



# Environment Committee

## Minutes

Wednesday, 16 February 2022 at 18:30

**Present:**

Councillor Wells (in the Chair); Councillors Annison, Bensly, Bird, Cameron, P Carpenter, Fairhead, D Hammond, Robinson-Payne, Talbot, Thompson, Waters-Bunn and B Wright.

**Also in attendance at the above meeting were:**

Mrs P Boyce (Strategic Director), Mr C Silverwood (Director of Operational Services), Mr J Wilson (Head of Environmental Services), Mrs J Beck (Head of Property and Asset Management), Mr I Postle-Knowles (Street Scene Supervisor), Mr N Fountain (Senior Strategic Planner), Ms R Harrison (Technical Officer) and Mrs T Bunn (Senior Democratic Services Officer).

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Wells declared a personal interest in item 5 as he is a member of the GYBS board.

Councillor P Carpenter declared a personal interest in item 5 as she is a member of the GYBS board.

However, in accordance with the Council's Constitution they were allowed to both speak and vote on the matters.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November were agreed by assent.

Matters Arising

The Strategic Director updated the Committee on Project Facet which was progressing strongly. She asked for views on the installation of the Ballot Bins which are designed to reduce litter from cigarette ends. These are available for businesses to install and they would be responsible for maintenance and emptying.

RESOLVED

That the Environment Committee supports the use of the Ballot Bins as part of Project Facet.

### **4 FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the Forward Plan.

Agreed

### **5 FLYTIPPING HOTSPOT CAMPAIGN**

The Committee received a presentation from the Head of Environmental Services.

Objectives of the project were to:

- reduce the amount of flytipping
- reduce or eradicate bins being left out in alleyways
- to create some pride in location and ownership of the issue by residents

He described the two phases of the plan, Phase 1 - Education and Engagement, Phase 2 - enforcement and advised Committee that the campaign has proved to be very successful, with almost zero bins being left out in the targeted alleyways. Fly tipping reduced from approximately 5-10 fly tips per day in some alleys to approximately 5-7 fly tips per week across all 12 alleyways. There has also been improvement in other alleyways in the area with little intervention from officers.

The Committee discussed the options in respect of the next location to target with suggestions of Cobholm, Nelson Road South, Northgate Street and Lawn Avenue.

Councillor Wells congratulated the team on the results achieved in respect of the project and asked what had been put in place to support sustainability moving forward. The Head of Environmental Services advised that the process

of 'stepping away' will be gradual, monitoring and enforcement will continue which will reinforce the benefits until this becomes normal status.

Councillor Hammond thanked the team for the impressive improvements made bearing in mind the issues previously experienced.

Councillor Bird concurred with the congratulations but asked if there could be some linkage with the responsibilities of landlords in respect of flytipping in gardens along with overfilled bins and how this could be enforced as part of the selective licensing scheme.

The Head of Environmental Services advised that refuse crews should not collect residual waste but this should be treated as flytipping. He noted that the issues are being considered as part of the selective licensing work and also the team are engaged with the HMO properties.

The Committee discussed the feasibility of having community clear up days and a community spirit award to support good neighbourhoods.

The Committee noted the presentation contents and asked that their thanks were passed onto the teams for this piece of work.

## **6 GYBS CLEANSING HIT SQUAD UPDATE**

The Director of Operational Services gave an update presentation on the achievements to date of the GYBC cleansing hit squad. He introduced Isaac Postle-Knowles, the Street Scene Supervisor who manages the hit squad.

The team have a branded van which gives them high visibility in the borough and their work ethic is a benchmark for the rest of the team. The funding for the team is now contained within in the base budget and there is a plan to make the team self funded through sourcing specific funding pots moving forward. The work allocation is focused through the Environmental Services Team.

Councillor P Carpenter said that she was delighted with this project, the work and leadership have been inspirational with a huge impact in the town.

The Committee thanked the team for the work they have undertaken.

The Committee noted the presentation contents.

## **7 PLAYGROUND AND OPEN SPACE REVIEW**

The Committee received a presentation and report from the Head of Property and Asset Management updating them on the Playground and Open Space Audit.

The Strategic Director explained to the Committee that they had commissioned this report as part of their remit within the Constitution in respect of grounds maintenance and upkeep. The Committee is also able to scrutinise the Housing and Neighbourhoods Committee reports in respect of facilities and assets in respect of play areas but any strategic element is the responsibility of the Housing and

Neighbourhood Committee. Therefore any report in respect of parks and open spaces would be referred to the Housing and Neighbourhood Committee for a decision.

Councillor Wells referred to previous discussions in respect of these roles and responsibilities which also included selective licensing and asked the Committee to agree that he make representation to the Constitution Working Party as Chair of the Environment Committee to suggest that the Constitution is amended to correct this perceived anomaly.

Agreed

The Head of Property and Asset Management introduced Rachel Harrison and Nick Fountain who had been responsible for compiling the information included in the audit.

The Head of Property and Asset Management summarised the report contents, noting that there are 97 play areas identified as part of this audit which are spread over the 17 Wards and 21 parishes of the Borough. In total 93 of these are considered playground sites are covered in regular play area inspections. There are four sites which are not included in regular playground inspections but are included in the audit.

Not all of the play areas are in the ownership of the Borough Council but all are included in the repairs and maintenance schedules currently. The plan moving forward is to engage with the various stakeholders such as Housing Associations, Parishes and Community organisation to review how the spaces can be maintained and updated moving forwards. The action plan includes details of next steps in relation to finance and funding with these partners outside the Borough Council and to review the process and designation of Section 106 and Section 111 funding along with alternative ownership models.

Councillor Annison thanked the team for the comprehensive report and asked that members be provided with more detailed, information in respect of S106 and S111 monies to include how it is currently allocated and the options being explored.

Councillor P Carpenter recorded her thanks for this comprehensive document which is easy to understand and well laid out. She said that the last two years with the pandemic have taught us that we need parks and open spaces which are accessible to all. This work has been three years in the making and is extremely welcome and she looked forward to the implementation of the next steps.

The Committee discussed the issues experienced in the length of time it had taken in the past to get extensive repairs completed due to issues around the supply chain. They suggested that it would be beneficial to source sustainably built equipment from UK suppliers if this was possible. Also moving forward to have more non-mechanical play areas.

Councillor D Hammond asked that as part of the action plan moving forward a decision was made on the Jellico Road MUCA as this is an area of concern for residents. The Head of Property and Asset Management advised that this will be addressed in the next phase of work.

Councillor Waters-Bunn said she was pleased with the range and depth of the report with particular reference to accessibility moving forward, noting that it is not only the

cost of any equipment which must be taken into account but also the method of access to it. She also asked that the allocation of S106 monies within each ward be circulated to members.

Councillor Talbot said that she was pleased to see the inclusion of outside Gyms and items suitable for older children under consideration and that moving away from mechanical play equipment is beneficial.

Councillor Robinson-Payne thanked the team for the comprehensive report.

The Committee proposed an amendment to recommendation 4, to read:

4. To carry forward the Environmental Services staffing budget under spend to the 2022-23 financial year to cover the Technical Officer role in property services working on the playground and open spaces review project.

Proposed: Councillor P Carpenter  
Seconded: Councillor Waters-Bunn

Agreed

RESOLVED

1. To note the information is being consolidated on Concerto
2. To agree the quantity and quality data provided in relation to play and open spaces.
3. To adopt the action plan which identifies next steps
4. To carry forward the Environmental Services staffing budget under spend to the 2022-23 financial year to cover the Technical Officer role in property services working on the playground and open spaces review project.

Agreed

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that he had received requests that two items be added to the forward plan:

- Low noise / noiseless fireworks on Council owned land
- Update on the Trees for Cities project.

Agreed

The meeting ended at: 21:00