

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 5th December, 2012

Present:- Councillor Mrs Gillian Williams – in the Chair

Councillors Allport, Mrs Burgess, Hailstones, Mrs Johnson, Miss Mancey, Miss Reddish, Robinson, Mrs Simpson, Stringer, Sweeney and Wemyss

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Tagg.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a correct record, with the addition of Cllr Miss Mancey's apologies.

4. ALCOHOL ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND CHESHIRE EAST PRICING WORK

The Committee received updates regarding the Alcohol Action Plan and the Cheshire East pricing work from the Council's Community Safety Officer (Alcohol Lead).

There were two key projects leading from the Alcohol Action Plan. The first related to early intervention through a complete revamp of the Personal Social Health and Economic (PSHE) curriculum in schools. PSHE which taught high school pupils about alcohol and drugs, was now outdated and it was felt that a review was needed with two secondary schools signing up to be early implementers. Staffordshire County Council had asked district councils to lead on the project which was considered important as this would give districts the chance to change matters locally. The project was currently passing through the partnership delivery group.

The two early implementer secondary schools were noted and Members questioned whether schools were resistant to sign up due to not wanting to acknowledge there was a problem at their school. Some were resistant to change and would take more persuading than others, but it was positive there were schools signing up. The Alcohol Change Lead was confident that other schools would sign up and those which had not were being contacted. There was also confidence the project would get rolled out to all schools and it was hoped more information would become available through the Alcohol Change Lead.

Members questioned whether there would be support for bullying and it was considered that alcohol was a cross-cutting issue with the project covering a wide range of issues including drugs and anti social behaviour, therefore the project could include bullying. There would be some local governance and bullying could be suggested if it was considered that it should be incorporated. Truancy would most likely be included in the project too.

Members felt there were difficulties with PHSE and unless it was delivered imaginatively, children would either forget or not be interested in the subject. Members were aware of a drug dealer serving a prison sentence visiting a school to speak with the pupils and a multi agency event where a road traffic accident was mocked up. There had also been a project in the ST7 post code area aiming to reduce teen pregnancy, which drinking could lead to. The Kidsgrove/Butt Lane LAP were responsible for the project and would be happy to get involved. It was considered that involving partners could be something to aspire to and this could be fed back.

The Council's Community Safety Officer was aware of a survey, understood to be a parental survey, which had been conducted by four schools in Newcastle and could be circulated. The survey aimed to identify what parents would like to see their children learn in school. The Alcohol Change Lead would be attending the next Partnership Delivery Group and there should be more information available as a result of this.

The second project related to strengthening families and was a project driven by Staffordshire County Council which covered a broad range of issues. The county council were seeking further funding to roll out the project county wide.

With regard to the Cheshire East pricing work, Cheshire East was monitoring what was happening at national level. There was currently a debate in the news regarding the minimum unit price for alcohol and it was considered that there needed to be a consultation exercise with regard to this.

The Community Safety Officer would update the partnership of the Committee's comments.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

5. **UPDATES ON THE POLICE MOVES IN KIDSGROVE AND NEWCASTLE, AND HOW POLICING IN KIDSGROVE AND RURAL AREAS WILL LOOK IN THE FUTURE**

The Committee received a presentation from the Local Policing Team Commander for Newcastle Borough regarding the move of the Police into Kidsgrove Town Hall and the Civic Offices in Newcastle, with consideration of how policing in Kidsgrove and rural areas would look in the future.

The transfer of service was complete in Kidsgrove, the Kidsgrove Neighbourhood Team had moved into Kidsgrove Town Hall on a permanent basis and the move had been well received.

Police officers and staff were now working from the Civic Offices, where there was still work to be done, but it was progressing. Partnership working was one area that was being developed, with a multi-partner briefing taking place on a Monday morning and Police work with the Community Safety section being helped by the fact that both parties were now in the same building. Partners working together and adopting a problem solving approach to get to the root cause of problems and identifying long term sustainable solutions was considered the key to the effective delivery of a local policing service.

Members noted the Police move into the Civic Offices had benefits for both the Police and Newcastle Borough Council. However, there was still a way to go and the clear desk policy for the Police offices was not yet up and running. It was agreed that it was a work in process and would take some time. The Police were used to being in a station and there were concerns regarding data protection. However, it was felt it best not to rush things.

There was consideration of integrated offender management, which looked after people leaving prison that had served sentences for serious crimes, and helped them with such things as finding a job or drugs treatment so there would not be a cycle of reoffending. Problematic individuals would be offered support and guidance to hopefully change their offending behaviour and if an individual's behaviour was still not satisfactory then there were other options available. It was felt that the public should be informed through the LAPs about this and it should be publicised as best it could be, as it was going on quietly in the background but had been recognised nationally as working well. There was also a Neighbourhood Action Team consisting of a plain clothes Sergeant and four officers who undertook patrols and investigated individuals causing crime in an area.

The last slide of the presentation detailed partnership working and it was felt by Members that this was a positive way forward. It was considered that LAPs needed to take more control as Members felt that no real information was being passed down. Currently a PCSO attended LAP meetings, it was felt they did not provide significant information and the situation needed revitalising. This issue had been discussed at the LAP summit where it had been considered there was a wealth of information on the internet. It was felt that PCSOs were the right level of representation, in order that Police officers were then free to do their jobs. PCSOs should know local issues, but it was necessary for them to add value. The Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities was of the opinion that work was required to create a better flow of information, but that this did not necessarily mean that everybody needed to be in the same room, Police officers running through statistics was not the best use of their time. It was necessary to think creatively about how to make sure all parties communicated. Members considered that there were problems with LAPs as they were all working differently.

The Chair had visited Kidsgrove Customer Service Centre and considered the arrangements were very good. Partnership working was the driving force and it was requested that C.I. Hulme be invited back in the future to address the committee.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

6. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business considered.

COUNCILLOR MRS GILLIAN WILLIAMS
Chair