

**MINUTES  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Monday 18 September 2017**

Councillor Meredith Lawrence (Chair)

Councillor Bruce Andrews	Councillor Stephen Poole
Councillor Sandra Barnes	Councillor Alex Scroggie
Councillor Kevin Doyle	Councillor John Truscott
Councillor Roxanne Ellis	Councillor Boyd Elliott
Councillor Barbara Miller	Councillor Sarah Hewson
Councillor Marje Paling	

Apologies for absence: Councillor Paul Feeney, Councillor Tammy Bisset and Councillor Helen Greensmith

Officers in Attendance: H Lee, H Barrington, M Cryer, M Hill and R Caddy

Guests in Attendance Councillor P Barnes

**8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS.**

Apologies were received from Councillor Bisset, Greensmith and Feeney.

**9 TO APPROVE, AS A CORRECT RECORD, THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 JULY 2017**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the above meeting, having been circulated, be approved as a correct record.

**10 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS.**

None.

**11 PROGRAMME OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER ATTENDANCE**

The committee welcomed Councillor Peter Barnes, Portfolio Holder for Environment to discuss a range of issues relating to his area of responsibility. Mike Hill, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Mel Cryer, Service Manager, Parks and Street Care also attended the meeting.

Councillor Barnes discussed questions identified in advance of the meeting.

Questions from Councillor Lawrence:

**1. What lessons have been learnt from the recent unauthorised encampments on Gedling's open spaces?**

There have been three encampments on GBC green spaces and one on County Council land recently.

At Colwick Park travellers illegally entered by digging up and removing two bollards off the Crosslands Meadow Estate to allow them to drive on. They then additionally accessed the park by the play area from the city direction. Both areas have now been reinforced with new steel barriers and swing gates and a height restrictor barrier. The cost for all of this were £7,500 for metal barriers and gates, £3,000 for clean-up and £1,000 for pitch renovation.

At Burton Road Jubilee Park offenders disc-ground the metal lock box and lock and entered by the gate owned by Severn Trent. A new reinforced steel lock box has been welded on the gate. This incurred costs of £500 for the steel lock box and lock, £1,500 for clean-up and £200 for pitch renovation.

The area at Carlton Forum on County Council owned land was free to drive onto. Concrete Bollards have now been placed at the entrance to prevent this happening again. £500 clean-up costs.

Thackeray's Lane - Prior to leaving the Woodthorpe Grange Park encampment in the City the travellers disc cut the locks off the entrance gates which enabled them to drive straight on. They have now left site. New locks have been put on the barriers. Clean up costs of £2,000 and an estimated pitch reinstatement of £1,000.

This is a growing issues made worse by changes in legislation in Ireland which has resulted in some travellers moving to England. It is not one group of travellers but several different groups who communicate with each other about possible sites. Installation of cameras would be expensive and do little to address the problem. There are no permanent sites in Gedling and even if sites were available it is unlikely these would be chosen by the perpetrators. It is understood that the recent groups are travellers and are not the same as Gypsy or Roma families. This is a growing problem across all local authority, it is currently subject to discussions between all Nottinghamshire authorities and is being considered in Parliament.

**2. When was the last time the feasibility of the provision of toilet facilities on Gedling open spaces, for example Colwick recreation ground, was considered, and is this something that could be looked at in the future?**

We now only have 5 public toilets left. Wood Street, Cavendish Road, Burnstump, Bestwood Country Park, and Arnot Hill Park. Because of current ongoing budget reductions there is no immediate desire to construct any further toilet blocks in the Borough. The pavilion at Colwick Rec is not suitable for alteration and would allow full access to the entire pavilion if left unsecured and open to vandalism and ASB attacks. Provision of toilets on recreation areas was identified as being necessary, however due to issues around expense and vandalism it would not be possible to install.

Questions from Councillor Doyle

- 3 I have noticed recently an increase of illegal fly tipping on a large, industrial scale covering huge expanses of rural ground. This has affected two sites in neighbouring counties but also a well-publicised case in Cotgrave. I would like assurance that the Portfolio holder is aware of this increased risk?**

The Portfolio Holder and Parks and Street Care (PASC) staff are well aware of this problem which affects the whole country. Best practice is shared at the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group and locally the Nottinghamshire Fly Tipping and Waste Management Forum meets to share acquired learning. Staff from PASC and Public Protection meet weekly to discuss current hot spots.

- **Has he identified potential areas in GBC for this activity?**

Areas identified are Graveley Hollow, Calverton, Devil's Elbow, Main Street (Green Lane) Burton Joyce, Honeywood Gardens Estate.

- **Liased with County Hall in both Leicester and Nottingham to establish lessons learnt, Modus Operandi of the culprits etc.?**

The Nottinghamshire Fly Tipping and Waste Forum meet every two months, these group share recent operational issues to provide acquired learning and discuss new campaigns to target the offence.

Nationally information on fly tipping is provided by the National Fly Tipping Prevention Group.

- **Discuss and formulated an action plan if this were to occur in our area?**

Public Protection Officers enforce fly tipping using fixed penalty notices. They investigate the majority of cases in an attempt to evidence ownership of the dumped waste. One unit of four covert cameras have recently been purchased and are deployed in our hot spot areas... GBC have had some success in this area with two high profile cases, publicised in the local press and dealt with by the Courts.

The strategy to deal with large scale fly tips and halt the increase has been reviewed and current hot spots identified in conjunction with PASC operatives and warden patrols are being targeted, particularly in areas of deprivation.

Two advertising A board signs have also be made to identify and allow witnesses for any larger fly tipping cases to report what they have seen to GBC, and we also continue to put up our normal fly tipping signs up related to hot spots. 'Fixed penalty notice' monies now come directly to GBC rather than the courts and are used to further fund fly tipping initiatives. The no-fly tipping message is promoted at the Arnold Carnival and at other events.

Crime scene tape which is now stuck to and surrounds any identified fly tipping to advertise it as an offence and let people know it has been reported.

The authority is working with County on the waste and recycling centres, and the introduction of the permit system.

A weekly meeting also takes place which will ensure we maintain close communication between PASC, Waste and Public Protection in our efforts to reduce and prevent this offence from occurring.

Members identified litter as being a particular problem in the Borough in particular after the car boot sale in Calverton, recreation grounds after football matches, outside fast food outlets and on grass verges.

It was agreed that

- The coordination of county council grass cutting schedules should be coordinated with litter picks where whenever possible
- Although letters have been sent to football clubs asking them to tidy up after matches another one should be sent reminding them about this.
- Fast food outlets should be reminded that they should clear up waste near their business.
- Councillor Elliot would contact the Calverton car boot organisers to discuss litter.

### **NI 192. Percentage of Household Waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting**

**The current figure is based on an estimate, when will this actual figure be known, and why the delay?**

Waste data flow information is updated and provided to us on a quarterly basis in October and April, so first quarter is always an estimate.

**Quite a few people asked about not being able to recycle the strawberry punnet type of plastics which now proliferates and packages all sorts of products. This is clear plastic of a flimsy nature. On a visit to Veolia they did refer to this and said their equipment could not handle these plastics. However, in conversation with other people in different districts they say these can be recycled. Could the portfolio holder, establish from Veolia exactly why they cannot be recycled, why other companies can recycle and when will Veolia develop and take more of our plastics etc? For many years now the types of recyclable material has**

**remained static. GBC should ask and seek for a wider variety of disposables to be added to our green bins?**

All recycling centres have different requirements for the recycling of plastic products and Veolia currently instructs us that they cannot be recycled. They have been asked to provide further information as soon as this is available Members will be updated.

Members concluded that the contract with Veolia DOES meet current demand for the recycling of many products but because of the length of the contract there was very little that could be done to increase the range of recyclable products.

- 4 Bolton Council has revealed that in their first year of operation “slim bins” have saved taxpayers £3.4m in waste disposal costs. In June last year the council swapped from the normal 240-litre grey household waste bins to thin 140-litre bins to save on landfill costs and boost recycling.**

**Has GBC looked into this potential saving and increased recyclable waste?**

Gedling currently operates with 240 litre bins and as these break and are replaced with new slim line 180 litre bins. If they were replaced all at once 50,000 bins at £20.00 each would need a capital outlay of £1 million. Ashfield District Council received support from the County Council to do this on the grounds that waste going into landfill would save money, Gedling was not considered a priority.

**Actions**

- 5 Raise the profile of the ‘Love where you Live’ campaign to educate residents and reduce incidents of environmental crime. Could the Portfolio holder please elaborate on the “Love Where You Live Campaign, the aim, scope, delivery times, measurable etc.?”**

‘Love Where You Live’ is an umbrella Keep Britain Tidy campaign that runs across the county. There have been a number of Love Where You Live street cleansing initiatives over the last 12 months, including:

- The Keep Britain Tidy Big Tidy ‘Great British Litter Hero’ initiative, Children were invited to design a super litter hero outfit . The ‘Green Nudge’ which was publicised by Kirsty Allsopp a national TV presenter, who has over ‘400,000’ followers nationally which helped get the message out there.
- Social media is used to message out that Litter and Dog Fouling are not acceptable. ‘We’re Watching You’, Fluorescent Eyes and Dog Fouling Banners. The Dog Poo fairy and ‘dog poo tree’ are used to increase public awareness of the anti-social issue.

- Targeted street sweeps. For example Byron Street, Daybrook and Dunstan Street, Netherfield. Where the residents of 'hot spot' streets have received letters advising that we will be cleaning their road on a certain date and requesting that they move their cars for the duration of the street sweep.
- Volunteer assistance for example staff clean ups have taken place at the Hobbucks, and at Top Valley behind the housing where fly tipping over garden fences has occurred in the past, and is degrading the environment. Sponsorship support from local companies, L'Oreal, McDonalds, and Boots who sponsor bins and provide corporate staff to carry out environmental cleansing initiatives.
- Staff member to litter pick in Arnot Hill Park on Saturday afternoons during the summer.
- Dog Fouling and Litter stencils in biodegradable paint.
- Support for litter picks by supplying black bags, litter pickers, gloves and fluorescent
- Advertising on Council Vehicles, promoting an anti-littering, dog fouling and fly tipping message on bin lorries and street cleansing vehicles.
- Use of restorative justice personnel to carry out environmental initiatives. E.g. paint Burton Road Pavilion. Litter pick, sweep up leaves etc.

Members considered initiatives like the Netherfield Best Garden encouraged people to take a pride in their area and assisted in changing people's attitudes to keeping their streets tidy.

**6 Undertake a review of street cleansing operations and invest/reallocate resources as appropriate.**

**Both of these are at 0% and need to be completed by end March 2018, when will there be some progress on this review?**

This will move forward when staff resources are available.

**RESOLVED TO:**

- Thank Councillor P Barnes for an interesting and informative presentation; and to
- note the report.

Rosie Caddie, Service Manager, Customer Services and Communications attended the Committee to discuss the Council's complaints process, analysis of complaints received and dealt with by the Council's internal complaints procedure, and the complaints and enquiries received by the Ombudsman 2016/17.

It was explained that customers are encouraged to give feedback, good and bad, in the form of complaints and compliments. There is a complaints form on line, paper copies available in leisure centres. When a complaint is received it is uploaded on to an electronic system and timescales are in place for response times.

The complaints procedure follows a three tier process

- Where a complaint is not upheld in full or in part at stage 1, the complainant may ask for it to be considered further under stage 2 of the complaints procedure
- If the complainant is not happy with the response at Stage 2 they are entitled to refer to the Local Government Ombudsman

Complaints and compliments received are monitored on a quarterly basis by SLT.

Year on year there has been a reduction in complaints and an increase in compliments and they are now nearly level.

In 2016/17 less than half of stage 1 complaints were upheld or partially upheld and a reducing number progress on to Stage 2. Only 19% of cases were upheld or partially upheld at stage 2. There was a slight increase in complaints progressing to the Ombudsman 9 in 2015/16 and 11 in 2016/17, three were upheld.

The nature of complaints included 46% for service failure, 14% for staff attitude/behaviour, 17% policy implementation, 8% quality/accuracy of advice and 15% were undefined.

Some service areas receive more complaints due to the nature of their service. Revenues receive a high volume but less than half are upheld. Leisure Centres receive a higher amount and members of staff are trained to deal with complaints effectively. Some services have very low levels of complaints mainly due to the fact they are not public facing services.

Members requested information about the three complaints that were upheld by the Ombudsman. They were informed that they all related to planning issues and not responding to the complaint within the time frame of ten working days. This problem was due to staffing issues which have now been addressed and should not happen again.

Councillor Andrews left the meeting at 7.00pm.

**RESOLVED to;**

- To thank Rosie Caddy for an informative presentation; and
- Note the information provided.

**13 COUNCIL PLAN 2017/19: OVERVIEW OF QUARTER 1**

The Director of Organisational Development and Democratic Services presented a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, informing the committee about the position against Improvement, Actions and Performance Indicators in the 2017/2018 Gedling Plan.

Two of the 83 Gedling Plan actions have been completed, with the remaining 81 either in progress or assigned to an officer. As the data only refers to the first quarter of the financial year it is expected that over time these actions will be completed.

Overall performance shows that out of a total of 34 indicators, 22 were on or above target, 2 were slightly below and 8 indicators missed their target. One indicator is for tracking purposes only. Examples of positive performance included improvement in the time taken to process planning applications, an increase in the number of events and people attending the Bonington Theatre, an increase in resolving cases where people considered themselves homeless and the number of One Stop Customers seen within 15 minutes.

Two areas of concern where performance indicators missed target were the net number of homes delivered and affordable homes delivered and, though an improvement on the previous month, the level of sickness absence.

During discussion the following points were raised:

- Moves to encourage developers to accelerate the number of houses being built have been tried.
- A review is currently taking place of all schemes that have received planning permission to identify if there is any way to encourage starts on site. Members requested additional information regarding this issue.

The report which highlights key achievements delivered during quarter 1 focusing on where the Council has made a real difference to people's lives was discussed. The Redhill 3G football pitches, the number of breastfeeding sites, refugee Befriending Project Development and Apprenticeship training accreditation were all highlighted as positive achievements.

The need to make the people who live in Gedling aware of the achievements was highlighted and how Facebook, Twitter and other social media could be used to do this was discussed. The possible lack of a dementia café for people living in rural areas was also considered.

**RESOLVED to:**

- Note the progress against actions and performance indicators in the 2017/19 Gedling Plan
- Request additional information relating to progressing housing developments.

**14**

**SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

**The Armed Forces Community Covenant**

Councillor Collis as Member Lead for armed forces relationships attended the Committee to discuss his role and current initiatives to support the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

He explained that the Armed Forces Covenant was signed by the Mayor of Gedling in 2013. In 2014 Gedling was awarded the Silver Award for Employers when it was confirmed that they would support all current and future employees in the reserved forces. This has been re-awarded in 2015, 2016 and 2017. Gedling is the only Borough Council in Nottinghamshire to have achieved this.

Representatives from the authority attended a very informative Armed Forces Covenant Symposium, the Civil and Military Partnership Board and an event called honouring the Covenant organised by veterans in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire where problems, progress and associated matters linked to the Covenant were discussed.

Gedling Borough is currently reviewing the development plan for the Covenant, and the Covenant Action Plan will be refreshed to include the following key action points:

- Updating the Covenant web page, adding links to relevant web sites
- Identifying the military and ex-military community. Currently we can only identify this is people make themselves known. The possibility of including a question to establish this in customer service, leisure and benefit registration processes is being considered
- Maximising the Covenant Fund
- Military/ex-military engagement projects which would include exploring the possibility to establish informal support groups

- Engaging cross departmental impact assessments of services on military/military community
- Supporting military memorials and memorial events
- Supporting the RBL outreach service in the Civic Centre
- Accessing opportunities through the County Council Community Voluntary Service.

Members suggested that leisure centre concessions should be considered for military and ex military personnel. They also felt it would be helpful to have a written update at the next committee on progress of the Covenant refresh.

Councillors Truscott, Elliott and Hewson left the meeting at 7.40pm

### **Visit to the Contact Centre**

It was agreed that Members, who expressed an interest in visiting the Contact Centre would be contacted after the Committee.

### **Collection of inappropriately filled bins**

Members discussed the written response to the request for information regarding arrangements for inappropriately filled bins to be collected and educating residents about correctly filling refuse bins. Members appreciated the response but decided that they would like to invite the Service Manager, Transport and Waste to the next Committee to enable them to explore a number of issues.

### **Scrutiny Reviews 2017/18**

The need for additional Members to be included in the proposed new reviews was discussed. It was decided that a further request should be circulated with a reminder that evening meetings could be arranged if this would be more convenient for Members.

### **Programme of Portfolio Holder Attendance**

The forward plan for the attendance of Portfolio Holder attendance was agreed.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- Thank Councillor Collis for attending the meeting; and

- Request a written update on progress to refresh the Covenant
- Invite the Service Manager Transport and Waste to the next Committee
- Continue with arrangements for the Contact Centre visit
- Request additional members for the proposed working groups
- Agree the forward plan of Portfolio Holder attendance.

**15        REPORTS AND NOTICES RECEIVED BY THE CHAIR OF  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

Members considered a report, which had been circulated in advance of the meeting, which included information on matters referred to the Chair as required by the constitution.

**16        ANY OTHER ITEM WHICH THE CHAIR CONSIDERS URGENT.**

None.

The meeting finished at 7.50 pm

Signed by Chair:  
Date: