



TOWN AREA COMMITTEE

PARKSIDE, STATION APPROACH, BURTON STREET, MELTON MOWBRAY

13 MARCH 2016

PRESENT:-

Councillors T Greenow (Chair), T S Bains, T Beaken, M. Blase,  
T Culley, P Cumbers, J. Douglas, J Illingworth, S Lumley, A Pearson,  
P M Posnett, J Wyatt

As Observer

Councillors J Orson, M Sheldon

Chief Executive  
Head of Central Services  
Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods  
Head of Regulatory Services  
Waste & Environmental Maintenance Manager  
Senior Environmental Health Officer  
Administrative Assistant Communications & Member Support

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T28. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Glancy and Hurrell.

T29. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 21 November 2016 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

The Minutes of the meetings held on 19 December 2016 were confirmed and authorised to be signed by the Chairman.

T30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Pearson and Posnett each declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the County Council due to their roles as County Councillors.

### T31.RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

There were no recommendations from other Committees.

*In view of the number of members of the public present, the Chair exercised his right to bring forward the following item.*

### T32.DOG FOULING

The Head of Regulatory Services

- (a) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) providing the Committee with information on the current costs and enforcement of dog fouling and enabling Members to consider further measures, including the feasibility of establishing Public Spaces Protection Orders (Currently known as Dog Control Orders), which would allow fixed penalty notices to be issued
- (b) provided a brief overview of the report, advising
  - i. current measures to tackle the problem of dog fouling included ad-hoc patrols of the areas where most fouling occurred, the installation of temporary CCTV cameras and placing 'We're Watching You' posters in areas which presented the most prevalent problems. Fouling in the Town Centre or near a school was cleared within twenty-four hours, while streets more remote took longer to clear. The Environmental Health Team was working with MARS Pedigree Pet Foods to promote responsible dog ownership and ultimately, the campaign aimed to change behaviour and awareness within communities
  - ii. the cost of posters (£56) and street cleansing (£50 to £80) in respect of dog fouling
  - iii. this Council was able to consider a Public Space Protection Order, enabling the issue of £75 fixed penalty notices, enforced through the courts, to ensure it would be established as an effective deterrent
  - iv. Members were invited to decide whether further measures were appropriate and if so to determine their nature and extent, in order for these measures to be investigated further by Officers.

The Chair noted this was a serious issue, which received a considerable amount of public attention and he stated that the aim of the discussion was to identify solutions to this problem.

A Member highlighted that this was a very real problem for the residents he had spoken with and commented that the action taken must demonstrate that dog fouling would not be tolerated. He suggested

- i. the £7,000 projected underspend in the Town Area Committee budget be committed and carried forward to ensure a one off clean up of the streets in the areas affected by dog fouling, litter pick, placement of signs and delivery of educational material in the most problematic areas
- ii. a business case and a budget be developed, which would allow enforcement to be undertaken in a proactive way and that future issues

- would be dealt with proactively rather than reactively. All options would be researched and presented to ensure the most efficient and effective strategy would be implemented to support this
- iii. an Environmental Champion be nominated by this Committee to oversee the implementation of an improvement plan to deal with the issues identified in Melton Mowbray with identified Officer support
  - iv. an educational approach be taken in the longer term and Officers develop a robust plan in partnership with Melton Mowbray Town Estate, local residents' groups, Melton BID, MARS Pedigree Pet Foods and local schools and colleges.

A Member agreed with the above and added that he did not want the Committee to decline the opportunity to establish a Public Spaces Protection Order, as he wanted all options available for Members' consideration.

A Member drew attention to Section 6.1 of the report and queried whether agreed measures to tackle dog fouling would be in place by the time the current Dog Control Orders would expire in Autumn 2017. The Head of Regulatory Services confirmed that Officer would be able to submit a business plan with options for Members to consider in readiness for the Autumn 2017 expiry date.

The previous comments were echoed by another Member, who requested sight of a map, detailing the location of bins allocated for the disposal of dog fouling. He stated that he was pleased that both the community and MARS Pedigree Pet Food were involved in finding solutions to this problem.

A further comment was made by another Member that this was an emotive issue, invoking strong feeling from residents, who had expressed that funds would be best spent on educating dog owners. She suggested providing dog walkers with bags, to make it easier for them to clear up dog foul. She advised that she had previously stated her astonishment at the cost of the 'We're Watching You' posters and had since found online that signs were available for £2 to £8.

It was also stated by a Member that dog fouling had been a problem for decades, despite various measures, including the provision of lots of bins to place dog foul. She agreed that providing bags to dog walkers was a good idea but also commented that that there had not been one prosecution in respect of dog fouling to date. The Council needed to be prepared to enforce through the courts. A fine, enforced through court may prove a successful deterrent.

A Member commented that she agreed with most of what had been stated and suggested revising the remit of Enforcement Officers to include targeting irresponsible dog owners. She advised that she understood it was difficult for people to act as witnesses against those in their own communities and recognised there was a huge cost conflict involved in court action. She highlighted that this Council's funding was decreasing and there was a great need to be conscious of how and where money was spent.

A Member reiterated previous comments made. He advised that residents had stated they were not aware that dog foul could be placed in 'normal' bins. He confirmed he had discussed this with the Waste & Environmental Maintenance Manager, with a view to having signage displayed, advising the public of this. He added that he believed there were enough bins for this purpose. He thanked

members of the public for their help and commented on the use of social media on this topic, confirming that all Members were committed to finding effective solutions to this problem.

A Member further commented in support of his earlier comments and stated that it was the Council's responsibility to collect dog foul and advised that current measures were not good enough. The health of children was being put at risk, with the possibility of diseases as a result of dog fouling. Effective measures needed to be enforced to ensure the town was clean and healthy for the public and savings could be made elsewhere. Action was required urgently.

Members agreed and commented that commitment to enforcement measures was required. A plan, incorporating education and information for dog owners was required but offenders also needed to be aware that the Council would be prepared to enforce prosecutions.

The motion being moved and seconded previously was put to the vote

**RESOLVED** that:-

- (1) the £7k projected underspend in the Town Area Committee budget be committed and carried forward to ensure a one off clean-up of the streets in the Special Expense areas affected by dog fouling, litter pick, placement of signs and delivery of educational/awareness material in the most problematic areas
- (2) a business case and budget be developed, which would allow enforcement to be undertaken in a proactive way going forward and future issues be dealt with proactively, rather than reactively. All options be researched and presented to ensure the most efficient and effective strategy be implemented to support this
- (3) an Environmental Champion be nominated by this Committee to oversee the implementation of an improvement plan to deal with the issues identified in the Special Expense areas in Melton Mowbray, with identified Officer support
- (4) an educational approach be taken in the longer term and Officers develop a robust plan, in partnership with Melton Mowbray Town Estate, local residents' groups, Melton BID, MARS Pedigree Pet Foods and local schools/colleges. Such further report to be presented to this Committee and to the Rural, Economic and Environmental Affairs Committee.

**T33. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING APRIL 2016 TO JANUARY 2017**

The Head of Central Services

- (a) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) updating the Committee on the progress of schemes within the Capital Programme to January 2017
- (b) gave a brief overview of the report, advising that it set out the position on the capital budgets this Committee was responsible for until the end of January 2016. There were only two schemes in the programme, the Play Areas, which

was now complete and the Pavilion (on which there was a separate report on the agenda) and this scheme had not progressed to date.

There being no comments or questions forthcoming from Members, it was

**RESOLVED** that the progress made on each capital scheme at Appendix A, together with the year end forecast position be noted.

#### T34. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING APRIL TO DECEMBER 2016

The Head of Central Services

- (a) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) providing information on actual expenditure and income incurred on this Committee's services compared to the latest approved budget for the period 1 April 2016 to 30 December 2016
- (b) gave a brief overview of the report, advising that it set out the outcome of the budget monitoring to the end of December 2016 and included the forecast position to the end of the year. There were no major variances to report i.e. those over £10k that under the Council policy would trigger a detailed explanation. The position shows a likely underspend on all services of approximately £7k. This had been allocated to address dog ouling issues as agreed earlier on the agenda.

There were no comments or questions.

**RESOLVED** that the financial position on each of this Committee's services to 31 December 2016 and the year end forecast be noted.

#### T35. COUNTRY PARK PAVILION

The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods

- (a) submitted a report (copies of which had previously been circulated to Members) updating the Committee on the current position on the demolition of the Country Park Pavilion and making Members aware of the next steps
- (b) gave a brief overview of the report, highlighting
  - i. demolition of the Country Park Pavilion, as well as removal of the concrete base had been commissioned. This work would be completed within the next two months
  - ii. there had been extensive consultation with local residents, concerning the need and demand for a community facility at the site. As there was no community appetite for this, there were no plans to build a new Pavilion or a community facility at the site. He drew the Committee's attention to recommendation at 2.2 of the report and added that financial resources would be redirected and used as agreed by Members

- iii. other options for the use of the site would be explored. The site was part of a Small Sites Study, which had been commissioned to investigate options for its use. It was proposed that the Small Sites Study be presented to Members of the Policy, Finance and Administration Committee, recognising that this Committee would need to be consulted on any proposals and would then be brought before this Committee.

A Member queried what future options for the site were under consideration and the Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods confirmed that there were none as yet. This would be for Members to consider at a later date.

A Member commented that she had requested information from the Council, in response to a resident's query on the proposed usage of the site but had waited for some time for direction on this. She advised that she would like to update the resident and asked when more information would be available to Members. The Head of Communities and Neighbourhoods confirmed that an initial report would go before the Policy Finance and Administration Committee in July 2017.

There being no further comments or questions, it was

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) the current status of the demolition of the Country Park be noted
- (2) removal of the Capital Project to build a new County Park Pavilion from the Special Expenses capital programme be approved
- (3) the current work undertaken with regards to developing options for the site be noted

**T36.URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting which commenced at 18:30 p.m., closed at 19:15 p.m.

Chairman