

# ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 30 January 2020

Present: Councillor T Anderson (Chair)

Councillors	C Muspratt	H Cameron
	T Cottier	A Hodson
	G Davies	A Brame
	K Greaney	S Hayes
	L Rennie	J Bird (In place of B Kenny)
	I Williams	T Norbury (In place of S Spoor)

## 32 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Councillor Christina Muspratt declared a personal interest in Item 5 (Allotment Provision in the Borough) as she had an allotment.

## 33 MINUTES

**Resolved - that the minutes of the meetings of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 November 2019 be approved as correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

## 34 SCRUTINY OF BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21

Shaer Halewood, the Director of Finance and Investment, introduced this report, which was part of the Council's formal budget consultation process, as set out in the Constitution and in accordance with the legal requirements to set a balanced and sustainable budget for 2020/21. The report also presented an update on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) covering the period from 2021/22 to 2024/25 and would be taken to Cabinet on 17 February. Appendices to the report contained proposed spending, pressures and proposed savings

Members discussed aspects of the proposals including streetlighting, garden waste, gritting, car parking and leisure services. It was noted that climate change proposals would not be known until an action plan was more developed.

**Resolved - That**

- (1) the financial proposals for 2020/21 that will be subject to consultation and further consideration by Cabinet in February 2020 be noted; and**
- (2) the financial challenges facing the Council in setting a sustainable and balanced budget for the MTFP period from 2021/22 to 2024/25 be noted.**

**35 ALLOTMENT PROVISION IN THE BOROUGH**

Colin Clayton, Assistant Director for Community Services, introduced this report, alongside Mary Worrall, Senior Manager Parks Coast & Countryside Team, and Vicky Abbott, the P&C Technical Administrator. The report provided information on the provision of council allotments in the borough, the number of available plots, information about current waiting lists, areas of particular pressure and shortfalls, and outlines the actions being considered to increase availability of allotments in order to decrease length of time people have to wait to take up an opportunity to participate in allotment gardening.

Members noted the large demand for plots and were pleased that available plots were allocated and even divided to meet demand. Further areas for plots were investigated although they may require capital funding to develop them. Members were concerned at the unmet demand and suggested that community groups could assist.

Members thanked staff for their work.

**Resolved - That**

- (1) the content of this report be noted; and**
- (2) the relevant Cabinet Member be recommended to set up a Working Group in consultation with allotments societies and other stakeholders to explore increased provision in the Borough and the availability in the Borough and bring a report back to the relevant Committee.**

**36 PROPOSED DOG CONTROL MEASURES**

Mike Cockburn, Lead Commissioner for the Environment, introduced this report which provided an update following a review of dog control measures across Wirral. In January 2019 the Committee made several recommendations in response to proposals, including the use of existing bylaws to deal with the minority of dog owners who act in an irresponsible manner. Existing bylaws included the prohibition of dogs from cemeteries and some play areas, but the rules and areas covered could not easily be amended. A dog control Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) was

proposed to replace these bylaws, to include: Cemeteries – dogs to be under control via use of a lead; Play areas; Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA); and Kickabouts – with dogs prohibited from entering, subject to conditions. Education and encouragement would be undertaken through signage.

The review of dog control measures in place across Wirral was brought about because of public concern about issues such as dog fouling and the apparent inadequacy of existing dog control measures in place. The Residents Survey of 2017 carried out by Ipsos Mori on behalf of the Council found that dog fouling was a major concern among residents. A previous environmental enforcement contractor terminated their contract by mutual consent in March 2019.

Members were concerned that the proposal had a lack of enforcement measures, had possibly not been consulted with on a wide enough basis and they were concerned at the possibility of extension of powers under the PSPO.

**Resolved – That**

- (1) Accept the recommendation that the PSPO allow dogs in cemeteries on a lead subject to consultation with user groups, and**
- (2) the PSPO proposal be supported in principle for play areas Play areas, Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA) and Kickabouts subject to conditions (including concessions for working assistance and therapy dogs) subject to a further report on how that will be enforced and bring it back to a future Committee.**

**37 ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in co-operation with the other three Overview & Scrutiny Committees, was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual scrutiny work programme. The work programme was to align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the Wirral Plan pledges which were within the remit of the Committee. It was envisaged that the work programme would be formed from a combination of scrutiny reviews, standing items and requested officer reports.

**Resolved – That the proposed Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2019/20 be approved.**