

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 20th October, 2016.

Present: Cllr David Wilburn(Chair), Cllr Paul Rowling(Vice-Chair), Cllr Gillian Corr (Sub Cllr Ken Dixon), Cllr Allan Mitchell, Cllr Stephen Parry, Cllr Matthew Vickers

Officers: Mark Berry (Principal Environmental Health Officer), Colin Snowdon (Environmental Health Unit Manager), Graham Birtle (Scrutiny Officer), Jenna McDonald (Governance Officer)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Ken Dixon, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Julia Whitehill

1 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

2 Minutes for signature - 21st July 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st July 2016 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chair.

3 Draft Minutes - 22nd September 2016

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22nd September 2016.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

4 Scrutiny Review of Dog Fouling Enforcement

The Committee received information on the Scrutiny Review of Dog Fouling Enforcement. Key points were noted as follows:

- At the last meeting of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee, Members asked whether a by-law could be introduced in order to tackle issues around dog owners not picking up after their dogs. It was noted that by-laws were no longer an option where more appropriate legislation such as Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were in place. It was explained that the Dogs Fouling of Land Act was already in place.
- Members were informed that the glow in the dark Keep Britain Tidy Campaign had ended, it was noted that the current dog fouling stickers available from the Keep Britain Tidy website cost £5.00 each.
- It was explained that no refurbishment programmes existed in relation to the repair of bins and this was done on an ad-hoc basis. Members heard that there was no budget in place for the provision of bins.
- With regard to the use of permanent paint on bins, it was noted that if this was

to be introduced, a new stencil and paint would be required. It was heard that the use of paint on bins could potentially encourage graffiti.

- It was highlighted that the local authority received positive feedback around stencils on pavement.

- In relation to partnership work, it was noted that SBC had worked previously with Dogs Trust who carried out an annual national poop scoop campaign.

- Between 2002-2004, SBC bought into a database which contained information of around 6,000 dog owners across the Borough.

- It was noted that in some cases, it was possible to communicate a zero tolerance to irresponsible dog owners without issuing a fine.

- Members asked whether PCSOs and Enforcement Officers approached dog owners in order to ask whether they carried poop scoops whilst walking their dog/s. It was noted that animal welfare staff approached and engaged with all dog owners and as part of this, gave out bags to owners but currently under the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act it was not a legal requirement to carry a bag. Some other authorities were beginning to introduce the need to carry a suitable means of picking up after their dog as a positive requirement of their Public Space Protection Order controls.

- Members discussed the letter included in the report which was sent out to members of the public if a complaint had been made to the Environmental Health department alleging that a dog in their care may have been fouling in a public place. It was asked how the letters were currently used, in response, it was noted that due to resource issues, the letters were used on a first instance basis, some of the letters were posted and some letters were hand delivered. The Committee requested that the letters to be circulated to all Members.

- The Committee were keen to understand how many letters were issued per year. It was noted that in 2015, 27 dog owners were identified as being irresponsible and were delivered a letter and or received a personal visit.

- It was asked whether information on dog fouling was circulated in schools. In response, it was noted that such information was not circulated by the Council in schools however may be circulated as part of educational campaigns within schools.

- With regard to poop scoops distributed at three contact centres in the borough, it was noted that around 200,000 biodegradable bags were distributed in 2015/16.

- Members discussed the imagery used in marketing campaigns to demonstrate the effects of smoking and drinking alcohol. It was suggested that similar campaigns could be used to demonstrate the effects of irresponsible dog ownership. It was noted that some national campaigns had used effective imagery in the past and therefore this could have been a possibility.

- Members agreed that a low number of residents understood that it was acceptable to use a standard waste bin to dispose of poop scoops. It was

suggested that information be displayed on standard bins to advertise acceptance.

- Members asked what process was followed once a stray dog was found and caught. It was explained that all stray dogs were firstly scanned for a microchip. If the dog had a microchip and the details were accurate and up to date, the dog would be returned to its owner.

- It was noted that around 40% of dogs were now micro chipped however, around 60% of the 40% of microchips did not hold accurate/up to date information.

- The Committee asked whether a borough wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) would be costly. It was noted that the cost of providing new signage for a borough wide PSPO was around £26,250.

- Concerns were raised around the future provision of dedicated dog bins. It was heard that currently, dog bins were provided from Ward Members Community Participation Budgets which were to cease in the near future.

The Committee suggested the following:

- A borough wide PSPO be introduced

- As many Authorised Officers as possible should be encouraged to be proactive in tackling dog fouling as part of general patrol duties. Regular training to update and for new officers is recommended.

- Progress of other local authorities be proactively monitored

- Future dog fouling campaigns/pilots be considered.

- Discussions take place with the Council's Legal Department on PSPOs and cost implications

- Discussions take place with the Council's Neighbourhood Enforcement Team on engagement and enforcement work

The Committee commended the work of the Animal Health and Welfare Officers, the Environmental Health Officers and the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers.

AGREED that the information be noted.

5 Work Programme

Consideration was given to the work programme 2016-17.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

6 Chair's Update

The Chair provided no update.

