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Date of meeting **Wednesday, 1st March, 2017**
Time **6.30 pm**
Venue **Committee Room 1, Civic Offices, Merrial Street,
Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 2AG**
Contact **Jayne Briscoe 2250**



**Civic Offices
Merrial Street
Newcastle-under-Lyme
Staffordshire
ST5 2AG**

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 - 4)**
To receive the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee.
- 4 Draft Report - Subways** **(Pages 5 - 12)**
- 5 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.
- 6 URGENT BUSINESS**
To consider any business which is urgent within the meaning of Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 7 Date of next meeting**

Members: Councillors Allport, Burgess (Vice-Chair), Cooper, Dillon, P Hailstones, Mancey, Naylor (Chair), Olszewski, Panter, Reddish and G Williams

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

FIELD_TITLE

Classification: NULBC **UNCLASSIFIED**

Cleaner Greener and Safer Communities Scrutiny Committee - 21/12/16

CLEANER GREENER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 21st December, 2016

Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:- Councillor Wenslie Naylor – in the Chair

Councillors Dillon, Holland, Olszewski, Panter,
Reddish and G Williams

Officers Executive Director (Operational Services)
- David Adams, Jayne Briscoe - (Scrutiny
Officer) and Trevor Nicoll - (Head of
Recycling and Fleet Services)

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest stated.

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Burgess (Councillor Spence as substitute) and Councillor J Cooper (Councillor Holland as substitute).

3. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2016 be agreed as a correct record.

4. **RECYCLING SERVICE**

Members scrutinised the report of the Independent Review of the Implementation of Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Councils New Recycling and Waste Collection Service on 4 July 2016 by Howard Davies MA (Cantab), C.Eng, MICE, completed in October 2016.

Members referenced the Action Plan in order to address the recommendations and learning points set out in the report. Recommendations from the scrutiny committee will be reported to Cabinet.

Members supported the recommendation for a better approach to pre-trialling new vehicles, scrutiny members had received complaints relating to the use of vehicles of an inappropriate size for some areas.

Missed collections were highlighted by scrutiny members and they supported the recommendations in the report alongside refining reporting procedures and requests for assisted collections. Members agreed that a clear, centrally operated policy relating to kerbside collection which was communicated to all residents would have helped smooth the pathway for implementation of the new service.

A member asked about the additional costs to the Borough due to the increase in the number of recycling collections and considered that the Review was not sufficiently critical in its analysis, particularly of the role of the current administration in the perceived failure of the new system.

In this respect the Review concluded that the increased volume (approx. 25%) of recyclable material had not been anticipated and had resulted in some of the operational aspects becoming overstretched.

The need for better “in day” handling of material was addressed in the report and supported by Scrutiny members. Members also supported the recommendation for a better approach to pre-trialling new vehicles; members had received complaints resulting from the use of inappropriate sized vehicles. .

Members of the scrutiny committee moved on to look at the future operation of the scheme, including whether trolleys could be provided on request (at a potential additional cost) and whether the further household separation of glass/cardboard should be pursued.

The need for more effective use of existing data bases together with additional staff training was highlighted. Also the reintroduction of “missed bins” as a Key Performance Indicator and a more comprehensive approach to communications were endorsed by scrutiny members.

All of the recommendations in the report had a timeline for implementation and members of this scrutiny committee anticipated a future role in scrutinizing performance against the recommendations.

Agreed That the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee be reported to Cabinet.

5. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

6. **UGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of Urgent Business.

7. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING -23 JANUARY 2017**

COUNCILLOR WENSLIE NAYLON
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.20 pm

Classification: NULBC UNCLASSIFIED

Draft report Subways, also known as Underpasses in Newcastle under Lyme

Cleaner Greener and Safer Scrutiny Committee Feb 2017

Membership Chair (Councillor Naylor) Vice Chair (Councillor Burgess) Councillor Allport, Cooper, Dillon, P. Hailstones, Mancey, Olszewski, Panter, Reddish and G. Williams.

Contents to add

Chair's preamble

Underpasses, commonly called subways were seen as a good solution to the problem of separating pedestrians from fast moving traffic. In the decade of the 1960s many town highway engineers were attuned to the needs of through traffic. Ring roads were constructed; town centres bypassed and subways were constructed as part of the process. Newcastle under Lyme was no exception

The numerous (14) subways across the town, and some not directly linked to a ring road, are useful in many ways. They offer ramps and steps and an easy way to cross busy roads. They have become a 'problem' as the funding for their maintenance appears to have been steadily eroded and with a divided responsibility between the Borough Council and the County Council the perception is that subways in our Newcastle public domain are progressively neglected

The Borough Council risks its reputation due to poor public experience in subways and the possible loss of Purple Flag award

Specific Issues

Increased risk to pedestrians from storm water flowing into subways and not getting away down drains due to infrequent attention to inadequately sized and sometimes blocked drains

Impact of increasingly dirty barrel roofs and walls with patchy and dirty appearance largely due to the need to spray out offensive and unpleasant graffiti. Subways can be seen as places to avoid and may increase the fear of crime in the public psyche

High cost of continuing need to clean off graffiti. This can fall to the Borough Council if there is offensive material. Other graffiti in the public domain is left by the County Council for long periods of time as they have the responsibility for graffiti connected to 'highways' sites

Lack of engagement with Councillors and members of the public about the issues. It is unlikely that residents of the Borough know there is divided responsibility for the public domain, subways included.

The County Council takes total responsibility for these structures. The Borough Council only sweeps the ground surface of subways and collects litter

Positive Actions

There have been joint approaches to some aspects of subways in Newcastle. Led lighting has been installed resulting in much improved brighter lighting. So-called 'sacrificial light covers have been

used to defray costs of replacement when damaged by graffiti. Roof barrels have been painted bright white

Artworks have been commissioned in some subways. These have been largely untouched by graffiti 'artists' and well received by users of the arms decorated in this way

There has been some use of 'community payback' with young offenders to clean up some subways

Recommendations

1 Engage further 'community payback' teams without delay to start on a publicly visible and ongoing approach to cleaning off graffiti Ask NBC Senior Executive Team for their experience with these initiatives, success and limitations

2 The Police Commissioner's Proceeds of Crime (POCA) and People Power funding may offer an opportunity. Applications can be submitted by strategic community safety partners (i.e. those that are formally part of a community safety forum, JOG, LSP or similar) and make a long-term contribution to local community safety activities. People Power applications can be submitted by community groups for values between £100 and £3,000 with a view to becoming sustainable in the longer term. Applications should be supported by local policing and carry the support of the community safety partnership, who makes recommendation to the OPCC. in the longer term. Applications should be supported by local policing and carry the support of the community safety partnership, who make recommendation to the OPCC.

3 Joint volunteer approach: NBC to set dates and provide materials and call for volunteers among known volunteer groups to clean sections over several months.

4 Safer Routes to School initiative of the County Council could be seen as a driver to improving the environment of identified relevant arms of subways. No parent wants to be explaining offensive drawings and words on subways to children on their way to school. County Council to be engaged with this with a view to funding clean up schemes

4 Drains need more frequent suction. Responsibility and process mechanisms to be identified clearly and on a proper maintenance programme to be agreed between NBC and SCC

5 Develop the idea of paid for lit up advertising panels; this had been mooted by the County's portfolio holder as something to be trialled in Stafford. Ask for their ideas and experience

6 Build on the popular 'Art in Subways' detail needed on how SCC/NBC/BID can work on joint approaches to gain substantial funds: A report from the Regeneration and Economic Development Manager follows later in this report

7 Explore idea of 'sponsor a sub' fund seeking from businesses (BID/NBC via Britain in Bloom team)

8 Some subways could be closed entirely. Start the process of identification. Whilst this is a costly process it is a logical step long term and plans should be drawn up and agreed between NBC and SCC identifying where closure could take place, and what alternatives can be made for pedestrians e.g. controlled green man zebra crossings.

9 The offer from the portfolio holder Cllr Mark Deaville at SCC to be taken up and agreed for the first of regular meetings quarterly meetings An agenda item for the first meeting to be: discussion of County handing over responsibility and funding for complete maintenance of subways to the Borough Council under the District Deal

10 Council's website to allow reporting by members of the public on subway 'issues'

Investigation

14 surveys have been completed by members of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Scrutiny Committee on the 15 subways with more surveys done for town centre subway arms than outlying ones.

The results of field surveys show on balance subways were fairly litter free, At the time of most surveys there hadn't been heavy rain so the drain 'problem' i.e. not sufficient of capacity to take away storm water was not recorded.

The lighting was just about adequate and walking surfaces also adequate. All the subways were recorded to a greater or lesser degree as being rendered unpleasant due to scrawls of graffiti, some of it offensive and bordering on offensive. Nearly all the walls and lighting were shabby, dirty and giving an impression of neglect

Local authorities: their roles; other partner organisations: How they have been involved up to now other potential partners in ways forward

Staffordshire CC Highways: advice and information sought from officers and Portfolio Holder Cllr Mark Deaville

The Engineering Manager Graham Williams advised and gave information on respective roles The Regeneration and Economic Development Manager gave information about background and initiatives involving partners including Sustrans, Inspector Barlow from the Local Policing Unit submitted the statistics relating to reported crime adjacent to subways.

Ward Councillors with subways in their areas should be informed and enlisted for their help; Leader of the Council has already written to Leader of SCC (Cllr Philip Atkins) previously about the condition of our subways (no reply given)

BID team for liaison between town centre businesses and operations staff at the Council

LAP for town centre could have a role especially in finding funding and dispersing information as needed

County Council- ref *Safer Routes to School*, (relevant teams) some subways are identified as such when they are near to Primary Schools

Britain in Bloom team perhaps to seek sponsorship to help with care and maintenance of subways

Joint Operations Group

CGS Committee needs to invite NBC's portfolio holders (both authorities) and relevant Executive Officers in both authorities to comment on the draft report in respect of recommendations

A case study- success and limitations

Conclusion

The current management of our subways is steadily failing the residents of Newcastle in respect of providing a pleasant experience to a necessary process: crossing a busy road

Despite a difficult economic climate, it is now time for the two Authorities and 'partners' to meet and come up with a more satisfactory plan to address the recommendations in this report

Appendix *Maps? ref to where survey sheets can be seen and their analysis*

Acknowledgements

Subway Art



History

Subways can be dark, gloomy, enclosed spaces. Particularly nasty ones are susceptible to graffiti and poorly kept, giving a bad impression of the area and creating uneasy experiences for local people. By making the subways brighter and a more pleasant environment, this can help reduce the fear of crime.

The first subway to be painted in 2004 was the Barracks Road subway outside Jubilee Pool. Artist Grega Greaves worked with young people and residents from the Beth Johnson Housing Association for 10 days and together they produced an impressive timeline depicting Newcastle scenes from the 1950's to the present day.

In 2005, the Grosvenor Roundabout subway was chosen and artist Anthony Hammond worked with young people from the borough councils Youth Inclusion Programme on a lively and colourful design that shows Newcastle's past industries.

During the summer 2006, 'B Arts' worked with young people from the borough to transform the Pool Dam subway. The vibrant and dynamic design was inspired by Maxim's, a nearby nightclub. Although it is now closed down Maxim's is part of Newcastle's history and many people will have fond memories of the club from their youth.

Nelson Street Subway Mosaics: 2008-2009



This subway art project was devised to allow young people to have a real impact on their surroundings; to brighten up the subways and make them a more attractive 'gateway' into the town centre and to hopefully help prevent / deter graffiti on the walls. In doing so, it empowering the young participants through full involvement in the creation of the mosaics, at all stages, was integral to creating a sense of ownership and pride in the new-look subways. Many of the schools teachers and participant's wider families have been involved and aware of the project and through the multiple mosaic tiles produced, it has guaranteed that there is a tile publicly on display by everyone involved – creating an outdoor exhibition of everyone's hard work and creativity.

The theme of 'Our Town' enabled all of the young people to work with a professional artist, a unique opportunity in its own right, to discuss and learn more about their own and their peers perspective on where they live, what they like about where they live and themselves personally, collectively producing artworks reflecting a young persons perspective on Newcastle. They used local terminology, landmarks and symbols to represent this, whilst developing drawing, mark-making and communication skills more generally.

"Working with the seventy young people and teachers of St Giles and St Georges and Hassell St Primary Schools was a delight. It was really good to celebrate Newcastle under Lyme as 'Our Town'. Very rarely do young people get the opportunity to change their environment and town in such a positive way. Full marks to the Council and Newcastle Under Lyme Museum Arts Team for having the vision to commission such a innovative art work with young citizens of the future."

Phil Hardacre, joint commissioned artist

Who was involved?



Artists Philip Hardacre and Denise O'Sullivan were contracted to create the mosaics, with the design and creation process underpinned through working with two local schools each. Each Artist spent approximately 3 days with each school, over an approximate period of 4 months.

Schools involved in the design and creation of the tiles were:

- St Giles and St Georges School (Philip)
- Hassell Street Primary School (Philip)
- Blackfriars Special School (Denise)
- St John Fishers Catholic high school (Denise)

The arts and education aspect to this project has actively engaged over 100 local school children and young people since the practical workshops began in the Autumn of 2008.

Support



The project received excellent professional support from Staffordshire County Council's Highways department in the preparation

and installation of the two mosaics, working alongside both artists to ensure they had adequate support and supervision at all times during the final stages.

There has been noticeably less graffiti on the subway walls of those used in previous projects since 2004. They have also proved to be popular with the general public, proving the positive effect creative interventions and public art can have within the local environment.

- Formal Unveiling took place on Friday 24th April between at 11am