

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 30th July, 2020.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Tony Riordan, Cllr Andrew Sherris and Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley.

Officers: Stephen Donaghy, Mark Berry (A&H); Gary Woods, Peter Bell (MD).

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: None.

CD 1/20 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no interests declared.

CD 2/20 **Minutes**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on the 5th March 2020 for approval and signature.

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

CD 3/20 **Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses**

Ahead of Select Committees resuming their reviews following the requirement to pause all scrutiny work programmes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council's Executive Scrutiny Committee recommended that consideration was given to amending, where necessary, review scope and plans to take into account the emergence and impact of Covid-19. As such, informal meetings took place with relevant Officers and the Committee Chair and Vice-Chair, and it was subsequently agreed that there were no fundamental changes to this review required (i.e. the issue remains as it was prior to the pandemic).

This meeting (the first for this Committee since it was agreed that work programmes could resume) sought to update Members on Local Authority and Cleveland Police developments since March 2020 in relation to the issue of fly-grazed horses within the Borough.

LOCAL AUTHORITY

Council Officers confirmed a continuation of previously reported issues around fly-grazed horses since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, and continued to actively work with key partners, including Cleveland Police, to address incidents. It was noted that the Police were trying to engage with all Tees Valley Local Authorities to ensure a joined-up approach.

Attention was drawn to a specific case which occurred shortly after the national Covid-19 lockdown was implemented. In early-April 2020, three young colts were found to be running loose on Council land at Hartburn Sixfields which

backs onto the A66. Temporary barriers were put up around the large site, and Officers made contact with a previously-used equine bailiff who was present the following day to round-up the horses. The colts were eventually seized on the Eggescliffe side of the A66 after running loose on a farmer's field – all three have since been rehomed, microchipped and passported. Indications are that the horses may have been abandoned due to the pandemic and its knock-on effects of cancelled festivals / meetings. There was a concern that this may herald a spate of further incidents, though this did not transpire.

Aside from the above, Officers stated that there had been relatively few issues raised since lockdown, probably as a result of people being confined indoors more and therefore not observing cases. However, horses are still fly-grazing across the Borough, and there may be a sense from some horse-owners of less enforcement activity due to Covid-19.

The Committee asked if there was any information on where the colts at Hartburn Sixfields had come from. Officers stated that no details were evident, and that the horses could not be checked for microchips until they were caught and settled (they were not chipped). It appeared that the horses may have been let out via the small entrance at the rear of Sixfields where a vehicle could have reversed back to.

CLEVELAND POLICE

The Cleveland Police Officer leading on this issue was scheduled to be in attendance to present an update on developments from the Force's perspective. However, due to an urgent and unforeseen work-related incident, the Officer was unable to join the meeting. As such, the Committee noted the written submission that had been provided prior to the meeting, the key aspects of which included:

- Cleveland Police remain committed to working with partners to agree and put in place a partnership-approach to tackling this issue.
- Previous discussions with the Force's legal department and constructive conversations with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council demonstrate that the Force and Local Authority can quickly come to an agreement around what a local plan should look like and how it can be introduced across the district. Ideal outcome would be for the development of a Force-wide plan.
- Contact made in the past fortnight with relevant individuals from Hartlepool and Middlesbrough, both of whom are willing to discuss the development of the plan. Still trying to get a response from Redcar.
- Since March 2020, the Police have received in the region of 21 calls for service in relation to horses. Three of these were serious – each incident involved horses getting onto the carriageway, causing problems for road users. One of these incidents resulted in the deaths of two horses and significant damage to a motor vehicle.

Members requested clarity around the horse death incident quoted within the Police update – this would be taken back to the Officer for a response.

SCOPE AND PLAN

An updated scope and plan, which included amended timescales in light of the

impact of Covid-19, was provided for the Committee.

It was noted that arrangements were being made for the next meeting in September 2020 to include a submission from the Council's Land and Property team regarding possible sites to place horses found to be fly-grazing (where necessary). Members highlighted the need for care around this proposal, specifically concerning the responsibilities of landowners when a horse is on their property – understanding this and any potential costs would be essential when weighing up possible solutions.

AGREED that the information be noted.

**CD
4/20** **Work Programme 2020-2021**

Consideration was given to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2020-2021.

The next Committee meeting was scheduled for the 10th September 2020 (4.30pm) and was anticipated to include a number of monitoring items (these would normally have been considered by the Committee already, but had been delayed due to Covid-19). However, as two of these items are school-related, they may have to be put back to a later meeting as schools prioritise arrangements for the planned return of all pupils in September 2020.

AGREED that the Crime & Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2020-2021 be noted.

**CD
5/20** **Chair's Update**

The Chair informed the Committee of a recent discussion at an informal scrutiny Chair's meeting regarding the monitoring of agreed recommendations from previously completed reviews. Adopting a more efficient and effective monitoring process was suggested, and this would be considered further with the Council's Scrutiny Team.