

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 24th March, 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs Gillian Williams – in the Chair

Councillors: Councillor David Allport, Councillor Peter Hailstones, Councillor Mrs Hilda Johnson, Councillor Glyn Plant, Councillor Miss Marion Reddish, Councillor Kyle Robinson, Councillor Mrs Sandra Simpson and Councillor Andrew Wemyss

Portfolio Holder(s): Tony Kearon – Safer Communities

Officers: Dave Adams – Executive Director, Operational Services
Julia Cleary – Democratic Services Manager
Nesta Henshaw – Head of Environmental Health Services

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declaration of interest received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 December 2013 are agreed as a correct record.

4. REDUCING THE STRENGTH

The Community Safety Officer gave an update on a campaign Suffolk Police, Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council and NHS Suffolk launched during September 2012 called Reducing the Strength Campaign to tackle problems with dependent street drinkers. This has worked well in reducing violent anti-social behaviour with two thirds of off licences signed up.

The aims of the campaign were:-

- To encourage licensees of premises with an off licence to voluntarily remove all super strength lager, beer and cider from their premises on a borough wide basis. Following this, to persuade licensees to voluntarily change the terms of their licence to include a licensing condition not to sell such items.
- To use the campaign to highlight the dangers of alcohol in general and in particular super strength alcohol, to the communities of Ipswich, and the wider Suffolk community

Both Inspector Mark Barlow, Staffordshire Police and Newcastle Borough Council's Community Safety Officer recently attended a Reducing the Strength Campaign conference in Ipswich.

Newcastle Town Centre and surrounding areas experience issues with dependent street drinkers some of which present significant challenges not only on the streets of Newcastle but also within the their own communities and neighbourhoods.

Eleven out of sixteen off licences have agreed, in principle, to sign a voluntary agreement.

There is a Dependent Drinkers Case Conference which is chaired by the Community Safety Officer covering issues of preventative measures, treatment, enforcement, acceptable behaviour contracts, conditions etc.

A meeting has been arranged for Wednesday 26 March 2014 to look at the next steps regarding public relations, communications which play a crucial role to the public and trade.

This was reported as a very good start with a need to progress further to Supermarkets, writing to the Head Offices. Lidl and Morrisons have refused as they are already tackling alcohol abuse but more discussions are taking place with Sainsbury's. Public Health have backed the campaign and discussions are taking place regarding fast track route into treatment services. Newcastle Borough Council have pledged money to support the facilitation of the campaign.

A Member expressed this as an excellent idea and for it to be widened across the Borough; Tesco and Home Bargains, Kidsgrove. Home Bargains, Kidsgrove has been targeted but they do not retail super strength alcohol it is mainly beers, ciders and lagers not wine or spirits. Presently Bargain Booze is out of the area for the first phase.

Promotion of the campaign was raised, but it was felt there is a need to get the off licences signed up to the agreement, attend the Conference in Ipswich then plan the Communications Strategy. With a formal launch to be arranged.

It was raised that the retail outlets that are supporting the campaign to be praised.

The Community Safety Officer advised it would be useful to meet with Councillors and Portfolio Holders to present a case regarding supermarkets.

A Member expressed concern of the campaign displacing the problem elsewhere. The Community Safety Officer advised that the off licences that have not signed up have been warned that they will be approached by more drinkers. If this occurs the Licensing Section at Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council will enforce action. Resulting in the off licences to sign the agreement.

The Executive Director Operational Services advised that abstinence/less drinking is more likely to address the problem. The Community Safety Officer informed that Public Health must be a fast track route to help services/treatment. Burton Hospital has pledged £xxxx support

Helen Jones (District Public Health Development Officer – Newcastle-under-Lyme) who is based in the Business Improvement and Partnerships office is in liaison with Tony Bullock (Commissioning Lead at Staffordshire County Council).

Concern was raised of withdrawal, possibly death and the only fast track way in Cheshire is if you are in hospital as an in-patient.

It was raised for Clinical Commissioning Groups to be involved as Public Health is not sufficient. This service is going out to tender shortly. Presently there are three providers. Combined Health Care provide detox with Public Health providing resources for alcohol, smoking, infant mortality and obesity.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council and 'Brighter Futures' are working on projects with dependent drinkers.

Matthew Ellis, Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner advised early intervention is required/moral support.

This can be linked in with the work the Community Safety Officer has been involved in with schools.

RECOMMENDED:- That the campaign is fully supported. With the supermarkets and the Staffordshire Chief Inspector of Police pleased to be involved. Section 30 Zone does include Morrisons and Lidl. Press releases to be published. Tesco, Kidsgrove to be involved and publise. Ensure it does not send more dependent drinkers over the Newcastle-under-Lyme.

5. **PURPLE FLAG UPDATE**

The Committee considered an update regarding the Purple Flag scheme. The Community Safety Officer is producing the first draft of the application to be presented to a working group in couple of weeks with the aim of trying to encourage the Town Centre Partnership composing a submission.

The Town Centre Partnership are looking at the early evening economy, 5.00pm to 8.00pm, which presently is tenuous. There is a mixed variety of arts, theatre, bars and clubs.

It is unknown if the Public Realm work is completed. Community Safety Officer is discuss at the next working group. Application will be deferred if the time is not right.

6. **LICENSING OF FAST FOOD OUTLETS**

A request was made for this item to remain as an agenda item and for the Head of Planning to pursue it as part of the Local Plan.

The Executive Director – Operational Services asked for it to be sourced by market forces as Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council does not want empty shops within the Borough.

RECOMMENDED:- It was agreed that it does not look appealing for shutters of outlets to be down during the day.

7. **DOG CONTROL ORDERS**

The Head of Environmental Health Services gave an update on the Dog Control Orders. Five Fixed Penalty Notices have been served to date, one successful prosecution and twelve formal warnings.

A Member raised an issue of constraints. There are limits to the amount of enforcement which the authority can deliver based on its geographical size and available staff resource.

Cemeteries have been opened to allow members of the public to walk their dogs through but it was felt this should not be allowed.

A Member raised on-going problems at Butt Lane hot spots. Mainly due to there being no signage and public awareness is crucial. The Member asked for free material from Keep Britain Tidy.

Signage is required to inform the public that dog faeces can be disposed of in litter bins. An option was to use Keep Britain Tidy but the preferred option was to use in-house signage. Keep Britain Tidy can be looked into again.

A Member asked for certain problem areas to be targeted with leaflets.

RECOMMENDED:- The Head of Environmental Health Services to liaise with the Executive Director – Operational Services and Head of Operations regarding signage.

8. **A FRAME OBSTRUCTION ON PAVEMENTS (BRIEFING NOTE)**

A frames are the responsibility of Staffordshire County Council. Members do need to be proactive in reporting direct to the County Highways and if no response to raise with the County Councillors.

All concerns are to be reported via the Guildhall which will be forwarded to Staffordshire County Council.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities advised that Town Centre Partnership could be approached with regard to the Good Code of Conduct.

This item is to be kept as an agenda item and invite the Town Centre Partnership Manager or a representative from the Town Centre Partnership and Dave Greatbatch, Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager at Staffordshire County Council to future meetings.

9. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered the Work Plan. It was agreed that the following items would remain on the work plan in order for the Committee to further consider them in the future:-

- Licensing of Hot Food Takeaways
- 'A' Frames Obstruction on Pavements – in order to invite the Town Centre Manager or a Town Centre Partnership representative and the Community Infrastructure Liaison Manager (Staffordshire County Council) to future meetings.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No items were raised.

COUNCILLOR MRS GILLIAN WILLIAMS
Chair