

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 10th September, 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, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley.

Officers: Stephen Donaghy, Mark Berry (A&H); Marc Stephenson (CS); Gareth Aungiers (Xentrall); Gary Woods, Peter Bell (MD)

Also in attendance: Helen Ivison (Thirteen Housing Group)

Apologies: None.

CD Declarations of Interest

6/20

There were no interests declared.

CD Minutes

7/20

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on the 30th July 2020 for approval and signature.

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

CD Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses

8/20

Scheduled as the final evidence-gathering for the Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses, the Committee was asked to consider information from the Council's Land and Property team, horse-owners, and the approaches undertaken by other Local Authorities / Police Forces regarding this issue.

SBC LAND & PROPERTY

One of the review's key lines of enquiry was around the options which may exist to reduce current service demand in relation to fly-grazed horses. As such, representatives of the Council's Land and Property team had been invited to attend this meeting to provide a view on this issue, particularly around the potential viability of any sites for placing horses.

The Committee was informed that relevant Officers from that department were unable to be in attendance, but that the following written statement had been submitted in response to the original request:

'The team do not believe there is any suitable land within the ownership of the Local Authority at the current time. Furthermore, the team would suggest that the request to explore this as an option forms part of the work already ongoing into a review of the Council's assets across the Borough and their current and potential future uses so that all factors can be taken into account.'

Members expressed their frustration that no-one from the team could be present at this meeting to respond to any questions that the Committee may have had, and agreed that Council representatives should be requested to attend the next Committee meeting. This would disappointedly mean that the presentation of the final report to Cabinet would be delayed.

HORSE-OWNERS

Informal meetings involving the Committee Chair, a Committee Member (substituting for the Committee Vice-Chair) and relevant Officers had taken place with two horse-owners prior to this Committee meeting, and incorporated questions previously submitted by Members. Topics covered included the reasons for keeping horses and where they are kept, horse welfare and road safety concerns, and thoughts on potential options that the Committee may want to pursue.

The Chair notified Members that the informal sessions had provided useful insight into the thoughts of local horse-owners on this issue, and the sense of community and passion they had for their animals was also noted. What was clear was that they will continue to keep horses come what may, and it is up to organisations to work with this rather than against it. Formal feedback would be circulated to the Committee following this meeting once the information had been collated.

OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY / POLICE FORCE APPROACHES

Circulated within the papers of this meeting was a table providing an outline of some of the measures undertaken by other Local Authorities and Police Forces in relation to fly-grazed horses. It was evident that this issue was by no means unique to the Borough, and that several areas had formalised policies in place to address cases within that locality.

Acknowledging that having a policy document did not necessarily mean that its content was being implemented / enforced, Officers had followed-up with two of the Local Authorities highlighted to get further details of their licensed grazing schemes:

Dudley

- have eight sites and issue annual licences at a cost of £455 per year.
- one horse per acre (need to allow land to re-grow).
- horse-owners have a tenancy-like agreement, with rules / regulations regarding how horses are to be kept – this includes the need for a horse to be microchipped / passported.

Wakefield

- have two sites (a 'heath' and a 'common') charging £500 per year.
- capacity for a maximum of 40 horses in total, which brings in an income of up to £20,000 – this is put back into the facilities.

Initial costs for these schemes involved the basic requirements of a fenced-off field with water and some form of shelter, though further information on any other set-up charges had been requested. Annual running costs appeared to be covered by the ground rent, and Environmental Health Officers would be

interested in conducting a visit to these locations should the Committee wish to pursue this option.

Further follow-up on other Local Authorities with formal fly-grazed horse policies in place had discovered that these published procedures were often not adhered to – available resources and key Officers leaving their roles (losing any momentum that an approach may have had) were some of the reasons identified for a lack of action.

AGREED that:

- 1) the information provided be noted.
- 2) SBC Land and Property representatives be requested to attend the next Committee meeting to provide a response in relation to the Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses.
- 3) feedback following the informal meetings with horse-owners be circulated to the Committee.
- 4) further details on other Local Authorities' licenced grazing schemes be provided.

**CD
9/20**

Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Hate Crime. This was the second update provided to the Committee following the initial one in March 2020, and Members were informed that all the remaining actions were now fully achieved.

Despite the considerable impact of Covid-19 on services, good progress had been made around the hate crime agenda, an achievement that was testament to the work of the Council's Community Safety Team. Of note was the development of a new online portal as part of the hate crime reporting system which was due to be launched in October 2020.

Members queried how they could get others involved in the Stockton Hate Crime Group if they felt it would be beneficial for them to be part of this membership. Members were asked to either contact the Community Safety Team or approach the Community Protection Service Manager direct.

Reference was made to the new 'evidence of impact' request for each recommendation on the progress update document – this had been added from August 2020 to further strengthen the monitoring process following discussions between the Chairs of the Council's scrutiny committees. It was acknowledged that, in some cases, impact may not be seen for some time after an action had been achieved – however, there was a desire to understand the difference that the Select Committees work had ultimately made.

AGREED that the progress update be noted and the assessments for progress be confirmed.

**CD
10/20** **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 8th October 2020 (4.30pm), and will consider three monitoring items – two proposed Action Plans in relation to the previously completed reviews of Protection of Older Residents Living at Home and the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) regarding Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School (both of which have been delayed due to the ongoing Covid-19 situation), and one progress update in relation to School Parking. As agreed today, further evidence-gathering regarding the Scrutiny Review of Fly-Grazed Horses is now required at the October meeting, therefore the summary of evidence / draft recommendations informal session for this review will now be deferred until November 2020.

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

**CD
11/20** **Chair's Update**

The Chair had no further updates.