

Crime and Disorder Select Committee

A meeting of Crime and Disorder Select Committee was held on Thursday, 9th February, 2023.

Present: Cllr Pauline Beall (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Lynn Hall (sub for Cllr Stephen Richardson), Cllr Steve Matthews JP, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Alan Watson

Officers: Reuben Kench, Dale Rowbotham (CS,E&C); Jimmy Jones (A&H); Gary Woods (CS)

Also in attendance: Cllr Mike Smith (SBC Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport)

Apologies: Cllr Clare Gamble, Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Stephen Richardson

CD 39/22 Evacuation procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CD 40/22 Declarations of Interest

There were no interests declared.

CD 41/22 Minutes- 1 December 2022

Consideration was given to the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Select Committee meeting which was held on 1 December 2022 for approval and signature.

AGREED that the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 1 December 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CD 42/22 Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management

Consideration was given to the draft final report and recommendations for the Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management. The following additional information was noted:

- Paragraph 4.5: As requested during the Committee's 'summary of evidence' session in January 2023, a reference to the Place Select Committee's recent work on Planning (Development Management) and Adoption of Open Space had been included.
- Paragraph 4.25: Commentary on how Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC) manages tree stumps.
- Paragraph 4.47: A brief summary of the recently published case involving Newcastle City Council.
- Paragraph 4.48: SBC assurance in response to the Newcastle case.
- Paragraph 4.49: Survey response statistics amended in light of the duplicate information which had emerged during further analysis of the feedback received.

- Paragraph 4.57: Some further links to tree planting information, which included a useful guidance document from Cornwall Wildlife Trust in relation to planting the right tree in the right place (graphic added as Appendix 2).
- Recommendations: Members were informed that 1e) had been proposed and added to the draft report following discussions at the end-of-review tri-partite meeting in late-January 2023.

Regarding the removal of tree stumps, the Committee queried if the Council provided opportunities for the public to purchase these for private use. Officers reiterated previously relayed caution around potentially selling-on contaminated wood, and that any wood made available for the purposes of fuel would need to be fully dried prior to burning so it did not cause environmental damage. Weighing-up the costs and benefits of selling tree cuttings / stumps therefore required careful consideration.

Members requested clarity on the Council's facilitation of the disposal of residents' Christmas trees. Officers confirmed that a local charity offers a collection service, and that they can also be picked-up as part of the normal waste collection process.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport thanked the Committee for its work on this scrutiny topic and asked if Members might consider strengthening recommendation 5 (Corporate funding be sourced for an ash tree survey to be undertaken as soon as possible to establish the potential extent of the looming arrival of ash dieback within the Borough, along with a plan on how this will be managed (including anticipated resource requirements)) by calling for a Tees Valley-wide approach. It was agreed that the wording would be kept as presented, but that the subsequent Action Plan in relation to the review's recommendations could look to propose such activity.

The Committee thanked officers for their input during the course of the review and for the production of the ensuing report which would now be presented to Cabinet later in February 2023. The SBC Director of Community Services, Environment and Culture echoed this appreciation, and felt this once again demonstrated the added value afforded by the scrutiny process.

AGREED that the Scrutiny Review of Tree Asset Management final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.

CD 43/22 Monitoring the Impact of Previously Agreed Recommendations - Fraud Awareness (Personal)

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 second progress update following the Committee's agreement of the Action Plan in July 2021 and key developments were noted as follows:

- 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): Further exploration into the availability of digital awareness initiatives had uncovered several offers across the Borough via SBC itself and other community bodies. Links to these opportunities were included in the submitted progress update document.

The Committee emphasised the need for the Council and those community organisations offering digital awareness sessions to ensure these were not solely promoted on electronic media, as such an approach may be hidden from a large proportion of those who the sessions would benefit most. Understanding take-up of these initiatives would also be useful in determining any alternative promotional activity.

Further to the previous update on progress that was provided in July 2022, developments in relation to Action Fraud were noted. As referenced within the recently published House of Commons: Justice Committee report, 'Fraud and the Justice System: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2022-23' (January 2023) (accessible via <https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/33421/documents/181645/default/>), the Government plans to replace Action Fraud with a new service in 2024.

AGREED that the Fraud Awareness (Personal) progress update be noted, the assessment for progress be confirmed, and the Action Plan be signed of as fully achieved (no further updates required).

**CD
44/22**

Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2022-2023

Chair's Update

The Committee Chair reminded all Members to forward any proposals for 2023-2024 scrutiny topics by the required deadline (17 February 2023) – these would then be included in the process for setting the 2023-2024 scrutiny work programme.

Work Programme 2022-2023

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

The next meeting (and final one of the current Council four-year term) was scheduled for 9 March 2023, and would involve several monitoring items. Assuming Cabinet endorsement of the Committee's final report later in February 2023, a draft Action Plan in relation to the recommendations from the Tree Asset Management review would be presented for approval. Progress updates for previously completed reviews on Police Communications in Stockton-on-Tees (Task & Finish), Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPOs), and Bonfires on Public Land would also be considered. Finally, the overview and scrutiny end-of-term report for 2019-2023 would also be presented.

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

