

FOR: COUNCIL MEETING

8th APRIL 2014

AGENDA ITEM 6

(YELLOW ENCLOSURE)

**REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF LEISURE, PARKS AND WASTE MANAGEMENT
(OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY) COMMITTEE**

PRESENT:

Councillors Mrs Tranter (Chairman), Pullen (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Constable, Mrs Hancocks, Pearce, Willis-Croft, Walker MBE and Yeates.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: were received from Councillor Awty, Bacon and Isaacs (Vice-Chairman)

(In accordance with Council Procedure No. 17 Councillors Eadie and A.F. Smith also attended the meeting.)

Also Present

Andrew Barratt, Director Assets and Environment – Tamworth Borough Council
Nigel Harris, Waste & Environmental Protection Manager – Joint Waste Service

At the meeting of the Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 5th March 2014 the following matters were considered:

1. CHANGES TO THE ORGANIC WASTE SERVICE
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- 1.1 The Committee received a report on potential changes to the Organic Waste Service. It was reported that currently waste from black bins currently went for incineration at a County Council facility at four Ashes rather than being disposed of at landfill. It was then reported that currently brown bin waste, including food, was currently disposed of by an In Vessel Composter which was more costly as it was housed indoors for environmental health reasons due to that food waste.
- 1.2 It was then reported that there was an opportunity to change the organic waste element of the service as the contract with the County Council was due to expire in October 2014. It was noted that if a change was not done by this date, the current arrangement would be retendered and would commit both Lichfield District Council and Tamworth Borough Council for the next 7 to 10 years.
- 1.3 It was reported that it was proposed to request that residents put their food waste into the black bins instead of the brown bins. This would then mean that the food waste was incinerated along with the other residual waste. This in turn would mean that a large saving could be achieved with the garden waste as could be disposed of at a Windrow composting facility with a much lower gate fee and was closer so would be cheaper in fuel and resources.
- 1.4 Members asked if the compost produced by the garden waste was available for sale to the public and it was reported that it was for the operator of the facility to sell as they wished. It was noted that the Joint Waste Service did still encourage home composting and would continue to do so.
- 1.5 Members felt that education and communications to residents on the changes would be important and it was reported that it had been budgeted for. It was suggested that a dedicated phone line and up to date bin collection diaries be produced.

Members were concerned that having bin inspectors would create negative feelings with residents and it was reported that even with a communications plan, some residents may not know of the change and contaminated bins would be cost to the Joint Waste Service and having people go out inspecting would mitigate this.

- 1.6 It was noted that there would be other changes forthcoming in the future regarding recycling including a focus on the quality of the materials recycled and not just the quantity and so a sustained education policy would be produced. It was noted that a report would be submitted when these changes were known.
- 1.7 Overall, the Committee accepted the proposed changes.

2. REVIEW OF THE LICHFIELD DISTRICT'S 2013 FESTIVALS AND EVENTS PROGRAMME AND PREVIEW OF 2014 PROGRAMME
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- 2.1 The Committee received a report on the extent and successes of the Lichfield District 2013 Festivals and Events Programme and outlining the proposed 2014 programme. It was reported that the highlights of the 2013 programme was Royal Visit to beacon Park by the Princess Royal and the World's Shortest Fun Run. It was noted that this fun run attracted global media coverage due to friendly banter with Portland, Oregon in the United States of America who also claimed to have the smallest park.
- 2.2 It was noted that the Economic Growth, Environment and Development (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee had the remit for tourism and so would also be considering this report this year and then on solely in subsequent years. It was requested by the Chairman that it may help that Committee to have more detailed budget and resource implications for the 2014 programme.
- 2.3 Members asked if there were any new events planned for 2014 and it was reported that so far, the only additional event planned was the Dig It Gardening Festival which was still in the early planning stage and was being organised by the Lichfield Town Team. It was noted that Burntwood Business Crew were considering doing a similar event.
- 2.4 It was reported that the skatepark had been handed to the District Council by the contractors and there would be a special skating competition on the 5th April 2014.
- 2.5 Members then asked for the net cost to run the Lichfield Proms in Beacon Park event and it was reported that it was approximately £4k but will always push for sponsorship and sale of gazebos and other promotional items. It was noted that although weather was a risk to the event, it had only been rained off once in recent times and luckily, the Garrick Theatre hosted it indoors.
- 2.6 Members asked what steps were being taken to make the event cost neutral and it was reported that each year the event gets bigger and better which helped close the gap but it should be considered that there were other non direct benefits from the event including business uplift with more people in the City Centre. When asked, it was agreed to produce an economic impact assessment for this event and send it to the Committee.
- 2.7 The report was noted.

COUNCILLOR YEATES DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST AS A THEATRE PROMOTER.

3. FIT FOR THE FUTURE – PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION

- 3.1 The Committee received a report on the outcome of a review into the practicality of introducing charging for access to the Council's public toilets. It was reported that there had been a proposal under the Fit for the Future programme (F4F) to generate a net surplus by introducing a 20p charge for admission to use the Council's public toilets.
- 3.2 It was then reported that since the service had moved to another Directorate, this proposal had been investigated and a number of developments had arisen. It was reported that the first development was the accuracy of the usage of the facilities as it was realised that the light beams used to calculate the number of users counted people in as well as out of the toilets and it was noted that the actual usage was around half that of what was estimated. It was then reported that there had been an expression of interest from a bowls club to acquire the facility at Chasetown High Street. It was reported that resulting from the review, there was also a greater understanding of the cash collection costs and practicalities of locking the toilets associated with the original proposals.
- 3.3 It was then reported that as £38k saving had been calculated as part of F4F, this still needed to be found and this gap could be filled by a set of alternative proposals. These proposals included the incorporation of some toilets into the parks management team and one into the street cleansing team, the transfer of the Chasetown facility to a bowls club and the closure of the facility at Swan Island at Burntwood due to the low levels of usage along with other suggestions. It was also suggested that a Community Public Toilet Scheme could be introduced where private, public and voluntary organisations were encouraged to allow members of the public to use their facilities without charge and without the expectation of a purchase. It was noted that participating premises could receive an annual payment of providing clean, safe, hygienic and easily accessible facilities.
- 3.4 Members asked is an introduction of a Community Public Toilet Scheme would be fazed to ensure the public knew where to go and it was reported that it would be along with a promotional materials like leaflets and widow stickers to promote participating premises.
- 3.5 Members then asked if local businesses would be asked to participate in a Community Public Toilet Scheme first to ensure they got the benefit and it was reported that this would be kept in mind however it would be best to have a mixture of small local companies and larger national ones as the larger stores would be open for longer hours.
- 3.6 Members felt that the Swan Island toilet attracted anti-social behaviour and agreed that its closure would be beneficial.
- 3.7 Members agreed that the charging proposals be dispensed with and the alternative proposals as reported be investigated further.

4. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

- 4.1 Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme and Council's Forward Plan. It was noted that forthcoming items for the next municipal year could include Leisure Services Fit for the Future Review, Fees and Charges, Restoration of Stowe fields and Pool along with various Waste Services items.
- 4.2 The Work Programme and Forward Plan were noted.

5. VOTE OF THANKS

- 5.1 It was proposed, duly seconded and resolved that the sincere thanks of the Committee be recorded to all the Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Officers for their work during the past year.

Mrs H. Tranter
Chairman
Operational Services, Leisure, Parks and Play (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee