

**SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL**

**Cabinet in the Community**

**Meeting held 11 March 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillors Isobel Bowler, Ben Curran, Julie Dore, Jackie Drayton, Jayne Dunn, Harry Harpham, Mazher Iqbal, Mary Lea and Peter Price (Chair)

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**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

1.1 Councillor Peter Price, Chair of the North East Local Area Partnership, welcomed members of the public to the meeting and introduced the Cabinet Members who gave a brief overview of their areas of responsibility.

**2. WRITTEN RESPONSES TO PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

2.1 The written responses to written public questions submitted prior to the meeting are attached as an addendum to these notes.

**3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Responses to public questions were provided as follows:-

**Litter**

Councillor Jayne Dunn, Cabinet Member for Environment, Recycling and Streetscene, stated that there was no excuse for litter and made reference to a community clean-up week. She added that people from the Roma community had organised their own litter picks and she encouraged other groups to do the same. She also encouraged people to report issues regarding litter and flytipping. Councillor Dunn also informed the meeting that Amey would pick up any litter collected by individuals. The Chair, Councillor Peter Price, commented on the use of the Communication Bus to spread the word about reducing litter, particularly to schools in the area. He added that there were proposals to put skips in various locations for people to use and that litter wardens were to be appointed. There was also a need for people to help themselves, due to Council budget restrictions, through such means as hiring skips. He also encouraged people to report any incidences of where Amey weren't fulfilling their contractual obligations and this would be followed up.

**Parking on Grass Verges**

Councillor Jayne Dunn asked the questioner to speak to her after the meeting. Councillor Harry Harpham, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods, commented that parking on grass verges had always been an issue and that the introduction of a bye-law had been explored but that the cost of undertaking

Court proceedings had been found to be prohibitive. Councillor Julie Dore, Leader of the Council, added that Transport for London had the relevant legal powers and funding to be responsible for towing vehicles away which were blocking the pavement and that the Council were asking for the same powers to apply to Sheffield. The Chair indicated that officers would check on the situation reported on Galsworthy Road.

#### Page Hall Selective Licensing Scheme

Councillor Harry Harpham explained that the scheme stopped landlords letting out properties without first approaching the Council and made breach of this a criminal offence, thereby giving the Council some element of control. He added that the scheme would take time to work and emphasised that it would not tackle issues such as littering and groups of people congregating, which were a problem in Page Hall. It was hoped though, that the scheme would play a part in getting rid of rogue landlords. A voluntary scheme, which had been requested by landlords, had not worked, so options were being considered and a report was to be presented shortly to the Cabinet Member. There were obstacles which had to be overcome regarding the introduction of a Selective Licensing scheme, but these would be tackled. If the scheme was to be extended to an area wider than Page Hall, then further consultation would have to take place.

#### Housing+

Councillor Harry Harpham explained that the aims of Housing+ were to get officers out of the office and on to the estates, thus enabling them to get to know the area and the relevant issues and it was hoped that this would prove a forerunner to getting services out to people. Lessons were being learnt from the operation of the pilot scheme in the South East of the City, with most people considering that it was working well and there had been no reports of a lack of patch officers. It was recognised that there was a need to ensure that staff were ready and suitably trained for this new way of operating.

#### Anti-Social Behaviour

Councillor Harry Harpham considered that the Police did a good job despite the cuts which the service had suffered and that was the reason why Police Officers were not as visible on the streets. During the next year there would be 180 fewer Police Officers on the streets in South Yorkshire. He did feel though that the Police had changed to becoming a more neighbourly service, more so in fact than any other service.

#### Parkwood Landfill

Councillor Jackie Drayton, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, and Councillor for the Burngreave Ward, stated that the intention for this site was to convert it to be a country park and commended the work of the Parkwood Landfill Liaison Group and the Friends of Parkwood Springs in monitoring the operation of the site over the years. A planning application had been submitted for the site and this was being closely monitored by those two

groups and local Councillors. She added that the area had great potential. Councillor Isobel Bowler, Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure, made reference to the Ski Village and indicated that the Council were looking for similar sorts of activity at that location, with proposals such as mountain biking trails and the development of an urban park, which could serve the City and the region.

### *The Effects of Unemployment on Different Groups in the Community*

Councillor Julie Dore indicated that unemployment statistics were available through the Local Area Partnership updates and the labour market bulletin, and that these had not identified a particular demographic apart from age, but she would check to see if the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) community were disproportionately affected. She added that monitoring was carried out on the 100 apprenticeship scheme, which was now into its fifth batch of recruits, and these showed that 25% of the apprentices were from a BME background. The Level 3 apprenticeship scheme, which recruited 16 to 19 year olds with Level 2 qualifications, was also monitored. Councillor Dore emphasised that an important Council priority was promoting jobs and skills and that any inequalities in this process would be addressed.

Councillor Jackie Drayton highlighted the need to make a difference in schools so that young people had the qualifications and skills to obtain employment. She added that 1 in 12 young people in the North East of the City were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs) and that there was a need to drill further down into the data to see if there was a disproportionate number from the BME community in these figures.

Councillor Mazher Iqbal, Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Health, made reference to targeted programmes which were operating in the Burngreave and Parson Cross areas, which provided support in assisting people to find work, but added that resources were an issue.

### *Members' Challenges*

Councillor Julie Dore stated that continuing to provide the services that people expected from the Council, at a time of unprecedented cuts, was a significant challenge. It was important that the Council continued to find new ways of engaging with the people of Sheffield when making these decisions.

Councillor Harry Harpham regarded the implementation of the Bedroom Tax as being unfair and attacking the vulnerable, whilst on a personal level he cited privatisation in the NHS as a challenge.

Councillor Ben Curran, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, referred to staff job losses which resulted in more pressure on existing staff and added that the Council had lost 2,000 staff since 2012.

Councillor Mazher Iqbal referred to the libraries restructure and commended the volunteers who were showing great spirit in continuing the service. He also

referred to the restructuring of advice services and the increased use of food banks which he considered to be a result of benefit sanctions. He added that the benefits safety net appeared to be no longer there and that he was trying to ensure that this was restored.

Councillor Jayne Dunn explained that, as a result of her experience as a single mother living on benefits, she had wanted to put something back into the system and was committed to fighting inequality and unfairness. In relation to her Cabinet duties, she indicated that decisions on Winter gritting were the most difficult issue she had had to deal with. In terms of finance, she indicated that the challenge was how to bridge the gap between income and spending requirements.

Councillor Jackie Drayton explained that she had not expected to make cuts against those who were in most need and made particular reference to the effect of Government policies on poverty, youth services and grants for families with children with disabilities. She was proud that the Council had decided to pay the living wage and that its contractors were encouraged to do likewise. She made particular reference to her involvement in negotiations with the school meals contractors to pay the living wage.

Councillor Isobel Bowler referred to the closure of the Stocksbridge Leisure Centre and the Don Valley Stadium but added that there was alternative provision for athletics in the City. Other challenges which she had had to face were the removal of the adventure playground funding in Burngreave, Parks service cuts and staff reductions which had resulted in a lack of people to support volunteers.

#### *Rooms in Firth Park Library*

Councillor Mazher Iqbal indicated that the rooms were currently occupied but may become vacant in the next month, although there were other parties interested in occupying them. He recognised the importance of ensuring that community groups were able to use these rooms, but felt it was unfair to allocate these to the Brushes Tenants' and Residents' Association without a proper assessment.

#### *The Link Between Green Issues and Highway Schemes*

Councillor Jayne Dunn asked the questioner to speak to her about this issue after the meeting, but added that the Green Commission had not yet finished its work, having held only two out of a planned six meetings to date.

## MEET THE CABINET NORTH EAST - 11 MARCH 2015

	<b>QUESTION</b>	<b>ANSWER</b>
<p><b>1) Annabel W</b></p>	<p>I have noticed over the last five years an increase in rubbish building up in and around the Firth park area. There is a Wood and fields just behind Windmill Lane which has lots of plastic bottles, cans, crisp packets and other household waste thrown on the ground. A lot is left by school children and the adults that walk across this land.</p> <p>There needs to be bins at both entrances of this land, to encourage these lazy people to put their waste in a bin. Maybe the word bin could be translated for all middle eastern and eastern European people to understand too.</p> <p>It's unacceptable to see so much waste scattered on what could be a pleasant area to walk round. Also, I would like to ask why so many Eastern European men are allowed to hang outside the shops at Page Hall all day. Why aren't they in work or volunteering to clean the area up especially as they have spent all day dropping litter? I find large groups like this congregating an eyesore and see this as antisocial behaviour. Hardworking taxpayers are fed up of the Firth park area getting dumped with idle, lazy men and women. There is an urgent demand for change now and fairness in where these people are placed. Sheffield has more to it than just the poor areas.</p>	<p>We agree that it is totally unacceptable for people to discard litter and household waste. The council and its partners are committed to ensuring that this sort of behaviour is not allowed to continue and we would encourage members of the community to report incidents via 101 or direct to the council on 273 4567 or at <a href="https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/report_request/crime/asb.html">https://www.sheffield.gov.uk/in-your-area/report_request/crime/asb.html</a>. If reports are received then the council is in a better position to respond, and this not includes removing the litter, but also assessing whether we need to engage in further preventative work in the area.</p> <p>A great deal of work is taking place in Page Hall to specifically address anti-social behaviour in Page Hall, which includes encouraging residents to engage with the council and its partners, including local community groups. We have made a great deal of progress in Page Hall over the last few months, with the Council increasing its street-based resource in the area, as well as working with community groups and local schools. Again, if people feel that issues need to be raised with the council, then we would encourage members of the community to report anti-social behaviour to 101 so that we can respond in the appropriate way.</p>

<p>2) <b>Paul Downend Unable to attend meeting</b></p>	<p>1. Why is the meeting held at the periphery of the North East wards where the majority of the issues of concern are in Page Hall?</p> <p>2. Where was this meeting advertised? I have had to email the council twice since February to get information only to receive word back days ago and then an email from the local Neighbourhood Watch last week.</p> <p>3. Can the Council explain their current policy in buying up properties for sale in Page Hall? What is the criteria for your approach and what numbers are you planning on buying?</p>	<p>1: Shirecliffe Community Centre was chosen as a venue by members as it is a good, easy accessible venue and it has always attracted good attendance from across the area.</p> <p>2. The news release on this meeting was issued on the 27 February to all local media contacts and went on the Council's newsroom site on the same day.</p> <p>A general press release was sent by the Council's Communication Team advertising all the cabinet meetings. Since then The Locality Management Team have blogged, emailed, tweeted the meeting on a regular basis. Paper copies of the posters have been sent to TARAs. We have asked our contacts in the Voluntary and Community Sector to help advertise the meeting also.</p> <p>3. We intend to purchase 20 properties at Page Hall by the end of March 2016. We are purchasing properties via 2 schemes;</p> <p><b>LTE Purchase and Repair (P&amp;R):</b> This is a scheme where the City Council can purchase Long Term Empty (LTE) properties and are able to claim Homes &amp; Communities Agency (HCA) funding. This scheme is citywide and properties have to be vacant for over 6 months to qualify for the HCA funding. We carry out surveys to ascertain what improvement works are needed and how much these will cost. We also instruct a valuer to carry out an independent valuation. We then input this information into our systems to ensure the properties are financially viable. If the property is viable then we issue an offer to the current owner and progress to completion.</p>
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4. Page Hall is still an area of concern for long standing residents, both homeowners and tenants alike, what assurances can you give that the issues of littering, fly tipping, anti-social behaviour, overcrowding are being addressed and what results have you reached so far? Are you planning on offering any financial support to those who wish to leave the area and cannot afford to do so?

**General Acquisitions:**

This is a scheme where the City Council can purchase properties in the City to increase the Council housing stock. It is City Wide although work has been undertaken to look at what type and size of properties are in most need within individual housing market areas in the City. This ensures that we are buying properties the City Council know are in demand and can be let via the housing register. These properties do not have to be vacant prior to purchase but they do have to be financially viable so the same process is followed as we do with the Purchase and Repair scheme.

We intend to purchase 4 properties at Page Hall through the P&R scheme (out of a total of 37 throughout the City in 2014/15 - 2015/16) and a further 16 will be purchased via the General Acquisitions (out of a planned total of 135 purchases throughout the city between 2014/15 - 2015/16). To date we have legally completed on 4 properties at Page Hall (2 via P&R and 2 via General Acquisitions). These 4 properties are now with Housing and Neighbourhood Services in order for improvement works to be carried out before the properties are let.

4: The council and its partners are working hard to address concerns raised by members of the community in Page Hall. The council recognises that there are ongoing issues with anti-social behaviour, particularly littering and fly-tipping. As well as the dedicated resource currently in Page Hall, and additional resource will be dedicated to Page Hall to deal with these issues. It is expected that these additional officers will provide more enforcement and educational opportunities to prevent issues occurring in future. The success of this work will rely on the continued support of members of the community, particularly in relation to reporting incidents of anti-social behaviour.

	<p>5. Are you planning on extending the selective licensing beyond the current area in Page Hall?</p>	<p>We believe that Selective Licensing will have a long-term positive effect in the area, and this coupled with the extra resource to tackle ASB, will provide us to build on progress so far. As an indication of the work being carried out by the council, we can confirm that in 2014 we investigated 199 complaints of rubbish in gardens and served 86 legal notices on landlords to remove the rubbish. From January to March 2015 we have already served 70 legal notices and expect this approach to be replicated to cover 'on-street' ASB.</p> <p>The council is not planning on offering financial support to those wishing to leave the area. We want to work hand-in-hand with residents to make the area a better place.</p> <p>5. Not at this stage.</p>
<p><b>3) Mike Barnfield</b></p>	<p>Can you give us a progress report on the Page Hall Selective Licensing Scheme including the proportion of landlords who have signed up in the voluntary zone? On our street (in the voluntary zone) things have only gone from bad to worse.</p>	<p>See attached</p>

<p><b>4) Neill Schofield</b></p>	<p>'Now that the Shirecliffe Landfill site has been closed to active waste tipping, how does the Cabinet see the future of Parkwood Springs?'</p> <p>I am putting the question as a local resident and as the Chair of the Friends of Parkwood Springs.</p>	<p>We want to see Parkwood Springs become a 'country park in the city'; it's only 1 mile from the City Centre and it has the potential to be a major leisure and recreation attraction that adds to Sheffield's unique image: an offer of both city life and outdoor recreation. With the landfill coming to the end of its active life now is the time to look at options for the future of Parkwood Springs. We've started a piece of work called a 'Regeneration Masterplan' and we have begun to engage with a number of people at this early stage, and we expect to widen this out in the coming months.</p>
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