

PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Monday 14th August 2023

PRESENT – Councillor Suleman Khonat (in the Chair) Councillors Taylor, Khan S, Khan Z, Fielding, Marrow and Russell.

ALSO PRESENT – Executive Member for Environment, Councillor Jim Smith, Officers – Tony Watson, Mark Wilde, Carmel Foster-Devine, Simon Ross and Phil Llewellyn.

RESOLUTIONS

5. Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Councillors Salim Sidat and Stephanie Brookfield.

6. Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

7. Declarations of interest

No Declarations of interest were made by Members of the Committee.

8. Environmental Crime

The Committee received a report and presentation on Waste, Litter and Dog Fouling Enforcement, with the Executive Member, supported by Tony Watson and Mark Wilde highlighting:

- The various waste enforcement responsibilities within the portfolio.
- The Council's statutory responsibilities.
- The ways that members of the public could report issues to the Council.
- Information on Littering/Dog Fouling Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Environmental Enforcement – what the Council could do, and what the barriers were.

Members of the Committee made a number of comments relating to the presentation and report, which are summarised below:

- The Committee noted the number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) issued since May 2022 when the contract with District Enforcement

commenced (at nil cost to the Council, with three operatives carrying out enforcement duties), 1577 for Littering, and 6 for Dog Fouling. The Dog Fouling FPNs were noted as particularly low, with the Executive Member and officers advising of the difficulties relating to enforcement of these offences. The Committee felt that the dog enforcement officer referred to at the last meeting could have a key role in enforcement of various dog related issues, with officers explaining that in relation to dangerous dogs that this was a police matter, who had advised that they did not have the resources to support wider enforcement. Tony Watson advised that the dog enforcement officer post had not yet been recruited to as the contract was currently being reviewed, but that the post would be looked at to see what wider responsibilities could be included.

- The Committee debated the issues relating to fly tipping, and enforcement, with officers explaining the different circumstances where FPNs or prosecution were used, and whilst the names of people receiving FPN's could not be made public, the number issued and amount paid could. In cases where waste had been dumped on private land, this was the responsibility of the landowner, who if not able to be traced, would face future charges for the removal of the waste.
- Members noted the current FPN charges and suggested that these should be reviewed with a view to increasing the fees to reflect national charges, and were advised that this was an ongoing discussion.
- When offences were committed, officers needed as much evidence as possible, as video evidence alone was not always sufficient, so dates, times and frequencies etc were crucial to effective enforcement. Mark Wilde outlined the process where evidence could be submitted via Whatsapp, and agreed to send the Whatsapp contact information to Phil Llewellyn to circulate to Members.
- Tony Watson advised Members that in relation to their concerns about removal of litter in their areas, the Council would be moving to a ward based road sweeper arrangement, which would mean a sweeper would visit each ward every 6 weeks.
- Tony Watson also indicated that he would circulate details to Members of litter and dog fouling hotspots.
- Finally, Members were advised that enforcement of tree related issues was a highways responsibility, and that this would be covered at the November meeting of the Committee, when Highways Infrastructure would be discussed.

The Executive Member and supporting officers were thanked for their attendance and input, and then left the meeting.

RESOLVED – It was agreed that Phil Llewellyn would send the draft minutes to Simon Ross, who would identify key actions/recommendations which he would send to Members to agree, and that this would then be relayed to the Executive

Member and officers and reported in the October Council Forum Scrutiny update report.

Signed:

Date:

Chair of the meeting
at which the minutes were confirmed