

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 28th February, 2013

Present:- Councillor Mrs Gillian Williams – in the Chair

Councillors Councillor David Allport, Councillor Mrs Silvia Burgess, Councillor Peter Hailstones, Councillor Kyle Robinson, Councillor David Stringer, Councillor Stephen Sweeney and Councillor Simon Tagg

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Johnson

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest given.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

4. THE CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report updating Members on the Carbon Management Plan and to note the progress of the projects in the current plan.

The Council had a Carbon Management Plan to deliver a reduction in carbon emissions from operations and estates by 30%, or 1,200 tonnes, from a baseline established in 2009/2010. To date, 290 tonnes had been achieved which equated to 25% of the target figure.

A number of projects had been proposed for 2013, but most did not have the required funding. Numerous projects had been put forward for the Invest to Save project, but there had been no communication as to whether they had been successful. Funding methods were being investigated.

LED lighting was being considered for the Civic Offices and a company had been approached who could install it free of charge. The savings which could be created by installing the lighting would be assessed, and the figure arrived at would normally be split equally between the company and the Borough Council. There were various other funding schemes that were based on the same principle.

Members questioned the Invest to Save scheme and if there were any priorities for allocating funding. It was possible that priority would be given to schemes that would create the best payback in the shortest period of time. The exact sum that was available for Invest to Save was not known.

Resolved: That the information be received.

5. ALCOHOL STRATEGY - UPDATES ON PROJECTS

Members considered a briefing note from Trevor Smith – Community Safety Officer - which provided an update on the two projects relating to the Council's Alcohol Strategy; the School Based Programme and the Strengthening Families Programme. Both projects had been included as part of the Newcastle Partnership Work Programme.

With regard to the school based programme, a half-day workshop had been held in early January 2013. A lot of early implementers attended the workshop, but Newcastle-under-Lyme schools had not been in attendance. The matter had been discussed at the Newcastle Partnership Delivery Group and Chief Inspector Hulme was to contact the schools to get them involved. When schools were fully on board with the scheme there would be further workshops.

The Council's Community Safety Officer (Trevor Smith) would meet with Gill Venables and Nigel Manning to ensure input at a local level and the Officer would also be liaising with key partners.

Members questioned whether children from all backgrounds would be included in the scheme; as alcohol abuse did not just happen in socially deprived homes. There would be a thorough evaluation of the progress of the scheme, which should encompass children and parents from across the board.

It was also questioned whether children would be educated about the physiological aspects of alcohol abuse through the scheme. Alcohol abuse could affect almost every aspect of a person's life and the Community Safety Officer concurred that the programme needed to encompass all aspects of alcohol abuse.

The Strengthening Families Programme covered children aged 10-14 and looked at issues such as anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, alcohol fuelled violence and domestic abuse. The District Commissioning Lead, Mark Hewitt, would take the project forward due to the cross over with the Troubled Families agenda. This was considered sensible as the District Commissioning Lead would liaise with local support teams.

Members questioned the training that had been delivered, as referred to in the briefing note. The Community Safety Officer was not privy to the details of the training as it had taken place prior to his involvement in the project, but it was thought it included how to deal with anti-social behaviour etc. Members questioned whether they could have access to this training. Funding would be the issue, but when funding was available it could be put forward if it was thought there was a gap to be filled. Members also expressed their interest in getting involved with the strategy and in visiting schools. The Community Safety Officer considered that the Members would be very welcome to become involved and could be included when there were timescales and a project plan in place.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

6. LET'S WORK TOGETHER

The Committee considered a report from Mark Bailey, Head of Business Improvement & Partnerships, regarding the Let's Work Together (LWT) initiative,

which had been designed to ensure that home visitors were equipped with the basic skills to spot risks in and around the home, and to provide home visitors with the tools to refer such issues to the appropriate organisation. LWT stemmed from the Olive Branch Initiative, where an elderly lady had died in her own home - the death could have been prevented by partners working together.

LWT was officially launched in Newcastle in November 2012 and the first training module took place earlier in the day on 28 February 2013. There were a number of focus areas for the project, including information sharing between partners. A lot of progress had been made with regard to information sharing, including the development of a One Staffordshire Information Sharing Protocol and also the development of software to share data (Patchwork).

This kind of partnership working was considered positively by Members, who felt that it was important for the private and the public sectors to work together. Members had previously asked whether they would have the opportunity to take the Olive Branch training and questioned whether there had been any developments with this. There was the intention to roll out the Olive Branch training to other organisations and there was no reason why Members could not be included. The Chair felt that it should be ensured that Members were given the opportunity to take the training.

The Council's Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Co-ordinator gave a summary of the training that had taken place that day, with the training presentation being distributed to the committee. There had been good attendance and discussion regarding what the Council offered for vulnerable people and the action that was taken against the perpetrators. This was module 1 of the training, the attendees had highlighted other people who would benefit from the training and the Council had been requested to conduct another session in April. 85% of the attendees had been satisfied with the training.

The ASB figures contained in the presentation were split into Local Authority Partnership (LAP) areas, and ASB figures would be provided at LAP meetings to ensure LAPs were kept informed. Members considered that there was a difference in the populations across the LAP areas and Newcastle Borough should be considered as a whole in terms of ASB. It was also advised that there were trends with ASB and figures would change from month to month for different areas.

Members felt the 236 cases of ASB that had been received via the Community Safety Team seemed a high figure, and asked if there were comparative figures for other authorities. These would be provided by the ASB Co-ordinator. The ASB Co-ordinator advised that the profile of the service offered by the Council could be raised, as a lot of residents were not aware of it. There were referrals from the Police, who dealt with criminal activity as opposed to the Council who dealt with ASB. Members noted that the ASB figures could be higher than 236 cases as a lot of cases could go unreported. The ASB Co-ordinator concurred and asked for Members to let her know if they were aware of any residents suffering due to ASB.

A report regarding anti-social behaviour would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee. The obvious focus for LWT was for the prevention of incidents; however more modules were being planned to focus on risk areas such as debt, and Members were encouraged to get in touch with the Head of Business Improvements and Partnerships if they had ideas they wished to put forward for this.

The Head of Business Improvements and Partnerships would work with the Scrutiny Officer with regard to holding a Members training session for the LWT initiative.

RESOLVED: (a) That the information be received.

(b) That comparative figures for anti-social behaviour be provided to the Committee.

(c) That a report regarding anti-social behaviour be received at a future meeting of the Committee.

(d) That a Member training session for the Let's Work Together initiative be held.

7. UPDATE ON THE STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report providing an update regarding the Stronger and Safer Communities Strategy 2012-2017.

There were a number of key areas of focus for the Strategy e.g. the Let's Work Together initiative, Building Resilient Families and Communities, and developing a social enterprise. The work programme at appendix c of the report was being taken forward and it was hoped that the Police and Crime Commissioner would attend a future meeting of the Committee. It was also hoped that the LAPs would be able to play a part in the delivery of the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

8. WORKING GROUP UPDATE - THE MOVE OF THE MAGISTRATES COURTS FROM FENTON TO NEWCASTLE

The Committee considered a report which provided an update of the progress to date of the officer and partner working group that had monitored the move of the Magistrates Courts from Fenton to Newcastle.

The court move had gone quite smoothly; there had been no major issues relating to anti-social behaviour and no spikes in crime figures. The working group had met a number of times and it had been decided to review the matter in six months. However, the working group would reconvene should any issues arise in the meantime. The Partnerships Team would also pick up any issues that arose. Community Safety officers had visited town centre off licences and stressed the importance of off licences trading as they should so there was not a steep incline in anti-social behaviour. Fortnightly conversations were being held with newsagents.

Members felt it was encouraging that there were not the problems that had been anticipated for the court move. There was one area of concern raised with regard to litter around the ring road near the courts, which had not been there prior to the move, and Members questioned whose responsibility it would be to clear the litter. The Executive Director, Operational Services would arrange for Streetscene officers to visit the site.

RESOLVED: (a) That the information be received.

(b) That further to Member's comments, the issue of litter around the courts be addressed.

9. WORK PLAN

There was discussion of the Committee's work plan. A report would be brought to the next meeting of the Committee regarding anti-social behaviour as discussed during agenda item six.

Members stated that there was illegal parking being carried out in Audley and were concerned it was causing a danger to members of the public. It was requested that the Council's Engineering Manager be invited to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: (a) That the work plan be noted.

(b) That the Council's Engineering Manager be invited to a future meeting regarding illegal parking.

10. **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business considered.

COUNCILLOR MRS GILLIAN WILLIAMS
Chair