

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING

Monday, 23 April 2018

PRESENT: Councillor N Weatherley (Chair)

Councillor(s): T Graham, B Clelland, S Dickie, K Dodds, D Duggan, M Hood, J Turnbull, A Wheeler, D Bradford, M Brain and J McElroy

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): J Graham, J McClurey, J Simpson and S Hawkins

CPL62 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Resolved:

- (i) The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 5 March 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

CPL63 OSC REVIEW - THE COUNCIL AND PARTNER'S APPROACH TO ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

The Committee received a report providing feedback on the outcome from an evidence gathering session on the role of the Council and its partners towards roads and highways.

It was noted from the report that the evidence gathering session focussed on four areas which were funding/repairs, traffic congestion, enforcement and road safety. It was further noted that the review is led by the Council with input from the Police.

From the report Committee were advised that funding is not sufficient to maintain the highway – a further OSC session is to be planned to review this. Further to this it was noted that members will be informed of repairs to roads in their areas.

Committee were updated on the current situation regarding traffic congestion as this is a significant problem with varying consequences for the economy and environment. It was noted from the report that future development threatens to worsen the problem and this is to be managed via current policies and where appropriate further measures will be considered.

Regarding enforcement the Council's plans for bus lane enforcement were highlighted. It was noted that this will help target this specific problem identified by the Police and local residents.

An update on road safety was provided reviewing previous priorities received at this Committee. Further feedback on the issues is to be provided at a future meeting.

Inspector Dean Hood of Northumbria Police was in attendance to answer questions from the Committee. The concern of the lack of enforcement for speeding in the hours of darkness was brought to his attention. Inspector Hood advised he does not have a breakdown of figures showing the difference between day/night incidents but that the Police are limited by the equipment they use in which to catch those speeding at night.

It was highlighted to the Committee that there are motor patrols who work through the night on priority routes such as the A19 and A1. Committee were further advised that the Police resource allocated to speed enforcement has shrunk following the introduction of Operation Dragoon who target dangerous drivers. It was further advised that all Police Officers can enforce speeding with Neighbourhood Police Teams being trained to detect and target speeding.

A question was asked whether the reduction in resource for motor patrols was as a result of finance limitations or whether the service had become more efficient. It was noted that the current local team were still a healthy size compared to similar sized Police Forces. The effectiveness of Community Speed Watch groups was highlighted – whilst such groups are not able to enforce speeding it was noted that they are a good tool for monitoring and reporting on problem areas.

It was asked whether the Police had powers to deploy a mobile speeding camera on any street. It was noted that prospective sites must be surveyed in advance to check their suitability for a mobile speed camera. It was further noted that sites must also have appropriate signage in addition to other conditions being met. As an example it was said that a road must have a 60m clear line of sight for a mobile camera to detect those speeding in 30mph areas.

It was further asked what determines the location of a mobile speeding camera. It was said that varying sources of information and intelligence are used such as fixed speed counters. It was also highlighted that there doesn't have to have been an incident for a patrol to be stationed on a road – these can also be put in place following concerns by the public and the local authority provided the necessary legal/practical criteria are met.

Softer speed prevention tools such as signage that displays an oncoming vehicles speed with 'Slow Down' and 'Thank You' were highlighted. It was advised that such signage is not recommended by the Department of Transport. A discussion took place regarding speeding on main roads – it was noted that speeding is often marginal in areas of high congestion.

The concern of drivers travelling at 50/60mph in 30mph areas at night was noted again. It was also noted that speed cameras do not work at night but that neighbourhood police teams have the power to do their own enforcement at sites highlighted as a concern. It was said that over 9000 journeys per year on Shibdon Road were logged as being over 50mph – it was noted that whilst this is correct this figure alone appears high, put with the total number of users on this road this volume

is small. A comment that the Police are doing a good job was made emphasising disappointment that more still needs to be done.

A Freedom of Information request is to be made to Gateshead Magistrates Court to get information on the number of prosecutions of people for speeding over 50mph. Once this information is known it is to be fed back at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) The Committee requested a further update on the Council and Partner's approach to roads and highways at a future meeting.

CPL64 MONITORING - OSC REVIEW OF IMPACT OF GAMBLING IN THE BOROUGH

Elaine Rudman attended to provide the Committee with an update on the review of the impact of gambling in Gateshead as part of the 2016/2017 programme.

It was noted from the report that four evidence gathering sessions of the OSC took place between September 2016 and January 2017 in which officers from Gateshead Council, The Gambling Commission and Gamcare attended.

It was highlighted that the Council continues to develop a good working relationship with the Gambling Commission. It was further noted that the Council should use every opportunity to contribute to the national debate about the harms that can be caused by irresponsible and problem gambling. The Committee then received an overview of the final recommendations following the OSC review.

The Committee were advised that plans are underway for the review of the Council's Gambling Statement of Licensing Principles. The new statement must be in place by January 2019 with the programme of drafting, consulting and reporting being planned.

It was asked what is being looked at when the Council does an inspection of licensed premises. It was said that procedures and practises are checked to ensure that they are in line with regulations, in particular social responsibility.

A question was asked about the Council's control of scratch cards, it was noted that the Council have no specific control as these are issued under the National Lottery. It was further asked what the rules were regarding staffing in licensed gambling premises noting there should be an adequate staff to customer ratio. It was said that betting shops have no problems with this and that premises have controls on their betting machines to limit spending and to alert staff of overuse by particular customers.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

CPL65 PROGRESS UPDATE ON ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received a report updating on progress made with Environmental Enforcement in the Borough.

From the report it was highlighted that the bulk of work carried out by the enforcement team in the area involves issuing fixed penalty notices to those who commit small scale fly tipping. It was noted that since the end of 2016 130 fixed penalty notices have been issued bringing in an income of £15K – it was further noted that perpetrators who do not pay their notices are prosecuted.

The work being done to deal with environmental antisocial issues was summarised highlighting the Coatsworth Road Project, Lobley Hill & Bensham/Saltwell Waste Pilot and Landlord Licensing Scheme Start up Meetings. A further summary of the reactive work being done to deal with criminal issues was also given.

The Committee were advised that the Enforcement Team is continuing to evolve and develop new processes and practises. It was noted that by working in partnership with other Council services and partner agencies has enhanced the range of activity and the impact it is having throughout the borough.

The Committee passed on their thanks for the hard work being done by the team noting it was good to see those who break the law being prosecuted. It was asked whether the team made use of cameras to identify perpetrators – it was noted there has not been much luck in the use of cameras due to the low image quality. It was also said that there are currently 40 live investigations ongoing.

A concern about the issuing of FPN to children was raised – it was confirmed that this would not happen and that work is being done to go into schools to provide education to children on the rights and wrongs of littering.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.

CPL66 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE GATESHEAD HOUSING CUSTOMER SCRUTINY PANEL

Neil Bouch, Director of Customers & Communities attended the Committee with Dave Newton, Chair of The Gateshead Housing Company Scrutiny Panel.

The Committee received a report to provide an annual update on the progress of The Gateshead Housing Company Scrutiny Panel.

It was noted from the report that the Panel have a range of tools available to help them effectively scrutinise a service area which could include the following:

- Self-assessment from Service Manager
- Q&A sessions with managers
- Focus groups of employees or customers

- Performance information including service standards and back benching information where appropriate
- Feedback from surveys
- Outcomes from mystery shopping
- Co-opting of experts of TGHC Customer Service Improvement Groups
- External learning to compare TGHC performance to other similar providers

A summary of customer satisfaction survey reviews was provided in addition to an update on how panel members are recruited.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to receive a further annual update next year.

CPL67 ANNUAL UPDATE TWAMS/BEAMISH

This item was discussed as third on the agenda in agreement with the Chair and Vice Chair.

The Committee received a report to highlight how the financial contributions that the Council makes to Beamish Museum and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums are used and the benefits to Gateshead.

It was noted from the report that Beamish is provided with a cash contribution of £5,000 whilst two separate amounts support the management of Shipley Art Gallery by TWAM on behalf of the Council. It was further highlighted that the Council also provides TWAM with annual contributions to operate the gallery which was £227,770 in 2016/17 and is £202,770 in 2017/18.

From the report it was said that Beamish Museum has confirmed that 5 schools from Gateshead visited in 2017 as part of 45,513 school children from across the region and beyond. It was noted that Gateshead's contribution of £5,000 could therefore equate to £100 per school and allows a significant proportion of Gateshead school children to visit Beamish.

It was reported that 51 schools from Gateshead payed a visit in 2016 and that TWAM has indicated that from April 2017 to February 2018 there have been 27,405 visits to Shipley Art Gallery; 5,890 of which were visits as part of school trips.

An overview of TWAM Governance was provided to the Committee. It was noted that a Strategic Board was established in 2014 to lead TWAM's governance and a new trading company to manage commercial activity, TWAM Enterprises Ltd. Furthermore, it was noted that the TWAM Development Trust is an independent charity which exists as an independent charity to fundraise for TWAM.

It was asked how the three organisations feed into each other. It was noted that this could not be explained at the meeting but Ian Watson, the officer who could provide this information could attend to provide this detail at a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Committee noted the contents of the report.
- (ii) The Committee extended an invitation for Ian Watson to attend to provide further detail on TWAM Governance.

CPL68 WORK PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Committee received a report on the provisional annual work programme and agreed that further reports will be brought to future meetings to highlight current issues / identify any changes / additions to the programme.

RESOLVED:

- (i) Committee noted the information contained in the annual review.
- (ii) Committee agreed the emerging issues for 2018-19.
- (iii) Committee endorsed the OSC provisional work programme.
- (iv) Committee noted that further reports

Chair.....