

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 3rd March, 2022.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (sub for Cllr Clare Gamble), Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Julia Whitehill (sub for Cllr Alan Watson).

Officers: Marc Stephenson, Joanne Roberts, Jamie Stephenson (CS&T); Rachel Harrison, Gary Woods (MD)

Also in attendance: None.

Apologies: Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Alan Watson

CD 50/21 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CD 51/21 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CD 52/21 Minutes

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on the 27th January 2022 for approval and signature.

AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 27th January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CD 53/21 Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Review of Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish)

Following consideration and acceptance of the Committee's final report by Cabinet in January 2022, Members were presented with the draft Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish) would be implemented, and target dates for completion.

The review's Link Officer acknowledged the late submission of the required documentation which had been delayed due to recent staff changes at Cleveland Police (specifically two officers who had been involved in signing-off the Committee's recommendations from a Force perspective). Since most of the recommendations were aimed at the Force, it was therefore necessary to brief other police officers on the review and its recommendations, who then provided input to the proposed future actions. The following aspects of the draft Action Plan were subsequently highlighted / discussed:

- Recommendation 1 (Any scheduled reviews of Cleveland Police's 'Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2025' document factors in the key findings and recommendations from this review): It was confirmed that Cleveland Police had committed to a review of their Community Engagement

Strategy 2020-2025 towards the end of this five-year period and would reflect on the Committee's findings as part of this process.

- Recommendation 4 (The SBC Ward Councillor survey is repeated in approximately 12 months to gauge developments around Cleveland Police-SBC Ward Councillor communications arrangements): It was proposed that correspondence be sent to all SBC Elected Members after this meeting regarding the intention to re-issue the survey in September 2022 (the Committee's final report should be included, as should a reminder that Councillors can continue to report issues to the police as they happen, as well as share concerns / issues with the SBC Leader / Deputy Leader so they can feed these into their bi-monthly meetings with senior police officers).

Regarding any required involvement of SBC in the proposed actions, the Committee was informed that the outcomes of the forthcoming Council restructure will determine who specifically takes forward any SBC-related elements.

Members were notified that issues around police communications had been previously raised with the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner, including the way Councillors were addressed / treated when raising concerns (i.e. Elected Members were not just another member of the public).

Reflecting on the seemingly-continuous staff changes at the Force (raised during the review and seen again when attempting to agree the draft Action Plan), Members repeated concerns around trying to progress communications with the police when key contacts were changing so frequently. The Committee was assured that engagement with relevant operational officers from both SBC and Cleveland Police occurs daily, and the new main Force contact for Stockton-on-Tees had a history of working in the Borough.

Noting the proposed 'due dates' within the draft Action Plan, it was agreed that the first progress update on these actions should be presented to the Committee in October 2022 (rather than the standard 12-months after the Action Plan is approved) – this should involve relevant officers from both SBC and Cleveland Police.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Action Plan regarding the recently completed Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish) review be approved.
- 2) correspondence is sent to all SBC Elected Members regarding the intention to re-issue the SBC Ward Councillor survey in September 2022.
- 3) the initial progress update on the agreed actions is presented to the Committee in October 2022.

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Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation

of the recommendations from the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) investigation on Obstructive and Illegal Parking around Whitehouse Primary School. This was the third progress update following the Committee's agreement of the Action Plan in November 2020 and key developments were noted as follows:

- Recommendation 9 (The Council conduct further research with the Department for Transport around the 'School Streets' concept): Following technical assessment and monitoring of this concept, findings were presented to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport. It was subsequently recommended that a further period of monitoring (six months) be undertaken so that the success of the initiative can be demonstrated before significant resources are invested on local schemes.

A 'School Streets Update' briefing note was also included within the meeting papers in order to provide further background context in relation to this concept. Members were informed that those Local Authorities who had introduced 'School Streets' strongly recommended that extensive community engagement was undertaken before progressing with any scheme. In terms of enforcement, it was noted that SBC had not yet taken-up the relevant powers to enforce such an initiative via cameras, and that the police would likely see this as a low priority compared to other demands. Any physical closure of a street had the potential to be unappealing to local residents, even if some were exempt.

In addition to those actions in relation to the one outstanding recommendation above, the Committee was also updated on the use of the 'little people bollards' which had been highlighted in a previous progress update. Two primary schools (Whitehouse and William Cassidi, Stillington) were currently using these bollards and they were being respected, whilst a couple of SBC Elected Members had expressed interest in using their Community Participation Budget (CPB) to assist in providing these at their local schools (who had since been contacted by SBC officers). Schools across the Borough had been approached via the Junior Road Safety Officer scheme to promote the bollards, and further correspondence could be issued to all schools if required. The Committee suggested that a future article is included in Stockton News to further advertise the benefits of this promising initiative.

AGREED that:

- 1) the progress update be noted and the assessment for progress be confirmed;
- 2) the next progress update be given to the Committee in September 2022.
- 3) an article is included in a future edition of Stockton News referencing the success of the 'little people bollards' (including the schools involved).

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Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land

Consideration was given to the draft scope and project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land, the proposed aims of which would be to:

- Establish the extent of bonfire-related concerns (e.g. personal safety, damage to property, flytipping, etc.) within the Borough during the traditional 'bonfire night' season (mid-October to mid-November).
- Understand what the Council and its partners have historically done to identify, address and reduce bonfire-related issues.
- Investigate what, if any, further measures can be put in place to strengthen the management, or reduction, of bonfires during this time period.

Key contributors would be the Local Authority (Community Services, Environmental Health, Education / Youth Services), Cleveland Fire Brigade, Cleveland Police, housing providers, and the RSPCA / Wildlife Trust. It was envisaged that the Committee's final report would be presented to Cabinet in September 2022.

To assist in ensuring the Committee is sighted on any known bonfire sites on public land across the Borough, it was suggested that all SBC Elected Members should be given the opportunity to highlight any areas within their own Wards where bonfires tend to occur.

AGREED that:

- 1) the draft scope and project plan for the Bonfires on Public Land review be approved;
- 2) correspondence be sent to all SBC Elected Members in advance of the first evidence-gathering session in late-March 2022 asking for locations of any known bonfire sites (on public land) across the Borough.

CD 56/21 Work Programme 2021-2022

Consideration was given to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2021-2022. The next Committee meeting was scheduled for the 31st March 2022 and would involve consideration of the draft Action Plan in relation to the agreed recommendations from the recently completed review of Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPOs), and the first SBC-focused evidence-gathering session for the Bonfires on Public Land review.

AGREED that the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme for 2021-2022 be noted.

CD 57/21 Chair's Update

The Chair had no further updates.