A meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel was held at the Town Hall, Nuneaton, on Wednesday, 2nd November, 2011

**Present**

Councillor J. Glass – Chair
Councillor D.P. Brown (Vice-Chair)

Councillors V.N.J. Fowler, J.H. Gutteridge, J. Haynes (substituting for Councillor W.J. Hancox), R.A. Taylor and C.M. Watkins

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor W.J. Hancox and N.G. Grant.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor I.K. Lloyd, Portfolio Holder for Arts and Leisure.

**256 Minutes**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th August, 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**257 Declarations of Interest/Party Whip**

Councillor D.P. Brown and C.M. Watkins declared personal interests in respect of any agenda item by reason of them being members of the Leisure Trust Board.

**258 Allotment Provision with Nuneaton and Bedworth**

The report of the Parks and Countryside Officer providing the Panel with information on the current position regarding allotment provision within the borough under the management of the Council and seeking consideration of the various opportunities to safeguard allotment provision, short and long term, for the Borough’s residents in the context of the current financial climate was considered.

Various points and concerns were raised as follows:

- the apparent lack of communication between the Council and Allotment Associations/independent allottees
• the current state of allotments infrastructure

• there were no signed leases in place

RESOLVED that

(a) an Allotment Strategy Working Group be established comprising of three Council Members, representatives from Nuneaton and Bedworth Allotment Associations and independent allottees, and representatives from third sector organisations (e.g. WCAVA) be invited to participate to consider the following recommendations:

• that a further audit to establish the current state of the allotment infrastructure, the issues being experienced by the tenants and current uptake of plots is undertaken;

• it is proposed that a borough wide consultation of allotment gardening and the community’s requirements be undertaken within the spring edition of ‘in touch’ and that this information is used to inform an allotment strategy for the borough in line with the Open Spaces Strategy;

• that a review of growth potential within existing sites is undertaken with the potential of division of plots being used to reduce any waiting lists;

• that a bench marking exercise is undertaken to learn how other authorities support their allotment sites in terms of capital and revenue budgeting;

• that as part of the allotment strategy the rental charges and tenancy terms are standardized across the borough;

• it is proposed that a programme of refurbishment is collated based upon the condition survey and that funding is sourced from capital receipts earmarked for allotments and s106 monies where applicable;

• that within the allotment strategy a development plan is put forward to increase the quality of facilities and open to a wider audience working in partnership with the associations to bring in external funding;
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- that partnership working is investigated with third sector organisations and others such as the People in Action, Community Pay Back and the NHS in delivering key benefits to the wider community;

- that the proposed lease is not signed until further information is collated and presented to the panel;

- the issue of a new lease agreement be prioritised;

- utilisation of spent palisade fencing for use as security fencing on allotments be referred to the Borough Plan Working Group for consideration;

- investigate the current situation with regard to allotments that are owned by Warwickshire County Council.

(b) it be noted that Councillor C.M. Watkins expressed an interest in participating in the Allotment Strategy Working Group and that an e-mail be sent to all Members to provide the opportunity for expressions of interest;

(c) a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel;

(d) consideration be given to re-instating the Allotments Liaison Committee; and

(e) thanks be expressed to members of the Allotments Associations/independent allottees, speakers and Officers for their attendance.

Speakers: Colin Muscott
Ray Potter – Greenmoor Road Allotment Association
Robin Wilson – Smorrall Lane Allotment Association
Barry Davies – Bulkington Allotment Association
Comments from Councillor I.K.Lloyd were read out to the Panel

Open Space Strategy

The report of the Parks and Countryside Officer providing the Panel with a summary of the strategy and the results of the subsequent consultation and asking for the assessment of the consultation results and consideration of the action plan created as an integral part of the strategy development, together with its effects and potential future budget requirements was considered.
RESOLVED that the Open Space Strategy be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

N.B. An e-mail was read out from Isobel Jacques, Chair of Ash Green Residents’ Association Steering Group.


The report of the Assistant Director - Regeneration and Public Protection informing the Panel of a consultation from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on a proposal to remove licensing requirements in England and Wales for most activities currently defined as “regulated entertainment” in Schedule One to the Licensing Act 2003 was considered.

Various points and concerns were raised as follows:

- entertainment licence not required for events where less than 5000 people present.
- possibility of potential nuisance caused particularly in relation to live music, dance and entertainment facility categories
- difficulties of dealing with noise nuisance under other types of legislation
- control of occasional sexual entertainment (eg; lap dancing, striptease) in premises exempt from the legislation relating to sexual entertainment venues
- increased resident complaints

RESOLVED that the Assistant Director – Regeneration and Public Protection be delegated to prepare the response to the consultation on “Regulated Entertainment” and the deregulation of Schedule One of the Licensing Act 2003 expressing concerns, to be submitted to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport by 3rd December, 2011.

261 Operational Integrated Performance Report - Second Quarter 2011-12 and Strategic Risk Register

The report seeking to provide appropriate performance measures and financial information for service areas within the scope of the Panel and providing the Panel with appropriate information to monitor performance, finance and risk information was considered.
Various points and concerns were raised as follows:

- Refuse collection/recycling should improve with the new scheme now in place
- Building Control has seen increased competition from the private sector due to the economic downturn
- Reduced car park income could improve when the Blue Badge and Civil Parking Enforcement is initiated

**RESOLVED** that the Operational Integrated Performance Report - Second Quarter 2011-12 and Strategic Risk Register be noted.

### 262 Un-adopted Roads Review

The Principal Democratic Services Officer (Overview and Scrutiny) reported to the Panel on the above, giving details of the papers included within the report.

Neil Benison of the Planning and Development Group, Warwickshire County Council was present at the meeting and answered questions from Members.

The following point was raised:

- Members expressed concern that some roads had remained un-adopted for many years

**RESOLVED** that Mr. Benison be thanked for his attendance.

### 263 Work Programme

The updated Work Programme for the Environment Scrutiny Panel was considered.

**RESOLVED** that

(a) the Allotment Strategy be included on the Work Programme 2011/12 for consideration at the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Panel to be held on 31st January, 2012; and

(b) the Work Programme 2011/12 as amended be approved.
Responses from Cabinet

Warwickshire County Council Highways Maintenance Programmed Carriageway and Footway Works

It was reported that Cabinet at its meeting on the 21st September, 2011 had considered the recommendations made by the Environment Scrutiny Panel on the 21st July regarding the problem with weeds, particularly in the town centres and had been advised of the letter of complaint forwarded by the Panel to Warwickshire County Council on this matter.

RESOLVED that the Environment Scrutiny Panel notes that the recommendations by the Panel had been noted by Cabinet.

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Chair