

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 21st July, 2022.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Steve Matthews, Cllr Stephen Richardson, Cllr Alan Watson

Officers: Ann Workman, Marc Stephenson, Jimmy Jones, Leanne Maloney-Kelly (A&H); Jamie Stephenson, Dale Rowbotham (CS,E&C); Rachel Harrison, Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: Cllr Norma Stephenson OBE (Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety)

Apologies: Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley

CD Evacuation Procedure

8/22

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CD Declarations of Interest

9/22

There were no interests declared.

CD Minutes

10/22

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meetings which were held on the 26th May 2022 for approval and signature.

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AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meetings held on the 26th May 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CD Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land

11/22

Consideration was given to the draft final report and recommendations for the Scrutiny Review of Bonfires on Public Land.

The following additional information was noted:

- Paragraphs 4.1 – 4.7: an additional section of legislative context had now been included (as suggested during the Committee's informal 'summary of evidence' session in June 2022).
- Paragraph 4.36: A summary of Cleveland Fire Brigade's analysis on a Primrose Hill Youth and Diversionary Project (forwarded after the Brigade's initial submission and subsequently circulated to the Committee) had been added.

- Paragraph 4.38: Clarity provided on the reporting routes for Cleveland Fire Brigade (and Cleveland Police) regarding the collection of combustible materials by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (as per previous discussions).
- Paragraph 4.59: a breakdown of the main aspects of the information in Appendix 2 (Cleveland Police – additional incident data).
- Paragraph 4.64: with reference to the figure of £10 million (costs of bonfires to the overall Stockton-on-Tees economy) Cleveland Fire Brigade included in their presentation to the Committee, this paragraph outlines the sources the Brigade used to get to that figure.

Members thanked officers for their input during the course of the review and for producing a comprehensive report which would now be presented to Cabinet in September 2022. The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety (who originally suggested this scrutiny topic) also praised the Committee for its work.

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Members thanked officers for their input during the course of the review and for producing a comprehensive report which would now be presented to Cabinet in September 2022. The Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety (who originally suggested this scrutiny topic) also praised the Committee for its work.

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

Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations

Cllr Clare Gamble wished it to be recorded for transparency purposes only that she was an employee of Catalyst (who were referenced within the documentation for this agenda item).

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Committee's previously completed review of Protection of Vulnerable Older Residents Living at Home. This was the third progress update following the Committee's agreement of the Action Plan in October 2020 and key developments were noted as follows:

- Recommendation 1 (The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Cleveland Police provide assurance around the measures put in place to address the failings highlighted in the Force's recent HMICRFS PEEL assessment around identifying vulnerable victims and providing adequate safeguarding): The OPCC was approached for supplementary assurance / evidence in respect of the improvements made following the PEEL inspection. No update had been received, neither by the deadline for submitting the papers for this meeting nor since.
- Recommendation 5 (Thirteen liaise with Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) Adult Social Care around the identification and provision of recognition equipment for vulnerable tenants.): Recognition equipment was not available as standard and was not a service provided by SBC One Call. It was, however, confirmed that the needs of vulnerable people were assessed on a subjective basis, and where needs could be met with additional equipment, this was considered case-by-case. Assurance was also given that there had been no referral or assessment issues in relation to this equipment.
- Recommendation 7 (Catalyst collate a list of local befriending initiatives offered by the VCSE sector and partner organisations (including SBC One Call, Thirteen and Cleveland Fire Brigade), for circulation to vulnerable older people living at home (which can also be advertised via Stockton Information Directory): Four organisations had been identified who specifically stated that they offered befriending services at varying degrees. These services were Age UK Teesside, Re-engage, Alzheimer's Society, and Pioneering Care Partnership. Many other VCSE organisations provided services which encouraged and promoted friendships through hobbies and social activities. However, they did not promote themselves as befriending services as defined in the review. Details of all the services on offer have been updated in the directories to better reflect the type of services on offer.
- Recommendation 11 (SBC and Catalyst produce an easy-read document listing the main contacts for support/advice which can be circulated via Stockton News and by local VCSE organisations to older people living in their own homes across the Borough): Due to the COVID pandemic, many organisations suspended services and, post-pandemic, many services were getting back to strength – however, it was a relatively slow process therefore the ability to map and accurately reflect it on written literature was challenging. Webpages had been updated to reflect the support available and a commitment was taken to push this via Stockton News. In a very positive development, a Fairer Stockton

Co-ordinator was to be appointed to help with this work. Once more information was available, it will be possible to produce and publish the lists of services envisaged by these recommendations in a much more accurate and holistic way.

Regarding the lack of engagement by the OPCC in relation to recommendation 1 (see above), it was noted that the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel have oversight of the developments around the PEEL inspection response. Members suggested that a summary report on any such developments is circulated to the Committee for information, something the Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety (also present at this meeting), a member of the Panel, offered to assist with.

The Committee welcomed this latest update and agreed that the outstanding actions could now be deemed 'fully achieved' – as such, no further progress updates would be required. The Committee Chair gave particular thanks to Catalyst for their contribution towards these post-review developments.

AGREED that:

- 1) the progress update be noted, the assessments for progress be confirmed, and the Action Plan be signed off as fully achieved (no further updates required).
- 2) any recent / future update to the Cleveland Police and Crime Panel on developments around Cleveland Police's response to their previous PEEL inspection is shared with the Committee.

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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 Committee's previously completed review of Fraud Awareness (Personal). This was the first progress update following the Committee's agreement of the Action Plan in July 2021 and key developments were noted as follows:

- Recommendation 1 (Representation be made to Action Fraud encouraging the sharing of relevant information with the Local Authority (reflective of the review and in support of the National Trading Standards position)): A first draft of the letter was prepared towards the end of September 2021, with the draft being discussed with Cllr Steve Nelson, the then Cabinet Member for Access, Communities and Community Safety in October 2021. The final agreed version was sent out to Action Fraud on the 22nd October 2021, however, the situation remains that Trading Standards does not receive any referrals from Action Fraud and does not have direct remote access to the Action Fraud database – this situation seems unlikely to change in the short to medium-term.
- Recommendation 2 (Cleveland Police consider the existing resources it has in place to tackle fraud, with a view to facilitating the disruption and prevention of fraud being committed in the first place, in addition to the investigation and prosecution of such crime): The number of dedicated fraud investigators remained the same with this being looked at again when resources allowed. A new Economic Threat Desk has been set up at NERSOU which reviewed and assessed the risk from Economic Crime around the three North East regions. Fraud and Cyber Officers have been given dedicated cryptocurrency investigation training and provided with IT systems to carry-out crypto investigations.

Given that this position was unlikely to change, it was suggested that the agreed actions in relation to this recommendation be re-graded to 'fully achieved' (as opposed to 'on-track' as stated within the published update document) – this was subsequently endorsed by the Committee.

- Recommendation 3 (Cleveland Police maximise the Neighbourhood Policing model to aid in identifying and supporting vulnerable residents, providing regular updates on the latest fraud-related activity and how residents can protect themselves (e.g., utilising the new Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) for Cleveland monthly e-newsletter): The Victim Care Advice Service had been awarded a further 4-year contract to provide support to victims of crime. They continued to provide enhanced support for vulnerable victims of fraud and cybercrime. The PROTECT officer had established links with the local community for distribution of PROTECT advice as threats were identified using a number of channels including social media. Through the SOCLP forum, the police had asked for dedicated SPOCs within each local authority who could assist in providing a pathway to specific victim groups to help get messages out quickly when necessary. This was due to be reported at the next SOCLP meeting.

Again, given that this position was unlikely to change, it was suggested that the agreed actions in relation to this recommendation be re-graded to 'fully achieved' (as opposed to 'on-track' as stated within the published update document) – this was subsequently endorsed by the Committee.

- Recommendation 4 (All local partners continue sharing and disseminating key anti-fraud messages, emerging threats, reporting mechanisms, and existing fraud-related resources via all available platforms (not just online)): All local partners remained committed to sharing and disseminating key anti-fraud messages. In the last year, Trading Standards had sent 48 notifications to the SBC Media Team on current and trending scams, with key graphics, sources, and help. Details of one banking scam reached over 10,000 people.

- Recommendation 5 (Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council includes a regular fraud-related feature in Stockton News which details the latest scams, reinforces reporting routes, and, where possible, highlights the prevalence of fraud against particular age-groups, including those under 40 years-old): SBC remained committed to publicising key messages on scam awareness and wider fraud protection issues in its community magazine, Stockton News. Current and topical issues are highlighted in order to increase impact.

Given that this position was unlikely to change, it was suggested that the agreed actions in relation to this recommendation be re-graded to 'fully achieved' (as opposed to 'on-track' as stated within the published update document) – this was subsequently endorsed by the Committee.

- Recommendation 6 (Relevant data and key messages for young people around fraud crime be shared with the Council's Bright Minds Big Futures (BMBF) initiative to facilitate strengthened awareness-raising with that specific demographic): Contact had been made with the BMBF initiative in order to facilitate and develop mechanisms in which to share key messages around scams awareness and fraud prevention. As a result of this, in the last year, 16 key scam awareness messages had been distributed to BMBF via these channels with further dialogue having been carried-out to engage with BMBF on scams generally and to answer scam-related issues. Again, current and topical issues relevant to the younger demographic are shared in order to increase impact.

- Recommendation 7 (The feasibility of supporting Age UK Teesside to extend its provision of digital projects (enabling older people to learn about devices / how to use the internet) in Middlesbrough / Redcar and Cleveland to Stockton-on-Tees is further explored): Contact was made with Age UK Teesside and an outline of objectives, specification and costs was obtained in relation to their Digital Inclusion Project by September 2021. The project was not taken forward due to a lack of available funds.

Although assessed as 'fully achieved', the Committee asked for this to be reviewed again in the future for any changes in funding availability. This action would therefore be re-graded to 'on-track'.

Further to the update on recommendation 1 (see above), it was noted that the City of London Police (who run Action Fraud) are updating the service, with a

new website envisaged for autumn 2022 and refreshed back-office functions in place for 2023 – this may provide future opportunities for Local Authorities to link-in with the fraud information they hold.

Regarding recommendation 7, Members suggested that Catalyst may be able to provide links to potential resourcing routes, and that organisations other than Age UK also provide digital inclusion initiatives which should be further explored. Continuing to raise awareness of scams to the older demographic was vital, some of whom may be scared to use online services because of the stories they hear, yet are increasingly being encouraged to use these platforms by organisations (further exacerbated by the impact of COVID). Officers gave assurance that this recommendation would be incorporated into the SBC Trading Standards service plan, a department which now had better links to Adult Services following the recent Council management restructure.

AGREED that the progress update be noted and the assessments for progress be confirmed (subject to the approved re-gradings for recommendations 2, 3, 5 and 7).

CD 14/22 Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management

Consideration was given to the draft scope and project plan for the Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management, the proposed aims of which would be to:

- Ascertain the Council's legal responsibilities and its current policy for the management of public tree stock.
- Examine the inspection and maintenance programme, the pressures contributing to the existing backlog, and the strategy/ resources in place to address this.
- Consider future demand (including new developments, land adoptions/transfers, Ash Dieback planning, environmental strategy) and the impact this may have on required operational arrangements.

Key contributors would be the Local Authority (Community Services and Environment, Leisure & Green Infrastructure), SBC Elected Members and other Local Authorities, with the Committee's final report expected to be presented to Cabinet in February 2023.

It was suggested that all SBC Elected Members should be given the opportunity to highlight any areas within their own Wards where trees were causing problems. The identification of protected trees was also raised, as was the potential for some selected site visits to get a visual appreciation of the issues faced across the Borough.

AGREED that the draft scope and project plan for the Tree Asset Management review be approved.

CD 15/22 Work Programme 2022-2023

Consideration was given to the current Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme.

The next meeting was scheduled for the 29th September 2022 and would include the first evidence-gathering session for the new review of Tree Asset Management, as well as the latest update on the outstanding action in relation to the previously completed Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) investigation regarding obstructive and illegal parking around Whitehouse Primary School.

AGREED that the Crime and Disorder Select Committee Work Programme 2022-2023 be noted.

CD
16/22

Chair's Update

The Chair had no further updates.