

CLEANER, GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 1st October, 2014

Present:-	Councillor Mrs Gillian Williams – in the Chair
Councillors	Councillors Colin Eastwood, Mayor's Consort, Hailstones, Harper, Proctor, Robinson, Welsh and Councillor Mrs Winfield
	Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities
Officers	Executive Director of Operational Services Head of Planning (for item 6) Senior Partnership Officer (for item 5) Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Head of Business Improvement, Central Services and Partnerships, Councillor Chloe Mancey and Councillor Simon Tagg.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:- That the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 25 June 2014 were agreed as a correct record

4. PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) QUESTION TIME

Two Portfolio Holders were in attendance, Councillor Mrs Ann Beech – Environment and Recycling and Councillor Tony Kearon – Safer Communities to provide a verbal update on their priorities and work objectives.

Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Tony Kearon advised that since the last time he attended Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Committee funding had been secured for the community safety work. Funding had also been received from the Police, Crime and Commissioner (PCC). There had been ongoing discussions with the PCC on his ambitions around Staffordshire and Newcastle Borough. The funding received was double that received from the home office funding.

The PCC had guaranteed funding for the next three years and have developed a lot of intervention work which helped to reduce anti-social behaviour in the long term. In the two years Newcastle was the only place anti-social behaviour had been reduced. There had been an increase of anti-social behaviour reported pushing to a 90% satisfaction of the offence being reported.

There was a good working relationship with the Police. Any anti-social behaviour was reported to Aspire Housing, Newcastle Borough Council or the Police.

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The Chair opened the meeting for any questions from Members.

Q1 The PCSOs around Kidsgrove have been changed into a response team, was it correct in terms of an extra 24 hour Officer?

Also the Senior Partnership Officer's team had been providing an excellent service in connection with the Minors Estate, Kidsgrove.

A1 Through discussions at county level there was concern that if there was a reduction in policing the situation would be looked at.

A Member commented that Chief Inspector Riley's integration into the community had found her to be very responsive and praised the Senior Partnership Officer's team in providing a very good service.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling broke the Operational Service down into Sections:-

Streetscene

It had been a busy summer with the hot weather. The section covered litter, collecting fees for bowling and tennis clubs. The grass cutting would now cease and focus would be on the winter work, including shrub pruning and leaf clearance.

The Portfolio Holder had carried out visits with the LEQ team to see how targets were met for standards and maintenance, recently achieving Gold and gained eleven green flags, making the Borough the best in Staffordshire and passed on her praise to the Head of Operations and his team.

Litter education had been carried out, involving working the schools i.e. litter picking and public awareness campaigns had been carried out over the summer.

Grounds Maintenance continue to support the Friends Groups within the Borough. The Park Attendants provide assistance with the Friends Groups as well as maintaining the parks.

Allotments – currently meetings are ongoing with Silverdale Parish Council. On the 19 September 2014 saw the handover of Park Road allotment. The Association run the allotment for their own Committee and was working well. Discussions were now taking place with The Acre allotment. Notices had been served on the ploholders and they were offered alternative sites for garden use only but had declined. A decision would be made by the Parish by the 31st December 2014.

Bedding Plants – Stoke-on-Trent City Council previously supplied all the plants but had closed down the greenhouse, now the plants are supplied by Stafford Borough Council.

Crematorium – The memorial safety testing programme was currently underway, Newcastle, Silverdale and Attwood Street had been completed.

An order had been placed for relining of the cremator.

Waste Operations

The Cabinet Waste Panel are holding a meeting on Wednesday 8 October 2014 to discuss the current and new service which comes into effect 2016. There was a need to review the project plan. WRAP were providing assistance on the alternations that would be carried out at the depot.

Food Environment

To maintain food hygiene was maintained.

Local Air Quality

Thirty eight properties are currently being monitored around the Borough. There was also air quality monitoring taking in place in the Queens Gardens.

The Borough Council had recently been notified that it had been awarded the Purple Flag Status for Newcastle.

A question had been submitted from a Member which had been raised at a Residents Association meeting - A couple of residents have had large items dumped in alleyways at the back of their houses and had been told by Officers the Council was not responsible for unadopted areas and so could not clear items away for free. It was asked (a) if fly tipping was on the increase in the Borough, (b) how much of it was costing the district, (c) if an increase was as a result of increased charges for removal and residents refusal to pay which compounds the problem and (d) what had the Council in place to reduce fly tipping, including on unadopted land?

The Member also believed Aspire Housing were having similar problems and did the Council work with them to address this?

The Portfolio Holder advised she would report back with the information relating to (b). There had been no reported increase in fly tipping and only if the source was found could enforcement action be taken.

A Member stated that fly tipping must be treated as a priority especially in relation to fridges as they pose a safety risk to children.

The Executive Director of Operational Services advised that Furniture Mine were part of Aspire Housing and would not remove white goods even if payment was made but he would look into this. Any fly tipping not on the public highway, including white goods, was not the responsibility of Newcastle Borough Council. It was advised that repeat incidences should be raised through the LAPs. If public safety was at risk it would be prioritised through the resources.

A Member asked if the Borough Council could open up negotiations with Kidsgrove Town Council to support employment costs for an extra Park Attendant for Clough Hall Park. The Portfolio Holder agreed to this.

A Member advised the Committee that he had reported an incident of litter, not as a Councillor, but as a member of the public and within two hours the crew had finished the request and wanted to pass on his thanks to the Executive Director of Operational Services and to the Portfolio Holder.

RESOLVED:-

- (a) That the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling provide the information on how much it was costing the district in relation to fly tipping to the Member who asked the question.
- (b) That the Borough Council open up negotiations with Kidsgrove Town Council for an extra Park Attendant.

5. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 2014

A presentation on the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 was carried out by the Senior Partnerships Officer. This would replace the current toolkit for dealing with anti-social behaviour and placed new duties on Local Authorities and Police to deal with conduct that had caused, or was likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person.

On the 20th October 2014 Newcastle-under-Lyme would adopt the 'Community Trigger' threshold of three complaints from one complainant (or somebody on their behalf) to a statutory agency within a six month period regarding three separate ASB incidents.

The Borough Council, County Council, Staffordshire Police, Health or RSLs may all be approached by a victim or persistent ASB to instigate the trigger.

Every Monday morning the partnership hub meets to provide assistance/ solutions to vulnerable residents, with recommendations being relayed back to the victim.

The appeal process for victims of persistent ASB who were not satisfied with the trigger review would be determined within the partner organisation with which the review was requested. For example if received by the Borough Council then the appeal would progress to the Head of Business Improvement, Central Services and Partnerships.

A Member felt assured that the final stage would progress from outside the Partnership hub to the Head of Service.

The Member was further reassured it was senior officers who were present at the hub.

It was asked if there were a review progressing on a licensed premise and the licence was revoked and taken to appeal could the community take control of the order?

The Senior Partnerships Officer advised if the community report the complaint, for example noise from the licensed premise, they could carry out a closure order.

A Member asked how were the Police, Crime and Commissioner approaching the public regarding the document they were producing.

The County ASB and Finish Group met every six weeks and the document had been issued to all authorities and would be distributed to the wider public.

It was asked if an incident recurred after three years would the process start again. Presently this was being looked into with partners, with a decision being submitted to the Chief Inspector and signed off by the Chief Executive.

A Member advised that it would only be sensible to ask why there was not a problem and the reason why there was not a problem was due to the prohibition being in place and should remain.

RECOMMENDED:-

That Committee receive the report and Members take note of the changes being proposed in Newcastle by the Borough Council and its partners.

6. PLANNING PERMISSION OF HOT FOOD TAKEAWAYS

The Head of Planning reported that the main role was the determination of planning applications. A report was submitted to Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee on the 24 March 2014.

There were two parts of planning permission; development and material change of use. The material change of use covered hot food takeaways. Government had seen the need to create a Use Class Order called Use Class A5. It followed that no planning permission was required to change from one type of hot food takeaway to another. To change a shop to a house was permitted development but there had been no liberalisation. There had been a change on advice of use of planning conditions.

The Borough Council does have supplementary guidance, which categorised areas and dates from 1996.

The Chair advised that there was a need to look at the accumulative impact and as a Planning Department to be able to refuse applications for hot food takeaways. The Head of Planning reported there had been not been any appeals since March 2014. There had been a reduction in hot food takeaway planning applications.

Stoke on City Council were preparing a supplementary document and was due to be adopted. The Planning Policy team was working with the Joint Local Plan. Out of the Local Plan in the long term there would be a need to prepare a supplementary document but presently the priority was preparing the Joint Local Plan and due to be launched for public consultation.

The Chair reported that there were a vast number of hot food takeaways along with A34 and that the Highway Authority were not investigating matters thoroughly.

It was advised that Members could write to the Community Secretary with their concerns.

RESOLVED:- That Members receive the verbal update presented by the Head of Planning.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY COMMITTEE ON THE 25 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED:- Members agreed to the Recommendations from the meeting held on the 25 June 2014.

8. WORK PLAN

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The Committee considered the Work Plan. It was agreed the following items would added:-

Pollution from exhaust emissions due to delay in traffic light sequence. An Officer from Staffordshire County Council, Highways Department, to be invited to an additional meeting to be held on xx December 2014.

9. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No questions had been received from the public.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business.

11. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

To be arranged

COUNCILLOR MRS GILLIAN WILLIAMS
Chair