrook site (former Massey Ferguson factories) and had reflected a change in land use from industrial to residential. It was also acknowledged that the construction of the railway flyover and expansion of the Tile Hill Railway Station Park and Ride facility had added additional highway pressure to the area. Notwithstanding this, the overriding characteristics of the area did not raise immediate concerns around the risk of excessive levels of poor air quality.

The report further indicated that the Council had been given the opportunity by DEFRA to prepare a 'Local Plan for Air Quality'. Despite sharing the same name as the planning document, it was a very different plan and would not form a material consideration in planning terms. The Plan would look to reduce existing levels of Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) at a number of hotspots around the City in the shortest time possible. Actions arising from the plan were likely to focus on sites in and around the city centre.

Mrs Sprouse circulated a document which sought clarification on a number of matters within the report and the Cabinet Member requested that officers prepare a written response to these following the meeting.

Given the concerns raised by the petitioners, it was proposed to include the areas of recent development in and around Tile Hill Village for consideration in the next round of air monitoring. It was noted that, at present, this area showed no indicators as an area of poor air quality.

The petitioners were advised that, not assessing future developments using the adopted Local Plan and other Council policies would leave decisions open to legal challenge. In addition to potential significant financial loss, a successful challenge may also remove any conditions placed upon the developer by the Council, including measures to mitigate any adverse effect on air quality.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Sport:

- 1. Notes the specific policy on air quality contained within the newly adopted Local Plan (Policy EM7) and the monitoring framework associated with that Plan.**
 - 2. Support officers in ensuring that areas around Tile Hill Village are included as part of the next annual review programme of air quality monitoring stations. It is a requirement that this review should take on a city-wide approach.**
 - 3. Support officers to continue their efforts to develop a Local Plan for Air Quality according to DEFRA requirements (The Air Quality Plan), that seeks to reduce levels of NO2 pollutants, where there are current exceedances, in the City in the shortest possible time.**
- 14. Any other items of public business which the Chair decides to take as a matter of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.**

There were no other items of public business.

(Meeting closed at 2.50 pm)

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