

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5th September, 2012

Present:- Councillor Mrs Gillian Williams – in the Chair
Councillors Allport, Hailstones, Mrs Johnson, Robinson, Stringer, Sweeney, Tagg and Wemyss

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Burgess and Councillor Miss Reddish.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

4. THE MOVE OF FENTON MAGISTRATES COURT TO NEWCASTLE MAGISTRATES COURT - SCRUTINY BRIEF

The move of Fenton Magistrates Court to Newcastle Magistrates Court was considered by the Committee and the invited representatives. HM Courts and Tribunals Service were unable to attend but provided a response to questions.

Members questioned whether the area around Newcastle Magistrates Court would be policed or if there was an anticipation of extra policing. There were concerns that offenders may stay in the area of the courts all day and there were off licences situated around the court. Furthermore, the actual situation of CCTV around the court appeared to only cover the court building itself.

Members questioned whether there were any plans regarding safety issues for the former Sainsburys' car park as there were dependent street drinkers who could be found on there. It was believed that only the ground floor was in use and the other floors were secure.

The Committee considered that an officer working group should be set up to monitor the move of the courts.

RESOLVED: (a) That the information be received.

(b) That an officer and partner working group be set up to monitor the court move.

5. THE REVISED ACTION PLAN FOR THE ALCOHOL STRATEGY

The Committee considered a scrutiny brief regarding the revised action plan for the Council's Alcohol Strategy. The action plan needed to be approved by the Alcohol Strategy PAG in September, and was therefore in draft form.

The Committee agreed that regular updates were required regarding the revised action plan.

With regard to the Alcohol Strategy, the Committee were offered the opportunity to receive the results of the young persons and parent survey.

It was confirmed that there was a triage service in the town centre which had been paid for by the Council and other agencies. There had been a verbal agreement to enhance this scheme with paramedics and consultants, but this had since fallen through and the Chief Executive was currently heading a group of officers who were looking at putting a project together regarding this.

Many organisational priorities had now changed including those for the NHS, but they were still prepared to pay two thirds of the cost as it could not be met by Safer Nights. Members questioned whether there was greater capacity at the new Accident and Emergency department and that if this was the case then was the initiative no longer a priority for the NHS. Members could understand why WMAS did not want to fund the scheme and it was considered that it could be a new funding project for the University Hospital of North Staffordshire. There were problems with capacity at the new Accident and Emergency Department and they had received a fine for not hitting their targets. It was suggested that a wider investigation be carried out regarding funding opportunities.

There was consideration by Members of unit prices for alcohol. It was also questioned whether there could be block closing of venues in Newcastle and Stoke at 12.00pm.

Members noted that Gloucester Borough Council had converted a bus where night-time drinkers could receive treatment, and questioned whether the Borough Council had spoken to them about the service. Officers confirmed that the Borough Council had looked into the idea with St. Johns Ambulance and First Bus, but there were no decommissioned vehicles available at the time. There was also the issue of making any suitable vehicle safe and compliant with the law, and there would also be insurance implications. It was considered that it could cost a few thousand pounds and was therefore not a viable option at the present time.

RESOLVED: (a) That the information be received.

(b) That regular updates be received regarding the revised action plan.

6. THE NATIONAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY AND ITS IMPACT ON LOCAL ISSUES

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Community Safety Officer (Alcohol Lead) and considered a briefing note regarding the National Alcohol Strategy and its impact on local issues.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

7. **UPDATE ON THE STRONGER AND SAFER STRATEGY FOLLOWING THE CLOSE OF CONSULTATION ON 10 AUGUST 2012**

The Committee considered the updated Stronger and Safer Strategy 2012-2017 along with the strategy's action plan.

The consultation had run from 16 May to 10 August 2012. The Committee were supportive of the strategy. It was expected to be signed off towards the end of September.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

8. **UPDATE ON THE NEWCASTLE PARTNERSHIPS STRUCTURE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Partnerships Manager and considered a briefing note regarding the Newcastle Partnerships Structure.

There had previously been a Local Strategic Partnership with Staffordshire County Council and the Children's Trust Health Group, which had been a very large structure. There was now one Newcastle Partnership Strategic Board. Members questioned how often the group met and whether the Leader of the Council sat on the group. It was confirmed that the group met monthly and the Leader did not sit on it. Members considered that the new structure was a vast improvement.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

9. **DEVELOPING WARMZONE TO MAXIMISE FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES**

The Committee considered a report regarding developing WarmZone to maximise future opportunities.

Green Deal was a new government scheme whereby work to improve a home would be funded by a loan, which would be based on the expected savings made as a result of the work. Five low income areas had been identified within the Borough that additional (ECO) grant funding could be targeted at.

Members considered that WarmZone had been a resounding success and that the Council should continue to support the North Staffordshire Warm Zone to enable it to maximise the uptake of funding which will be on offer from the national Green Deal and ECO energy efficiency programmes

RESOLVED: (a) That the information be received.

(b) That the Committee recommend that North Staffordshire Warm Zone should continue to be supported.

10. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered the work plan items to be on track.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business considered.

COUNCILLOR MRS GILLIAN WILLIAMS
Chair