



**Minutes of the Community Services
Scrutiny Committee held at the Civic Centre,
Riverside, Stafford on Tuesday
23 June 2015**

Chairman - Councillor R P Cooke

Present (for all or part of the meeting):-

Councillors:

C A Baron

R J Barron

G R Collier

M E Jennings

D B Price

J K Price

G O Rowlands

P Roycroft

R M Sutherland

Cabinet Member - Councillor F Beatty - Planning and Regeneration
Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor F A Finlay - Environment and Health Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor J M Pert - Community Portfolio

Cabinet Member - Councillor R M Smith - Leisure Portfolio

Others present - Councillors B M Cross, I E Davies, R J Draper,
A P Edgeller, E G R Jones and L Nixon

Officers in attendance:-

Mr N Jones - Head of Policy and
Improvement

Mr T Manders - Head of
Planning and Regeneration

Mr A Hill - Head of Leisure and
Culture

Mrs L Cowen - Deputy Head of
Finance

Mr A Yendole - Planning Policy
Manager

Mr R Simpson - Regulatory Services
Group Manager

Mr J Fraser - Health and Housing
Services Group Manager

Mr M Street - Environmental Services
Group Manager

Mr J Arnold - Sport and Leisure
Manager

Mr A Bailey - Scrutiny Officer

CSC1 Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 26 February 2015, having been published in Digest No 205, were submitted and signed.

CSC2 **The Plan for Stafford Borough: Part 2 Proposals Document**

Considered the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration which provided an overview of the 'Plan for Stafford Borough: Part 2 - Proposals document that was currently out for public consultation that sought views on the proposed settlement boundaries and policies that formed the second part of the plan.

The Planning Policy Manager, Mr A Yendole attended the meeting and provided Members with an outline of the document including and introduction, the four key policy areas and the processes.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report to which the Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Planning Policy Manager responded accordingly:-

- The inclusion of Hadleigh Park in the proposals;
- Clarification of the gypsy site provision;
- Clarification of the Glover Street site.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be noted

CSC3 **Community Infrastructure Levy - Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule**

Considered the report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration which provided Members with the progress on the Community Infrastructure Levy in Stafford Borough and, in particular, the details of the CIL Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule consultation.

The Planning Policy Manager, Mr A Yendole provided Members with an introduction to the Community Infrastructure Levy and the process for adoption.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report to which the Head of Planning and Regeneration and the Planning Policy Manager responded accordingly:-

- Clarification of the Infrastructure Funding Gap;
- Queried where Community Infrastructure Fund receipts could be spent;
- Confirmation that the Community Infrastructure Levy did not apply to housing for older people and reference to independent living;
- Clarification that the Community Infrastructure Levy applied to housing and retail developments, but not employment;
- Queried what happened to Community Infrastructure Levy receipts in non-Parished areas;
- The time limits on spending Community Infrastructure Levy receipts;

- The way in which Community Infrastructure Levy receipts would be paid.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be noted.

The Chairman (Councillor R P Cooke) declared a Personal and Non-Pecuniary Interest in the following matter as a Member of the Executive Committee of Stafford District Arts Council.

CSC4 **Members Item**

Councillor Mrs C A Baron had submitted the following item under paragraph 2.8 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules:-

“Numerous people have approached me to complain about the extra 50p charge when they go to the Gatehouse Theatre to purchase tickets for shows.

I quite understand the old £1 charge when booking tickets by telephone or on line however, I understand that this charge has been discontinued and the 50p charge across the board introduced.

Could the officers please tell us:-

- 1 When this change was made?
- 2 Who authorised it?
- 3 Why didn't it come to Committee?
- 4 Is this really fair on those organisations such as
 - (a) The Music Festival
 - (b) Stafford Players
 - (c) Castle Players

to name but a few who advertise their productions at a certain price and when people go in to purchase tickets they have to pay an extra 50p. Is it fair on the community who love the theatre and who shouldn't have to pay more than the advertised amount?”

The Cabinet Member (Leisure Portfolio) provided the following response:-

“Booking fees are included in the Fees and Charges which went to full Council on 25 November 2014. At this meeting a Councillor raised a question about it. In addition the principle of booking fees was questioned 12 months previously again at full council. This was when we introduced the £1 transaction fee.

In respect of the change from £1 per transaction to 50p per ticket there is no increase for two people which is the most common booking. The maximum charge is £4 for 8 tickets and above. When we first introduced

the £1 transaction we received some complaints mainly from single pensioners so in consideration of that we reduced it to 50p per ticket and as I say there was no increase for a couple.

Evidence shows that the large majority, if not all theatres, now charge booking fees. One of the main reasons for this is the various types of contract that performers use. When a performer requires a set number of ticket fees the Theatre does not make anything. The performer cannot take any of the booking fee. Some performers require a percentage of the ticket income, again the booking fee is excluded from this calculation. In fact in all cases except where a performer requires a set fee the Theatre loses out without a booking fee.

We now have a modern box office booking system and the booking fee helps cover the cost of maintaining the software and hosting it online 24/7 and other running costs including tickets & ticket wallets. Furthermore when a customer uses their credit card to book a ticket, the theatre is charged 3% commission by the banks. The booking fee helps towards recovering these costs.

There are discounts available at the Gatehouse for Members of the Stafford District Arts Council (of which the 3 people mentioned are Members). Discounts are available for pensioners at most productions.”

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Members’ item be noted.

CSC5 In Pursuit of Success

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Policy and Improvement relating to the performance management for those areas within the remit of the Committee for the quarter 4 period up to 31 March 2015.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Cabinet Member (Planning and Regeneration Portfolio), with the Cabinet Member (Leisure Portfolio), the Head of Planning and Regeneration, the Head of Leisure and Culture) and the Health and Housing Services Group Manager:-

- P1.2 - Continue to develop Stafford and Stone Town Centres - concerns regarding the future viability of Stafford Market, including:-
 - the affect of the loss of traders;
 - the lack of footfall;
 - the need to pursue links with Stafford College;
 - the affect of car parking charges;
 - the affect of not holding the Santa Parade;
- LI25 - Number of new dwellings built - the need to revise the target as part of the Corporate Plan refresh.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the performance management data relating to areas of activity within this Committee's remit be noted.

CSC6 Section 106 Funding Update

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Culture, which presented Members with a progress report on both collected and uncollected off-site contributions on a ward by Ward basis.

The Committee discussed the following aspects of the report with the Head of Leisure and Culture and Sport and Leisure Manager:-

- The trigger points for Application Nos 05/0409/OUT and 06/07263/FUL - Haughton Farm;
- The uncommitted spend for Application No 04/01701/FUL - 148 Weston Road, Stafford;
- The receipt of £14,878 from Application No 11/16313/FUL - 299 Stone Road, Stafford
- The commencement of works for Application No 12/18013/EXT - Former Library HQ, Friars Terrace, Stafford;
- The need to pursue the conditions relating to Application No 12/18095/FUL - The Old Vicarage, Radford Street, Stone.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be noted.

CSC7 Urgent Decision - License for Bridge Works at Trent Road, Stone

The Committee were informed of an urgent decision taken by Cabinet on 5 March 2015 (Minute No CAB67/15 refers) which sought approval for the granting of a licence for the construction of a timber single span footbridge over a channelled watercourse to provide a linked access between the Council's local nature reserve and the proposed residential site.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the urgent decision be noted.

CSC8 Business Planning Report

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration, which presented Members with a review of the programme of business considered by the Committee in 2014/15.

The Committee were informed that during the last year they had considered a wide variety of issues affecting the various portfolios within its remit and had continued to be updated on the outcomes from their Task and Finish Review relating to Stafford Market.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the report be approved and submitted as the Annual Report to the Council.

CSC9 Work Programme - Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Considered the report of the Head of Law and Administration, which presented the Community Services Scrutiny Committee's Work Programme (V1 10/6/15) for forthcoming meetings up to February 2016.

RESOLVED:- that in exercise of the powers delegated to the Committee, the Work Programme (V1 10/6/15) be approved, subject to the amendments made at the meeting.

CHAIRMAN