

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 19th December, 2019.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall(Chair), Cllr Paul Weston(Vice-Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Maurice Perry (Sub Cllr Andrew Sherris), Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley

Officers: Mark Berry (DA&H), Jamie McCann , Marc Stephenson (DCS), Jo Roberts (EGDS), Gary Woods, Sarah Whaley (MD)

Also in attendance: A parent of a child at Whitehouse Primary School, Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE, Cllr Steve Nelson

Apologies: Cllr Andrew Sherris, Cllr Stephen Richardson,

CD 25/19 Evacuation Procedure

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

CD 26/19 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CD 27/19 Minutes of the meeting held on 16th October and 24th October 2019 for approval / signature

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meetings which were held on the 16th and 24th October 2019 for approval and signature.

Agreed that the minutes be approved and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

CD 28/19 Councillor Call for Action - Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School

Members considered the draft final report and recommendations of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee, Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) - Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School.

The main topics discussed were as follows:

- It was highlighted that many schools locally and nationally suffered from obstructive and illegal parking at school drop off and pick up times. Whitehouse Primary School had been specifically focused on as this was where the Call for action was made.

- The Chair commended the committee for recognising the number of SEN children with mobility issues attending Whitehouse Primary within the report and the requirement for those parents to park nearer to the school. More disabled parking was to be looked at in the recommendations.

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Committee thanked all those involved for

their hard work.

The Committee agreed the recommendations.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed the final report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 23rd January 2019 for approval.

AGREED that the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

**CD
29/19** **Scrutiny Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home**

Members considered the draft final report and recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home.

Brief discussion took place around the final report and Members attention was drawn to the recommendations contained within the main report.

The Chair of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee thanked all those that had been involved for their hard word.

The Committee agreed the recommendations.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed the final report would be presented to Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 23rd January 2019 for approval.

AGREED that the final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

**CD
30/19** **Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses**

Consideration was given to the (Draft) Scope and Project Plan of the Scrutiny Review of Fly Grazed Horses.

Members received background information regarding Fly Grazed Horses from the Principal Environmental Health Officer which included the following:

- Background information, covering how Fly-Grazed Horses had been dealt with historically.
- Issues surrounding Fly-Grazed horses on public and private land including horses on tethers and horses kept on secure pieces of land.
- The problems Fly-Grazed Horses posed to people and property, the local amenity and the welfare of the horse itself.
- Members heard that a full policy to tackle Fly-Grazed horses was agreed by Cabinet in 2001 which required substantial funding over a 3 year period and also required equine services to deal with the problem.
- Historically there had been approximately seventy Fly-Grazed horses within the Borough which had had a significant negative impact within the local area. Bailiffs had been recruited to deal with the problem, issuing notices, and where necessary, impounding horses which had resulted in dramatically reducing

problems on Council owned land. The problem however was displaced to other neighbouring authorities and to privately owned land.

- In terms of continued funding the authority managed to stretch funding out for 7 years. During 2007 funding was seen as a budgetary pressure and horse numbers began to increase again. By 2012 there were more than fifty Fly-Grazed Horses within the Borough. Due to securing some underspend funding and entering into a contractual agreement, the issue surrounding Fly-Grazed Horses continued to be dealt with until funding came to a halt in 2013.

- Members were informed that during the last three years there was no formal policy in place at Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Officers were dealing with horse owners' direct. There was a level of tolerance where there was less of a problem in a particular area allowing officers' to focus on areas which were considered more problematic.

- In terms of enforcement during the last 3 years Fly-Grazed Horses had been impounded twice, using services from York. A further 2 horses which had been abandoned in a field had escaped onto the local highway.

- Members were informed that Fly-Grazed Horses were not considered livestock by DEFRA

- Animal Welfare Services were receiving a number of requests in relation to the mere presence and welfare of Fly-Grazed Horses. There was no statutory requirement to provide a service to deal with those issues.

- Regards a legal position in terms of responsibilities, if a horse was not on council owned land the authority would not have a legal responsibility to deal with it. If a horse however, was on the public highway or footpath, then that would be the responsibility of the police.

- The Principal Environmental Health Officer suggested that the committee may want to consider looking at the role of enforcement agencies, welfare charities and any other partner agencies that could provide information for the review. There had in the past been operational issues with various agencies not accepting responsibility. It was also suggested Members may want to look at zero tolerance in terms of horses' not being allowed on council owned land.

- The removal of horses from council land cost the authority approximately £1000 per horse and quite often owners would not pay the cost to the council, to get their horse back. To buy a new horse was approximately £50, therefore preferable to some owners.

- Members heard that following a horse being impounded the Council had to keep the horse for 4 days to give an owner a chance to reclaim. Once an owner did not come forward to claim the horse that horse would become the property of the Council. The Council could either sell the horse or have it put to sleep. The latter option presented its own issues in terms of negative press.

- A suggestion was made for the Committee to look at the possibility of acquiring pockets of land which could be used to allow licensed grazing for rent

or lease. Pockets of land had been rented out historically however currently there were no agreements in place. Other authorities were currently offering this service which could be explored further in terms of how well the scheme was working and whether council costs would be covered.

- Members were informed that any horse from 2009 had to have an equine passport and all horses must be microchipped by 1st October 2020. If horses did not have passports or were not microchipped it was difficult to trace owners

- Members were keen to get the views of the RSPCA, and horse owners, including those from the travelling community. Members requested that the RSPCA be added to the 'Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work'.

AGREED that:

1) the draft scope and project plan of the Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses be approved subject to the amendments above.

2) the further information be provided as requested.

**CD
31/19** **Work Programme 2019-2020**

Consideration was given to the Crime & Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2019–2020.

Members agreed to consider the outstanding recommendation from the previously completed Scrutiny Review of School Parking at the next Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was scheduled for 30th January 2020.

AGREED that the Crime & Disorder Select Committee Work Programme be noted.

**CD
32/19** **Chairs Update**

There were no Chairs updates.