

Public Document Pack

Date of meeting Monday, 23rd November, 2015
Time 5.00 pm
Venue Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Merial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG
Contact Justine Tait ext 2250

Cleaner Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee

AGENDA

PART 1 – OPEN AGENDA

- 1 Apologies**
- 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive declarations of interest from Members on items included in the agenda.
- 3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 6)**
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 7th October 2015.
- 4 REVISED LOCAL BUS NETWORK IN NEWCASTLE (Pages 7 - 8)**
Councillor Mark Winnington, Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Transport will be in attendance.
- 5 DECRIMINALISED CAR PARKING**
The TMA Assurance Manager and the Governance and Improvement Manager, Staffordshire County Council will be in attendance.
- 6 PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION TIME (Pages 9 - 10)**
Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities will be in attendance.
- 7 WORK PLAN (Pages 11 - 14)**
To discuss and update the work plans to reflect current scrutiny topics
- 8 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**
Any member of the public wishing to submit a question must serve two clear days' notice, in writing, of any such question to the Borough Council.
- 9 UGENT BUSINESS**

To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Members: Councillors Allport (Chair), Braithwaite, Dymond, Hailstones, Mancey, Reddish, Robinson, Tagg, Welsh (Vice-Chair), Winfield and Wing

PLEASE NOTE: The Council Chamber and Committee Room 1 are fitted with a loop system. In addition, there is a volume button on the base of the microphones. A portable loop system is available for all other rooms. Should you require this service, please contact Member Services during the afternoon prior to the meeting.

Members of the Council: If you identify any personal training/development requirements from any of the items included in this agenda or through issues raised during the meeting, please bring them to the attention of the Democratic Services Officer at the close of the meeting.

Meeting Quorums :- 16+= 5 Members; 10-15=4 Members; 5-9=3 Members; 5 or less = 2 Members.

FIELD_TITLE

Officers will be in attendance prior to the meeting for informal discussions on agenda items.

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 7th October, 2015

Present:- Councillor David Allport – in the Chair
Councillors Braithwaite, Dymond, Hailstones, Reddish, Tagg, Welsh, Winfield and Wing

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Robinson and Tagg.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 29th June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

4. **REVISED LOCAL BUS NETWORK IN NEWCASTLE**

The Managing Director for First Midlands provided clarification into the closure of the Bus Depot at Liverpool Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme which occurred at the beginning of July 2015.

Twenty nine staff received voluntary redundancy, with the majority transferring to Baddeley Green depot. A few resigned from their driving positions.

The early signs from a financial point of view were successful. The two critical areas hit were reliability and punctuality, due to the number of road works within Hanley.

A decision was made to operate from a location to be decided, which would not affect services in Newcastle-under-Lyme. Routes 22, 72 and 97 had been dedicated.

Concern was raised of no bus route to Madeley and Audley schools.

Members were advised the 1985 Transport Act came into effect relating to road passenger transport; to make provision for the transfer of the operations of the national bus company to the private sector; to provide for the reorganisation of passenger transport in the public sector; to provide for local and central government financial support for certain passenger transport service and travel concessions. There was provision within the Act to go out to tender.

There was always the difficulty to provide a commercially viable school bus service as it would rarely cover expenses.

It was asked if there was an analysis of how often routes were being utilised.

Members were advised the ticket machine automatically defaults to the furthest part of the route. From a financial perspective there was no significance. It did recognise what route the passenger would be taking.

It was asked if a service was cut could it be reviewed and if the new route at Wedgwood Road, Talke Pits had been facilitated, as people liked continuity.

Mr Eggleton advised services that had been cut could be reviewed in the future and he would look into the bus route at Wedgwood Road.

The Portfolio Holder for Town Centres, Business and Assets requested information on what did the County receive in subsidies from the routes and were they being reinvested in Newcastle?

The Portfolio Holder advised that there had been a news release on the 7th October 2015 “Just the Ticket for Travellers” advising that customers using local bus services can now buy tickets at a town centre location for the first time. Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council had joined forces with First Potteries bus company to provide this service from the Guildhall in Newcastle.

The Chair thanked Mr Eggleton, on behalf of the Committee, for attending and providing clarification.

Resolved:-

- (a) That Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Transport is invited to the next meeting.
- (b) Mr Eggleton advised he would provide Committee with the information on Staffordshire subsidies.
- (c) That the news release be circulated to Members.

5. ABANDONED BUILDINGS WITHIN THE BOROUGH

The Development Management Team Leader introduced the report that set out the Council’s policies in dealing with abandoned buildings, how many abandoned buildings there were in the Borough and a step by step process of what the Council would do if a member of the public reported an abandoned building.

There was an Environmental Health Strategy which brought long term empty dwellings back into use. The intention was to prepare a general enforcement policy, possibly including reference to abandoned buildings.

It was asked how many empty houses were identified within the Borough?

The Development Management Team Leader would provide Committee with this information.

Resolved:-

That the Development Management Team Leader provide Committee with how many empty houses had been identified within the Borough.

6. FLY POSTING POLICY

Presentations were carried out by the Community Manager and the Team Leader (Licensing Enforcement) on the processes involved with the management of fly posting within the Borough.

Members asked for further clarification, as only certain posters were allowed to advertise material on buildings and street furniture within the Borough.

Resolved:-

That when the Fly Posting Policy is due for renewal for it to be submitted to Scrutiny prior to approval.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER QUESTION TIME

The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities was unable to attend but circulated overview prior to the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling presented Committee with an overview of the work carried out within the portfolio from February 2015.

The Council discovered it was not responsible to provide allotments within the Borough. Discussions took place with the Chair and Vice Chair of Silverdale for the handover of Park Road. The lease was successfully signed and the Park Road Allotments was now being managed by the Allotment Association, in conjunction with the Parish.

Work subsequently commenced to do exactly the same with The Acre allotments. Allotment holders, who had life stock, had eighteen months to find alternative premises, with the notice expiring March 2016. Approximately five months ago the Association started to run the site themselves.

There had been a total refurbishment of Nelson Place roundabout. P M Training fabricated the leaping fish.

The Green Space Strategy and Association Action Plan underwent a review and were passed by Cabinet. These were reviewed annually to see if they were still fit for purpose for the future.

Phases One and Two of The Wammy Neighbourhood Park were completed. Approval from Cabinet was being sought for approval of Phase Three. For Phase Four the idea would be to provide a pavilion for changing facilities.

Questionnaires were being sent out to residents on how the Council could redesign the streetscene service. The Borough Council's Streetscene Managers would be carrying out talks at various LAP meetings. The consultation would finish December, with the service being re-evaluated in the new year.

The new waste service would come into operation from July 2016, transferring from a bag to a box system. Discussions had been held with Acumen, who was the current contractor, to start to develop a timetable to commence the insourcing of the recycling operation. Proposed changes to the depot have had to have planning permission.

A Member asked if a message could be sent out to residents making them aware why the service had to change and the potential savings.

Resolved:-

- (a) That the public are made aware of the savings the new recycling service would bring.
- (b) That the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities be invited to the next meeting to be held on Monday 23rd November 2015.

8. WORK PLAN

Resolved:-

That the Review of the Fly Posting Policy be added to future items

9. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

10. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR DAVID ALLPORT
Chair

1. **The 423/424 Mow Cop Service to Leek is vital for elderly people living in quite an isolated area. Residents need this route to obtain basic supplies and food. Will Cllr Winnington keep in mind that this bus route was never set up for profit making purposes and the service was put in place because parts of Mow Cop are very rural?**

The 423/424 service which operated prior September this year was evaluated as part of an area review covering the Kidsgrove and Biddulph areas. Due to sustained low demand and revenue forecasts, it was not possible to continue to provide the direct Biddulph–Mow Cop service. Connectivity between Mow Cop and Kidsgrove (the closest shopping destination) is currently provided by bus service 77 and larger shopping destination of Stoke on Trent is served by service 27. Connections to and from Biddulph from Mow Cop are maintained by interchanging at Newchapel.

2. **Would Cllr Winnington agree that working people and the local economy will suffer as a result of cutbacks to the bus service subsidies?**

Some 90% of bus services in Staffordshire are provided commercially and we have been working closely with operators to ensure that where possible commercial viability is maintained and enhanced. This has included switching a significant number of pupils on to the public bus network and continuing to provide subsidized transport for young people via the Your Staffordshire Card and providing an enhanced concessionary fare scheme for the elderly and disabled community. Although it is recognised that any change to the supported bus network must have some impact on existing service users, any financial support to operate bus services in Staffordshire needs to be considered alongside other authority commitments.

3. **How much has been done to consult Staffordshire residents and users of the bus service regarding the County Council's cuts to transport subsidies?**

All supported bus services are kept under constant review and adjustment made to ensure value for money for the Staffordshire tax payer. In relation to changes that took place countywide in September this year, engagement took place in March and April 2015 with all district / borough councils in Staffordshire to gain their thoughts on draft service change proposals. Unfortunately an offer of detailed officer engagement was not taken up by Newcastle Borough Council. The proposed changes to the Staffordshire supported bus network were then informed to all local members and openly shown via the normal democratic process and the call in process was not invoked.

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Safer Communities Portfolio report, October 2015

Currently I am focussing on several key areas of work in partnership with the Police and other agencies in the area.

Anti-Social behaviour has the potential to significantly impact of the lives of residents, and therefore continues to be an ongoing priority for the team – Newcastle has an excellent record for prompt action in response to complaints from residents and elected members and a high proportion of complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of residents within a short time of being reported. Over the summer, in collaboration with the Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and other Agencies, this council delivered a wide range of activities for young people, which helped to reduce the nuisance behaviour usually associated with a minority of young people in the Borough over the school holidays. We are currently planning a range of activities and interventions to head off possible problematic behaviour over the Halloween and Bonfire Night periods. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour remains a priority despite the fact that Newcastle is already a ‘success story’ in Staffordshire.

General crime trends are very positive for Newcastle compared to similar communities in the region. In my regular review of crime statistics, I was concerned to see an apparent increase in recorded incidents of Arson in the borough over the last few weeks. On investigation this seems to relate to an isolated spate of incidents in rural Newcastle where wheelie bins were stolen and set on fire by youths. Because each bin has to be given a separate case incident number, a small number of incidents where bins were taken from several neighbouring houses at the same time produced a disproportionate rise in the recorded statistics for this offence. Officers of this council have been working with the police and Parish councils to identify the youths responsible and to put preventative measures in place, supported by funds from the JOG.

Domestic violence continues to be a priority for the team – we have taken a lead role in making sure that partner agencies across the Borough take note of and implement the recommendations of the recently published Domestic Homicide Review relating to a homicide which occurred in the Borough in February 2012.

October 1st marked the first meeting of the ‘Safer Neighbourhood Panel’ for Newcastle – this panel is a collaboration between the Borough and the OPCC, and is comprised of representatives of the Police, the Borough and County Councils, the Magistracy and a number of lay members of the public living in Newcastle. The panel will scrutinise the operation of policing in Newcastle, help to build on existing strengths of our local policing team and also make sure that good practice from elsewhere in the County is identified and adopted in Newcastle. This panel will also help to make sure that policing continues to meet the needs of Newcastle residents.

Cllr Tony Kearon, Cabinet member for Safer Communities

October 3rd 2015

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Members: Mrs Dymond, Mrs Winfield, Robinson, S Tagg, Hailstones, Miss Wing, Mrs Braithwaite and Miss Mancey

CLEANER, GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Chair: Councillor Allport
Vice Chair: Councillor Welsh

Portfolio Holder(s) covering the Committee's remit:
Councillor Amelia Rout (Leisure, Culture and Localism)
Councillor Ann Beech (Environment and Recycling)
Councillor Tony Kearon (Safer Communities)

Work Plan correct as at: Friday 13th November 2015

Remit:

Cleaner, Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee is responsible for:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
- Civil contingencies
- CCTV
- Community Cohesion and Safety
- Community Safety and Section 17
- Decriminalised Parking Enforcement and On-Street Parking
- Emergency Planning
- Older People
- Streetscene – Litter, Grounds Maintenance, Parks and Gardens
- Street and Community Wardens
- Buses and Concessionary Travel and Taxis
- Car Park Management
- Climate Change, Sustainability and Energy Efficiency
- Environmental Health
- Flooding and Drainage
- Highways and transport (Operational)
- Recycling and Waste Management

Date of Meeting	Item	Reason for Undertaking
29th June 2015 (agenda dispatch 19 th June 2015)	The Council's Role in Emergency Planning	Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council is part of Staffordshire Resilience Forum (SRF), bringing together all the emergency responders in Staffordshire. All Members are to be made aware of their roles and responsibilities in the event of a major incident or disruption to Council services
	Local Government Association Peer Review of Decision Making Arrangements	To advise Members on the recommendations of the LGA Peer Review and to request feedback on the recommendations
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year
7th October 2015 (agenda dispatch 25 th September 2015)	Portfolio Holder(s) Question Time (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Recycling and Safer Communities)	An opportunity for the Committee to question the Portfolio Holder on her priorities and work objectives for the next six months and an opportunity to address any issues or concerns that she may currently be facing. It is an opportunity for the Portfolio Holder to flag up areas within her remit that may benefit from scrutiny in the future
	Abandoned Buildings within the Borough	Abandoned buildings represent waste, financial expense and missed opportunity. They can blight communities, attract fly tipping, vandals and squatters and tie up the resources of the Council and the emergency services. Committee would like to receive a report on what powers the Council has, to take action against the owners of abandoned buildings, the number of abandoned buildings the Council is aware of and what action has been taken, to date, to deal with them.
	Revised Local Bus Network	Members have raised concern over the revised local bus network in Newcastle which came into effect on the 6th September 2015. The Managing Director of First Midlands will be in attendance.
	Fly Posting Policy	To receive an update from the Streetscene Manager (Development and Enforcement) on how the Fly Posting Policy is managed through Operational Services
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year

Date of Meeting	Item	Reason for Undertaking
23rd November 2015 (agenda dispatch 13th November 2015)	Revised Local Bus Network	Members received clarification from the Managing Director of First Midlands at the last meeting but wished for the Cabinet Member for Economy, Environment and Transport to attend to respond to further concerns.
	Decriminalised Car Parking	Lee Barnard, TMA Assurance Manager, Staffordshire County Council will be attending to present the principles of decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) carried out by civil enforcement officers, operating on behalf of either a local authority or a private firm
	Portfolio Holder Question Time – (Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities)	An opportunity for the Committee to question the Portfolio Holder on his priorities and work objectives for the next six months and an opportunity to address any issues or concerns that he may currently be facing. It is an opportunity for the Portfolio Holder to flag up areas within his remit that may benefit from scrutiny in the future
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year
2nd March 2016 (agenda dispatch 19th February 2016)	Annual Review of Scrutiny Committee's Work	To evaluate and review the work undertaken during 2015/2016
30th June 2016 (agenda dispatch 17th June 2016)		
	Work Plan and Scrutiny Topics for 2015/2016	To discuss the work plan and potential topics that Committee members would like to scrutinise over the forthcoming year

Task and Finish Groups:	
Future Task and Finish Groups:	
Suggestions for Potential Future Items:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Zone Delivery of Green Deal (potentially email to committee) • Review of the Fly Posting Policy (due for renewal 2017) • Decriminalised Car Parking • The Council's Role in Emergency Planning

DATES AND TIMES OF CABINET MEETINGS:	Wednesday 10 th June 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 22 nd July 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 16 th September 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 14 th October 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 11 th November 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 9 th December 2015, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 20 th January 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 10 th February 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 23 rd March 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1
	Wednesday 8 th June 2016, 7.00pm, Committee Room 1