

BOROUGH OF KETTERING

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Meeting held: 27th October 2016

Present: Councillor Greg Titcombe (Chair)
Councillor Jenny Henson
Councillor Anne Lee
Councillor Mick Scrimshaw
Councillor Mike Tebbutt

Officers: Martin Hammond (Deputy Chief Executive)
Ian White (Elections Manager)
Jon Hall (Environmental Protection Manager)
John Kinloch (Community Safety Officer)
David Pope (Committee Administrator)

16.RD.10 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from the Chair, Cllr Duncan Bain and Cllr Jim Hakewill. It was noted that Cllr Mike Tebbutt was acting as substitute for Cllr Hakewill.

16.RD.11 MINUTES

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th June 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16.RD.12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mick Scrimshaw declared a personal interest in items A1 and A2.

16.RD.13 PUBLIC SPEAKERS

Councillor Ruth Groome attended and stated her intention to speak on item A4.

Three members of the public registered their intention to speak on the

following items:-

Mr Robinson – Item A2
Mrs Scrimshaw – Item A2
Mr Wesley – Item A3

16.RD.14 UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED DECRIMINILISATION OF PARKING (A1)

A report was submitted which provided members with an update on the ongoing decriminalised parking project.

The meeting heard that KBC currently operated a criminalised parking regime, one of very few remaining across the country. The Government were keen to make parking enforcement a civil function and both KBC and Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) were keen to follow that model, although a difference of opinion between the two authorities had prevented this from occurring to date.

It was noted that in May 2016, the Department of Transport had invited both organisations to a meeting in an attempt to resolve the situation. An agreement had been reached whereby KBC would draft a business case to satisfy what it believed should happen in relation to parking enforcement going forward, whilst satisfying NCC concerns. A report had been completed and submitted to NCC for consideration, although no feedback had been received to date.

In addition, members noted that approximately two years previously a consultation had been undertaken to see whether additional streets wished to adopt a residential parking zone. Five streets had voted to adopt such a scheme, however due to the impasse outlined above; this had been put on hold. Negotiations had been undertaken with NCC and it was hoped to roll out a residential parking scheme to these streets by January 2017. Should NCC take on the role of parking enforcement, any costs associated with the setting up of the residential parking scheme would be reimbursed.

RESOLVED that the report on decriminalised parking be noted.

16.RD.15 DOG CONTROL ORDERS PSPO (A2)

The Environmental Protection Manager attended and provided the meeting with a presentation in relation to the consultation on the proposed Dog Control Orders PSPO.

Mr Robinson addressed the committee and stated that there had been a lack of advertising of the consultation, with no information notices posted at parks utilised by dog owners. He noted that it was more important to concentrate enforcement on inconsiderate dog owners rather than apply a

blanket exclusion on dogs being off leads in the public parks identified as part of the consultation process.

Mrs Scrimshaw addressed the committee and noted that responsible dog owners should not be punished for the misdeeds of a minority of inconsiderate dog owners.

The meeting heard that the consultation had commenced in early July and had ended on 30th September. It was noted that 163 responses had been received, with the results collated and analysed and recommendations suggested as set out in the table below.

The results of the consultation were as follows:-

Consultation Question	Response	Recommendation
Q1. Carry on with the current powers that make it an offence for a person in charge of a dog to fail to clean up its faeces.	99% Yes	To continue with this existing power.
Q2. Carry on with the current powers that make it an offence to allow a dog into the Council's 8 cemeteries'	85% Yes	To continue with this existing power.
Q3. Carry on with the current powers that make it a requirement for owners to put their dog(s) on a lead(s) when asked to do so by an authorised officer	89% Yes	To continue with this existing power.
Q4. Introduce a new offence prohibiting dogs being allowed into fenced-in or enclosed play areas.	72% Yes	Introduce this new offence
Q5. Introduce a new offence requiring dogs to be kept on leads in additional areas (Market Square, Parish Church Yard, Garden of Rest, Municipal Gardens, and Jubilee Gardens).	68% Yes	Introduce this new offence
Q6. Introduce a new offence prohibiting any one person to walk more than six dogs at any time.	64% Yes	Introduce this new offence

Members considered the initial three questions and concluded that existing offences should be carried forward under any new Dog Control PSPO.

Concerns were raised that consultation results had not been made available to members prior to the meeting. In addition, members were unpersuaded in relation to the introduction of a new offence requiring dogs to be kept on leads in additional areas as outlined in Question 5. It was requested that this proposed new offence be given further consideration prior to being presented to the Executive Committee and that the

Executive Committee be provided more fully with information about the problems that had been caused by uncontrolled dogs in those areas.

The committee were also presented with responses made in relation to more open questions regarding where dogs should be kept on leads, where dogs should be prohibited and reasons for those suggested locations. No defined pattern could be identified from the responses received, although a small minority wished to see dogs prohibited from all play areas due to Health and Safety concerns.

Members noted that their recommendations would be presented to the Executive Committee on 16th November for approval, subject to further consideration of the proposal for a new offence requiring dogs to be kept on leads in additional areas.

Following discussion it was

RESOLVED

that:-

- i) Questions 1-4 and Question 6 as outlined above be recommended to the Executive Committee to form part of the Dog Control PSPO
- ii) That further consideration be given to the detail and practicalities of the proposal to introduce a new offence requiring dogs to be kept on leads in additional areas of Kettering

16.RD.16 DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDER TO PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (A3)

The committee received a report seeking to consult members on proposals to replace existing Designated Public Places Orders (DPPOs) with a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) as required by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.

Mr Wesley addressed the committee as a resident of Mill Road, noting that he had spoken to Cllr Mick Scrimshaw on a number of occasions regarding late night and early morning drinking and ASB issues at the Pocket Park. Not only was drinking an issue, but littering, drug dealing and a lack of lighting in the area caused concerns for residents.

It was noted that KBC was aware of the issues that affected Mill Road Pocket Park and Mill Road Park and possible remedial work was being investigated to improve the situation for residents. It was heard that this area could benefit from forming part of a PSPO area. The committee heard that every property surrounding the pocket park had received a leaflet advising complaints to be made on the Police 101 telephone number, as contacts were required in order to divert police resources to the area.

The meeting was advised that existing DPPOs would expire in October 2017, with the natural progression being to convert them into PSPOs. Additional enforcement capabilities would be available under a PSPO, allowing an expansion of regulations covering target areas, although supporting evidence would be needed in order to add additional provisions.

Members considered that the areas under consideration should continue to have a drinking ban that would form part of a PSPO, and that consultation be opened with interested parties regarding the possible expansion of restrictions. It was requested that Mill Road Park, Mill Road Pocket Park and Rothwell be included as part of the consultation process.

RESOLVED

that a consultation exercise be undertaken in regard to the creation of PSPOs for the areas currently under a DPPO, with the addition of Mill Road Park, Mill Road Pocket Park and Rothwell.

16.RD.17 ELECTIONS COSTS FOR TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS (A4)

A report was provided to members that sought the committee's views on whether or not to make changes to the current arrangements for funding elections for town and parish councils.

Councillor Ruth Groome addressed the meeting and stated that this was a sensitive subject and a decision in favour of levying charges on Town and Parish councils in relation to elections was likely to be controversial.

The committee noted that KBC was the only authority in the county that did not recoup at least some elections costs from Town and Parish councils and it was usual for the costs of an election to be met by the body to which the election related.

Members were provided with seven options for consideration as follows:-

- Charging the full cost of each election and bye-election to the relevant council
- Charging parish councils for the four year election costs but not for bye-elections
- Charging for by-elections only and not the four year election
- Charging for only some costs – e.g. direct costs of printing, postage and count staff
- Setting a fee for the cost of an election related to the size of the parish council rather than the actual cost
- Introducing charging over a period of time, on a sliding scale, to allow councils to budget for the change in policy
- Continuing with the policy of not charging

Following discussion, members considered that the current policy of not

charging for elections be maintained. It was therefore

RESOLVED that the Committee agreed to continue with the current policy of not charging Town and Parish councils for the cost of elections.

16.RD.18 REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES (A5)

The committee was presented with a report seeking the formulation of a response to the consultation relating to the Boundary Commission for England's (BCE) proposals in respect of the review of Parliamentary Constituencies in the United Kingdom published on 13th September 2016, in particular as to how they related to the Kettering Borough area, and to submit that response for approval to the Council's Executive. The report had been presented to the Executive Committee on 19th October which had requested a response from the Research and Development Committee

The rules that governed the review required a reduction in constituencies across the country from 553 to 501, with constituency electorates no smaller than 71,031 and no greater than 78,507. The Parliamentary Electorate figure to be used for Kettering as at 1st December 2015 was 68,296, significantly below the required tolerance levels.

The meeting noted that the existing Kettering Constituency boundary was co-terminous with the Borough Council area, however in order to meet the required tolerance levels this would need to change. The BCE had suggested that the Finedon Ward of the Borough Council of Wellingborough form part of the new Kettering Constituency alongside all the wards of the Borough of Kettering.

Members were provided with a briefing note that stated that should the committee be minded to make a different recommendation, there would be a need to suggest a proposal that would involve neighbouring parts of adjacent District Councils being added to the Kettering Constituency.

The committee considered the information before it and it was

RESOLVED that the Committee recommended to the Executive Committee that there appeared to be no viable alternative to the proposed constituency, which was the existing Borough plus the Finedon. Ward of the Wellingborough

16.RD.19 WORK PROGRAMME (A6)

Members considered the work programme

The work programme for the December meeting was agreed as follows:-

- Youth Engagement Task & Finish Group – Final Report
- Local Pollinator Strategy Task & Finish Group – Final Report
- Homelessness Update

(The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 8.55pm)

Signed

Chair

DJP