

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND PLACE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 29 January 2018

PRESENT: Councillor N Weatherley (Chair)
Councillor(s): T Graham, K Dodds, D Duggan, J Graham, M Hood, J Simpson, J Turnbull, A Wheeler, D Bradford, S Hawkins and M Brain

APOLOGIES: Councillor(s): B Clelland, J McClurey and A Thompson

CPL52 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting held on 4 December 2017 were agreed as a true record.

CPL53 OSC REVIEW - THE COUNCIL AND PARTNER'S APPROACH TO ROADS AND HIGHWAYS - EVIDENCE GATHERING

Steve Donaldson delivered a presentation outlining the legal and operational background to Civic Parking Enforcement (CPE) in Gateshead. The presentation also provided an update on the focus of current operations and an update on the decision to undertake Civil Bus Lane Enforcement within Gateshead.

It was noted from the presentation that there are several overarching aims for parking enforcement which includes: congestion, safety, air quality, accessibility, technology, working together and fairness. It was further noted that the council's parking control objectives are to minimise vehicle use in the busiest and most congested areas and to provide sufficient short stay parking facilities to support local businesses. It was also said that other objectives include safeguarding the needs of residents, businesses and visitors to Gateshead, to improve traffic conditions, to regulate and control parking and to preserve and improve infrastructure.

It was said that enforcement of parking is done so under the framework of Traffic Regulation Orders and national legislation which is supported by prescribed regulatory signs and lines. The Committee were also provided with an additional overview of enforcement strategies and activities which included an update on the Council's camera enforcement vehicle.

An overview of the Parking Charge Notice (PCN) appeals process was provided noting that there are several stages within an appeal which includes an informal challenge, representations and the Traffic Penalty Tribunal. It was further noted that there are set guidelines to be followed by staff at each stage of the process.

The Committee were presented with a breakdown of PCN's issued in 2016/17 as follows:

Informal Challenges:

- 3,168 received (24% of PCN's)
- 1,954 rejected (15% of PCN's)
- 1,214 accepted (9% of PCN's)

Formal Representations:

- 539 received (4% of PCN's)
- 338 rejected (2.5% of PCN's)
- 201 accepted (1.5% of PCN's)

It was noted on the presentation that a total of 1,415 PCN's were cancelled as a result of the above appeals process, which is 11% of all PCN's and that the figures indicate that around **72%** of people whose challenges were rejected accepted the decision. The Committee were also presented with several examples of parking contraventions and their outcomes following appeal to illustrate the process and how decisions are made.

An update on Civil Bus Lane Enforcement was provided. It was noted from the presentation that Cabinet approved the introduction of CCTV-based bus lane enforcement in May 2016 with work ongoing to ensure necessary legal and engineering work is in place.

It was asked how many people had been caught by the camera enforcement vehicle parking outside of schools – this information is to be provided via e-mail following the meeting.

It was also asked why the officers responsible for enforcing littering are not able to also enforce parking rules. It was noted that the legislation plays a role in this with an explanation provided regarding the differences between civil and legal enforcement.

It was noted that the Bus Lane Enforcement plan is welcomed and that five locations have been identified as being problem areas according to feedback from residents and the police. It was noted that the rollout is planned to be as cost effective as possible. It was further noted that not all private hire vehicles are allowed to use bus lanes, only those which have the appropriate signage can be used.

It was asked whether statistics could be provided on PCN's issued in each ward – notably Chopwell. It was advised that this information could be provided on a street by street basis if required – it was suggested that this information be fed via ward meetings.

A question was asked about the application process for Blue Badges noting that their use can be abused. It was said that there is a thorough application process and that Blue Badges can be seized if it is reported it is being misused.

A presentation was delivered by Sgt Matt Sykes from Northumbria Police to provide information to the Committee on the work done by police in policing roads.

It was noted that the priorities of the police form a 5 year strategy 2015-2020 which includes reducing road casualties, disrupting criminality, countering terrorism and patrolling the roads. An overview of schemes used to deliver the priorities was provided including the 'THINK!' campaign.

It was further noted that in policing the roads the police predominantly use motor patrols. An overview was provided on Operation Dragoon which targeted dangerous drivers and provided education and engagement to members of the public.

From the presentation the Committee were advised that there is a 3 strand approach to making roads safer which is enforcement, engagement and education. It was noted that this was set up in 2013 following a number of high profile incidents of dangerous driving which led to fatalities. A further overview of enforcement and engagement activities was provided highlighting the event at Saltwell Park and Revolution Car Event at Gateshead Stadium. It was also noted that the police make use of social media to promote their services and safety messages.

The Committee were advised that within Gateshead there are 16 active mobile camera sites, 5 static speed cameras, 4 red light cameras, enforcement on the A1 (due to commence) a handheld speed device and a community speed watch.

It was asked what is being done to prevent fatalities within Gateshead by speeding drivers. It was noted that there have been 8 deaths on Gateshead roads between the hours of 6pm and 6am. It was said that should the police receive a report they will investigate however it is difficult to enforce speeding in all areas at all times. It was further noted that on Shibdon Road where an issue was highlighted it is not possible to park a police van due to parking restrictions.

It was noted that previously there has been regular joint meetings with the police between Councillors to provide regular update on issues within wards – it was said that this is needed again and would need to be organised at a senior level.

It was noted that the enforcement signage is awaited for the A1 advising of the average speed cameras.

It was noted that criminal convictions are a matter of public record and it was said that it would be useful for a Council officer to research public records to establish the number of convictions for driving at speed/dangerous driving incidents in Gateshead, particularly at night.

RESOLVED:

i) That the information from the reports and presentations be noted.

CPL54 PROGRESS UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT/EXTENSION OF QUALITY BUS PARTNERSHIP

Stuart Corker provided an update to the Committee on the extension of joint working with Nexus and bus operators to the whole of Gateshead. It was noted that this

includes the development of a revised agreement and relaunch for the East Gateshead Quality Partnership as the East Gateshead Bus Alliance and the progress on a parallel agreement for West Gateshead.

The following was highlighted from the report:

- A Stakeholder Board will continue to oversee the delivery of the Alliance and monitor performance. The revised composition of the Board is three Gateshead Council representatives (reflecting the extended geographical area of the Partnership), one NECA Transport North East Committee (TNEC) Member, one Nexus officer and five Go North East Representatives.
- Service changes will be made on agreed dates and subject to agreed consultation procedures (involving the community and local Councillors), although the basic concept of the agreement is to maintain as stable a network as possible.
- Changes to fare levels will be limited to only reflect direct increases in costs and the Stakeholder Board would be consulted on any proposals. Go North East and Nexus will continue to look at innovative fares and ticketing options.
- The fleet operating services will be modern, low emission, floor easy access buses with on bus CCTV, audio visual next stop announcements and Wi-Fi. There are also commitments on improving the engine emission standards of the fleet.
- Punctuality and reliability targets will continue to be monitored against a penalty regime for failure to perform. The penalty payments contribute towards the Service Improvement Fund, which is used to provide benefits to passengers. The Stakeholder Board will continue to oversee the monitoring of performance.
- A marketing sub-group of the Stakeholder Board will develop and oversee an annual marketing plan for the Alliance.
- Gateshead Council will, within budget constraints, implement a programme of bus priority, infrastructure works, clearway enforcement and bus lane enforcement.
- Nexus will maintain and improve shelters, interchanges and information.

Regarding the Extension to West Gateshead, the following was also noted:

- The draft of a sister agreement for a West Gateshead Bus Alliance will be presented to Cabinet in due course. It is likely that the agreement will largely mirror the format and principles of its East Gateshead counterpart, while reflecting local detail in relation to services, future infrastructure works etc. In addition, all parties are keen to ensure that these agreements continue to

evolve; reflecting best practice and new approaches.

- As with the East Gateshead, the agreement will be between the Council, Go North East and Nexus, but other operators will have the opportunity to feed into the business of the Alliance.
- Officers have met to consider the potential scope of an agreement, and are looking to prepare an initial draft of the document before the end of February, with the Alliance commencing later this year.

It was noted that the level of consultation on service changes has been improved and that the experience of joint working has generally been positive.

It was asked what the structure of the new alliance would be; Stuart advised he would send further details of this following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the information from the report be noted.

CPL55 TOURISM IN THE WEST OF THE BOROUGH/LAND OF OAK & IRON UPDATE

Paul Scott attended to provide the Committee on an update on the Land of Oak & Iron and Tourism in the West of the Borough.

It was noted from the presentation that the Land of Oak & Iron Landscape Partnership is a Heritage Lottery Funded scheme that aims to conserve areas of distinctive landscape character in the UK. It was further noted that 2016 is the starting point of 4 years of project delivery with a view to work with local communities to celebrate, conserve and enhance the national, industrial and culture heritage at the Land of Oak & Iron.

An overview of the Land of Oak and Iron was provided noting it has 300 years of industrial history. It was further advised that the area has received more than £100,000 of investment including the Woodhouse Lane works which are underway and the Red Kite Trail near High Spen which is planned. The Committee also received a summary of restoration works at the Iron Works that have been complete in the area with photographs.

From the presentation an update was also provided on the new Heritage Centre which was designed by local residents following a design competition involving Northumbria University post-graduate architecture students.

Further information was presented on tourism in the west of the borough noting the 2017 Marketing Campaign which was ran to highlight what is on offer in the west of the borough.

It was noted that the presentation was well received and provided useful information to members. A discussion also took place regarding the various funding streams that

are accessed in order to deliver projects in the area and the partnership working that has taken place with stakeholders such as Groundworks.

RESOLVED:

i) That the information from the report be noted.

CPL56 WORK PROGRAMME

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) That the work programme be noted.

Chair.....