

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

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

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Steve Matthews and Cllr Alan Watson.

Officers: Marc Stephenson, Sharon Cooney (A&H); Neil Mitchell, Dale Rowbotham, Mark Nozedar (CS,E&C); Judy Trainer (CS).

Also in attendance: Jon Willoughby (Cleveland Police).

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley.

CD Evacuation Procedure

24/22

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CD Declarations of Interest

25/22

There were no interests declared.

CD Minutes

26/22

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on the 29 September 2022 for approval and signature.

AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on the 29 September 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CD Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations - Review of Bonfires on Public Land

27/22

Consideration was given to an Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the review of Bonfires on Public Land would be implemented including success measures and target dates for completion.

Members expressed concern about the effect of the Stockton Fireworks Display not taking place. It was acknowledged that the lack of a large diversionary event might have an impact but plans to deter unauthorised bonfires were in place. In addition, the Council's licensing team were pro-actively dealing with any reports of illegal fireworks and taking robust action.

AGREED that the Action Plan be approved.

CD Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations

28/22

Consideration was given to the assessments of progress on the implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Police Communication in

Stockton-on-Tees (Task and Finish).

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- Ongoing issues were still being experienced with police communications. Members reported issues with securing attendance at ward meetings, acknowledging receipt of information provided and receiving feedback on actions taken. Members commented that officers should be reminded to use “out of office” notifications when off shift or off duty due to sickness absence or other reasons.
- PCSOs should be sending one to two emails each month to local Councillors; Insp Jon Willoughby advised that he would be sending an email to all Councillors advising them to contact him directly if they were not receiving this level of service. Recognising the staffing pressures, he also highlighted that sergeants had an important role play in supporting contact with Members.
- It was agreed that having copies of rotas would be helpful and Marc Stephenson agreed to co-ordinate this with the Police.

AGREED that the progress update be noted and the assessments of progress be approved.

CD 29/22 **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 Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs).

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- A dedicated team of 12 Civic Enforcement Officers had been ring fenced to town centres across Stockton-on-Tees supplemented when needed by the core service. Additional funding of £35,000 had also been secured from the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner to facilitate further work in town centres.
- 513 complaints of aggressive begging had been received, however, only 5 of these had been designated as aggressive begging under the formal definition agreed at part of the scrutiny review. Members asked for details of the actions taken in respect of these cases to be provided to Select Committee Members.
- Members of the Committee commented that in accordance with the consultation process established under recommendation 3, there had been consultation on the potential introduction of a PSPO regarding drinking in public places. Officers confirmed that a PSPO was currently being explored and that a similar targeted PSPO in Scarborough was proving effective.

AGREED

- (1) That the progress update be noted and the assessments of progress be approved.
- (2) That details of the actions taken in respect of the complaints deemed as

aggressive begging be provided to Select Committee Members.

CD 30/22 **Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management**

As part of the second evidence-gathering session for the Committee's review of Tree Asset Management, the Select Committee received a presentation from the Environment, Leisure and Green Infrastructure Team outlining:

- Benefits of adding to our tree canopy - including helping to reduce CO2, preventing soil erosion, reducing water pollution, cleaning the air, providing shade and reducing temperatures, helping with our mental health, a source of sustainable fuel and food source, having a positive impact on house prices
- Legislation and strategy
- How the tree canopy contributes to the Environmental Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Strategy 2022 – 2032 and the four high level objectives:
 - o Achieve net zero greenhouse gases
 - o Use all resources efficiently and minimise waste
 - o Protect and enhance the natural environment
 - o Adapt to the impacts of climate change
- Updates including:
 - o 12,000 new trees planted in 2021/22; 12,000 further trees to be planted in 2022/2
 - o Ash dieback could cause the death of 80% of the Borough's 14,000 ash trees
- Funding:
 - o £393,000 acquired for the planting of tree and associated aftercare
 - o £60,000 secured for a Community Tree and Woodland Officer
- Internal and External Engagement Activities
- Challenges
 - o Ongoing maintenance as well as planting
 - o Cessation of funding for the Tree and Woodland Officer

The Select Committee also received a briefing paper from the Tree and Woodland Management Services. This set out:

- The Council's statutory obligations/ legal duties
- How resources are directed and current pressures
- Level of resource that other Local Authorities have to manage their tree stock
- What would an ideal service look like?

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- The Council had a legal duty of care to ensure a defensible system of tree inspection and maintenance.
- Delivery of routine priority work was carried out over a five-year cycle; however, reactive work had a negative effect on completion of other work.
- Priority 1 customer service requests were investigated for action within 1 – 10 working days; priority 2 requests were placed on the inspection waiting list with no predetermined response timescale.
- Additional resource might be needed to undertake Ash dieback work in the future. Although the scale of the problem within the Borough was not severe

at the present time, the evidence was that any infection would quickly spread; there was therefore a need to act now to plant more Ash trees to replenish the stock.

- A second maintenance team would help deliver an ideal service but would cost in the region of £120,000 per year; a 32-week seasonal “assist” team could be introduced to carry out simpler arboricultural maintenance task at a cost of £76,000 per year.
- Planting of the correct species in the right location would ensure that trees were self-sustaining and minimise the Council’s future obligations. Many of the problems currently encountered were due to poor planting decisions in the past.
- Members articulated grave concerns that the Council did not have resource to manage the current tree stock or the anticipated Ash dieback.
- Minimum statutory requirements and costs were requested together with details of the Tree Survey Database.

AGREED that the information be noted and the further information requested be provided to the Select Committee.

CD 31/22 Work Programme 2022-2023

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

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

CD 32/22 Chair's Update

The Chair had no further updates.