

FOR: COUNCIL MEETING

14 July 2015

AGENDA ITEM 9

(YELLOW ENCLOSURE)

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

PRESENT:

Councillors Awty (Chairman), Matthews (Vice-Chairman), Miss Fisher, Miss Hassall, Mrs Pullen, Mrs Tranter, Mrs Woodward and A Yeates.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received from Councillors Mrs Banevicius, Constable and B W Yeates.

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

At the meeting of the Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview and Scrutiny) Committee held on 25 June 2015 the following matters were considered:

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE:

- 1.1 Consideration was given to the Committee's Terms of Reference and the Chairman gave the Cabinet Member for Leisure and the Cabinet Member for Waste Management the opportunity to introduce themselves and outline their portfolios and priorities.
- 1.2 It was advised that the Committee's Overview and Scrutiny remit also included areas within the Cabinet Member for Tourism's portfolio and Members noted that an organisational chart was being prepared.

2. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW 2014/15 FOR THE LEISURE AND PARKS DIRECTORATE AND THE JOINT WASTE SERVICE:

- 2.1 A report was submitted on the progress made in connection with the activities and projects set out in the Council's One Year Action Plan for 2014/15.
- 2.2 The report included a statistical analysis of key performance indicators and Members were advised of the targets and performance indicators that had been proposed for 2015/16.
- 2.3 It was noted that the Council had been one of the best performing authorities in the country for recycling, and it was questioned how it would ensure a place amongst the best in the future.
- 2.4 The Cabinet Member for Waste advised that education would play an important part, and whereas the focus had previously been on the quantity of material collected the emphasis was now on the quality of material collected. He gave details of a campaign that would be undertaken over the Christmas period that would be positive in nature and seek to highlight items that could be put into recycling bins. It was confirmed that residents could request further blue recycling bins free of charge.

- 2.5 The Committee was advised that the County Council, as a waste disposal authority, had set a target of £1.5 million savings in its waste operations and this could have an impact on the District Council.
- 2.6 With regard to open spaces, it was asked if Members could access information about the Council's land ownership. The Director for Leisure and Parks advised that a lot of work had been undertaken to identify and understand the extent of the Council's ownership and an internal database had been set up. As part of phase 2 of the parks, grounds maintenance and countryside review it was intended that this information would be made available on the Council's website.
- 2.7 Following a suggestion by the Director for Leisure and Parks it was agreed that a tour be arranged for Members of the Committee to see the key leisure and waste facilities.
- 2.8 The Committee discussed the Garrick and the Cabinet Member for Leisure advised that in reducing grants to the Theatre he was seeking to achieve a balance whereby the facility remained viable, but increasingly attracted money from elsewhere. He noted that the subsidy had been reduced by £150,000 in 2015/16 and would be reduced by a further £150,000 in 2016/17.
- 2.9 Reference was made to the socio-economic impact assessment commissioned by the Garrick. It was understood that the Garrick's management was committed to this, and it was confirmed that the Council would continue to press for its completion at the earliest opportunity.
- 2.10 Reference was made to a meeting with representatives from the Garrick on 15 January 2015 and the Committee stressed that as a recipient of public funds it was essential that the Garrick should explain how these funds were used.
- 2.11 Details were given of recent management changes at the Garrick and, in view of the fact that these had taken place recently, it was deemed appropriate that consideration of the Garrick Trust by the Committee be slipped back to the October meeting.
- 2.12 The report referred to the results of an Active People Survey which found that 42.1% of Lichfield District residents over the age of 16 were active on one or more occasions a week making it the most active District in Staffordshire and third most active in the region. Questions were asked about variations across the District since there were likely to be considerable differences between Wards.
- 2.13 In addition to sports participation figures it was suggested that information about other leisure time activities would be useful, for example the time spent watching television or playing computer games. This data might enable better targeting of initiatives to educate people about activities that were available to them. It was noted during the discussion that the figure relating to the number of concessionary Leisure Activity Passes issued to disabled people and carers needed to be amended.
- 2.14 The Cabinet Member for Leisure said the Council needed to address a fundamental question as part of the Leisure Services Review, namely what it considered to be Leisure. He said Leisure did not just equate to sport but could involve a variety of other activities including walking and going to the theatre. This linked to other questions, for example did the Council want to provide leisure centres or assist local clubs to provide services? The Cabinet Member said he would like to see a ground up review of Leisure.
- 2.15 In the context of wider work to transfer assets to community groups and clubs the Committee considered issues relating to the transfer of playing fields at Hospital Road, Hammerwich to Burntwood Dragons and Burntwood Phonex Football Club. It was

noted that the Council had been working with other clubs that had used the pitches to find alternative provision.

- 2.16 Concerns were raised regarding the Football Club's capacity to deal with anti-social problems at the site. In response details were given of measures that had been undertaken including locking the car park gates at certain times, which could be built into the new lease agreement. Assurance was given that the Council would continue to co-operate with the club and they would not be left alone to deal with anti-social issues.

(COUNCILLOR A YEATES DECLARED A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THIS ITEM IN VIEW OF HIS WORK WITH LICHFIELD GARRICK)

3. FIT FOR THE FUTURE SERVICE REVIEW FINAL REPORT - PARKS, GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AND COUNTRYSIDE

- 3.1 The Committee was advised that the Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Countryside Review, which formed part of the Fit for the Future programme, was largely complete and had identified savings of £200,000.
- 3.2 Members were informed of the intention to complete a Phase 2 Review with the aim of finding further annual savings of £150,000.
- 3.3 The Cabinet Member for Leisure drew attention to two key thematic objectives, the reduction of the Council's estate and the reduction of unit costs through increased efficiency.
- 3.4 It was advised that a number of positive meetings had taken place over the past twelve months in connection with the transfer of open space to Burntwood Town Council.
- 3.5 In view of the intervals between meetings, it was felt that ongoing communication on the progress of the review was important to ensure Members kept abreast of developments. The Chairman suggested that this be done through briefing papers and it was agreed that details of the Project Initiation Document would be circulated when ready.

4. WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

- 4.1 The Committee was advised that Councillor Derrick, had maintained an interest in the Lichfield District Council memorial at the National Memorial Arboretum and arrangements need to be made for its ongoing maintenance. It was agreed that a briefing paper be prepared on this.
- 4.3 Given frequent questions addressed to Members on the subject, it was agreed that a briefing paper would be issued in relation to the scheduling and frequency of street cleaning. In response to queries it was also agreed that a position statement be circulated on the Council's public conveniences.
- 4.4 In view of the emphasise on collaborative working and transferring assets to third parties it was suggested that the Committee could learn from Hammerwich Cricket Club, who had already assumed control of an asset, to see how the approach was working. It was also suggested that the Committee might like to hear about Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's plans for Gentleshaw Common. The Chairman and Vice Chairman agreed to look into this matter.

R J Awty
Chairman

Leisure, Parks and Waste Management (Overview & Scrutiny) Committee