

Executive Scrutiny Committee

A meeting of Executive Scrutiny Committee was held on Tuesday, 27th September, 2016.

Present: Cllr David Harrington(Chairman),

Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Sonia Bailey, Cllr Derrick Brown, Cllr Carol Clark, Cllr Chris Clough, Cllr Philip Dennis, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Eileen Johnson, Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell, Cllr Maurice Perry, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Lynn Hall (Sub for Cllr Laura Tunney), Cllr Matthew Vickers

Officers: Graham Birtle, Michael Henderson, Peter Mennear

Also in attendance: Cllr Gillian Corr

Apologies: Cllr Laura Tunney, Cllr David Wilburn, Cllr Lisa Grainge,

1 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Corr, Perry and Dennis declared a personal/non prejudicial interests in item 5, entitled School Parking, as they were Governors of schools within the Borough.

2 **Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2016 - for signature**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2016 were signed by the Chairman.

3 **Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016 were agreed .

Members asked that details of the original cost associated with repainting Newport Bridge be re-sent to them.

4 **School Parking**

Members considered a report on school parking, which had been produced following the Crime and Disorder Select Committee's review of School Parking.

It was noted that the number of cars taking children to and from school had increased over the years not just in Stockton Borough but nationally and, as such, needed to be recognised as a problem that could not easily be remedied locally.

The key concerns that were investigated by the Committee were:

- Safety of children who are trying to cross roads between parked cars.
- Residents unable to access their own homes/driveways and being verbally abused by drivers.
- Safety of drivers (and young passengers) trying to manoeuvre where there are cars parked across junctions, on bends etc.
- How Enforcement Officers and local police could deal with the problem.
- What good practice is already happening and how can this be shared.

It was explained that Members visited a number of primary schools in the borough, those that were particularly affected by inconsiderate parking of adults transporting children to and from school to see for themselves the issue being scrutinised. Observing the parking issues both with and without Enforcement Officers showed some changes in driver behaviour but some adults were still willing to argue against traffic regulations applying to them.

Whilst taking into consideration what might be a busy schedule for parents taking their child/ren to school before going to work the Committee was interested to learn that in Stockton Borough 85 per cent of primary school pupils and 51 per cent of secondary school pupils lived within 1 mile of the school they attend. As such Members thought it reasonable to consider more children might be capable of walking or cycling to school. This could then reduce the number of car journeys, promoted some independence in children and if the journey was shared with friends a way of readying themselves for the school day ahead.

Walk to school weeks were popular campaigns and showed levels of support when they were held but this didn't appear to be maintained throughout the school year but the Committee was keen to help develop a change in behaviour by parents that might mean they continued to allow their child/ren to walk to school and thereby reduce the amount of car journeys necessary.

The Committee was keen to get the support of parents to change their behaviour when it came to parking but contraventions to traffic regulations did involve the Enforcement Team when vehicles were parked on zigzags, single and double yellow lines, and obstructive, indiscriminate, and/or inconsiderate parking.

Legislative restrictions by national government have limited what actions the Committee would like to see or introduce so were interested to make the case for reconsidering local authority powers in light of providing more safety around schools.

The Committee had discussed the issue with a wide variety of people including Headteachers, teachers, governors, parents, petitioners, police, enforcement officers, and other local authority officers to gather as much evidence as possible and puts forward the following recommendations as a way of tackling the problem of inconsiderate drivers and parking around the schools in the borough.

Discussion of this report could be summarised as follows:-

- recommendation No 1 was an attempt to get children more involved in the issue and for them to influence their parents. It was recognised that a degree of support would be needed to help this work and it would be important to get the resource pack right to get children on board. The packs needed to be available across the whole Borough.
- There was uncertainty around the legal aspects of enforcing Public Space Protection Orders but this was being monitored.
- it was noted that the Park Smart notices would be explored.

- School Parking was a a national problem but the law didn't back the Council up to deal with the issue.
- Enforcement officers could not issue a ticket to vehicles until a 10 minute period had elapsed from them observing the vehicle. Parents knew this and returned within that period.
- the behaviour of some Parents was very poor.
- it was noted that the action plan would be coming back to the Crime and Disorder Committee and that Committee would look at all recommendations, including scrutinising what the resource pack might contain. Updates would be provided every six months. There needed to be monitoring of enforcement statistics.

RESOLVED that the report and discussion be noted.

5 Annual Scrutiny Report 2015-16

Members received a report that presented a draft Annual Scrutiny Report for 2015 - 16.

Discussion could be summarised as follows:

- the report was to March 2016, so some recent issues may appear in the Annual Report 2016/17.
- reference was made to the Crime and Disorder Select Committee section of the report and the Review of the River Tees Crossing Infrastructure which had raised concerns relating to the Teesside Park access , which underwent remedial work recently. It was queried if this access issue would be considered by the Combined Authority or any other appropriate forum. An update in this regard would be provided.
- A Foreword for the Annual Report would be compiled .
- members found the report to be helpful and very readable.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Annual Report be agreed and a foreword be prepared.
2. an update on the Teesside Park access be provided.

6 Statutory Forward Plan

The Committee considered the Stautory Forward Plan, published 1 September 2016.

RESOLVED that the plan be noted.

7 Scrutiny Developments

Members considered Scrutiny Developments and noted that:

- The Ofsted inspection report, following a review of the Council's Children's Services had referred to the Children and Young People's Select Committee and the important work it had undertaken in certain sensitive areas.

Officers would look at providing links to Scrutiny reports in the Annual Report.

Members could provide links to reviews on their own web pages following discussion with Democratic Services.

RESOLVED that the update and discussion be noted.

8 Chairs' Updates

Members considered the Chairs' updates on Select Committees' reviews and other work.

During discussion of the Adults Services and Health Select Committee update reference was made to the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. It was strongly suggested that the consequences of a person being subject to DoLS should be fully explained to relatives. The Chair gave assurances that this would be looked at within the review.

Members asked if the date and time of the next meeting, of each Committee, could be detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the updates and discussion be noted/actioned as appropriate.

9 Chair's Update and Executive Scrutiny Work Programme 2016/17

Members considered the work programme

It was explained that Fleet Management would be considered at November's meeting.

The Committee noted that Cllr Dennis was Chair of the Combined Authority (CA) Select Committee. The Chair of Executive Scrutiny explained that he intended discussing with the Chief Executive a mechanism for all members to be informed of CA scrutiny work. Cllr Dennis would also raise this with relevant officers.

Members noted that the two co-opted reps on the committee had not attended for sometime and officers were asked to look into this.

RESOLVED that the work programme and discussion be noted/actioned as appropriate.

