

Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee Meeting held on 15 November 2016

Present: Simon Tagg (Chairman)

Attendance

Ann Beech	Geoff Martin
Len Bloomer	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Ian Hollinshead	Sheree People
Kevin Jackson	Paul Woodhead
Mike Lawrence	Mike Worthington
	Candice Yeomans

Also in attendance: Mark Deaville

Apologies: David Brookes and Mark Winnington

PART ONE

20. Declarations of Interest

There were none at this meeting.

21. Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 13 September 2016

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 13 September 2016 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

22. Enforcement of Car Parking Strategy

Since the decriminalisation of parking enforcement in 2008 enforcement powers had been shared between local authorities and the police. Details are provided on the County Council's website:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/transport/parking/Enforcement.aspx>

Prior to April 2015 on-street enforcement was carried out on behalf of the County Council by each of the eight district/borough councils. In April 2015 the arrangements changed and the County Council entered into a single arrangement with Stoke-on-Trent City Council for enforcement and back office services.

With the exception of dropped kerb crossing points and double parking local authorities can only enforce where parking restrictions exist. Any issues of vehicles parked dangerously or causing an obstruction remains a matter for the police. The police can also address offences of wilful and unnecessary obstruction on the road or pavement, the blocking of pedestrian/disabled crossing points and vehicle access crossings,

dangerous parking on chevrons at pedestrian crossings etc., and issues of double parking or parking too close to a junction.

Members were updated on proposed changes to the Policy for the Processing of Penalty Charge Notices and the Policy and Guidelines for Residents Parking Zones.

Members welcomed Matthew Ellis, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Bob Brockbank and Michael Clarke from Stoke City Council who were attending the meeting to discuss with Members and Officers the current arrangements for enforcement of the car parking strategy in Staffordshire. Members stated that there was confusion over which body was responsible for what, and that mixed responses were being given as to who was responsible for what.

The PCC confirmed that where there were clear obstruction issues this would be a police matter. Under new legislation due to come into force in March 2017 additional enforcement powers would be given to PCSOs. However, the PCC did not want PCSOs to spend all their time acting as traffic wardens as he believed that this would diminish their role, which should be at the heart of communities.

It was agreed that parking outside schools was a significant problem. Some good work was being done on this, with schools, the Police and local members working in partnership. Some schools were also proactively addressing the problem by providing space for children to be dropped off/picked up. Nevertheless it was important to reinforce the message that drivers had a personal responsibility to park safely and considerately. The PCC informed members that he would encourage the Police to be more proactive around tackling parking issues and would request the reintroduction of Warning Notices. In the past, issuing parking tickets had involved lengthy and time consuming paper trails. Now, thanks to modern technology carried by officers, it was greatly simplified. Members questioned why technology such as CCTV, police body cams and camera cars which were used in Stoke-on-Trent was not used to support parking enforcement. It was suggested that being more visible and vocal about the use of technology could provide improved preventative measures. The PCC agreed to do further work on exploring the use of technology, and informed members that it had been helpful to look at what could be done. Whilst he did not believe this matter could be completely resolved more work done in partnership could help to address the issue, specifically in agreeing basic principles and ideas and including the role of the Safer Roads Partnership. The PCC also agreed to consider a clear communications campaign on the respective roles of the Police and local authorities.

It was queried how local intelligence was fed back to the County Council. Members were informed that there was an Inbox clear.streets@staffordshire.gov.uk which members of the public could access. The Police were also asked to feedback any observations or trends. It was agreed that this link should be put on the Members' Portal.

Members requested a breakdown of enforcement activity by district, and also details of the costs of the arrangement with Stoke-on-Trent, together with details of the income collected from parking fines. There was a mixed reaction to the proposals to increase the minimum weekly payment for penalty charge notices from £10 to £20. They were informed that £20 had been considered to be a reasonable and proportionate figure.

The Chairman thanked the PCC, and officers from Stoke-on-Trent for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the responsibilities for on-street parking enforcement and residents parking zones in Staffordshire be noted;
- b) the proposed changes to the Policy for the Processing of Penalty Charge Notices and the Policy and Guidelines for Residents Parking Zones be approved;
- c) the Chairman write to the PCC to request:
 - that he consider undertaking an internal communications campaign within Staffordshire Police to communicate the roles of personnel involved in parking enforcement and also an external awareness campaign;
 - that he ask the Police to reconsider the use of advisory tickets in regard to parking enforcement; and
 - that he undertake further work on how technology can be employed in regard to parking enforcement and agreeing basic principles and ideas including the role of the Safer Roads Partnership; and
 - that he report back on responses to these requests;
- d) a link to the Clear Streets Inbox be added to the Members' Portal;
- e) the Cabinet Member provide a breakdown of enforcement activity by district, details of the costs of the joint arrangement with Stoke on Trent, and details of the income collected from parking fines; and
- f) the Cabinet Member prioritise the work in regard to the use of technology in parking reinforcement and report back.

23. Infrastructure+ - Executive Response to Working Group's Recommendations (2nd Update)

Members considered a second update on the Executive Response to the recommendations of the Infrastructure+ Working Group. Of the eight recommendations within the agreed Action Plan three were now complete, four were scheduled to be substantially completed during November 2016 and one was being taken forward.

A member Autumn Event had been held to update all members on the progress on the Infrastructure+ contract. This had been well attended and provided an opportunity for two way discussion. Members requested the slides from this event.

Members re-emphasised the importance of engaging local Members in highways matters as they were useful advocates and could improve communication.

In relation to recommendation 8, that Community Highways Infrastructure Managers be asked to share details of meetings with Parish Councils with the appropriate local county councillors, members requested that local town councils be added. Also, in regard to planning applications they requested that the form sent to the County Council for comment should include the question "Local Member consulted? Yes/No", and that it should be a requirement that officers contact local members for their views on substantial planning developments.

Members commented that whilst they appreciated improved communication on the work being done around potholes, the way the information was presented, in a long list covering all areas of the County, was not as helpful as it could be. It was suggested that this could be improved by segregating the information into areas, possibly including a list of the work planned for that area every three months. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport assured members that there would be ongoing improvement to the information provided, and that he was happy to discuss planning, highways and ongoing improvement on work around potholes. Members requested further information on the prioritisation of pothole repairs. In the interests of improved communication around recommendations three, four and five, members requested that priority be given to the development of the Highways Portal.

The Chairman queried whether there were set timescales in which officers were expected to respond to member queries and was informed that these were set out in the Member/Officer Protocol. He had experienced problems in trying to contact a member of the Community Infrastructure Liaison team, who had been off sick for several weeks but whose emails were not receiving an “out of office” response, and were not being picked up in his absence, which was a cause for concern.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the six-month progress against the previously agreed Infrastructure+ Action Plan be noted;
- b) performance data on pothole repairs be brought to future meetings;
- c) in relation to recommendation 8, that details of meetings with town councils also be shared with the appropriate local members;
- d) wording be included in the letters to District Planning Authorities requesting that local members be informed of substantial planning developments;
- e) measures should be put in place to ensure continuity of cover by local highways officers;
- f) officers should be reminded of the response timescales outlined in the Member/Officer Protocol; and
- g) the slides from the members’ Autumn event should be circulated for information.

24. Work Programme

The Select Committee received a copy of their 2016-17 Work Programme. Members requested that a letter be sent to the Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee to seek clarification regarding future scrutiny of the Operating Model for the Staffordshire Arts Service (the service, not the Shire Hall building), following the call-in on 4 October 2016.

Members noted that the following items be added:

- performance on the Infrastructure+ Contract;
- Innovation Centre Number 6, Keele University; and
- The Keele Deal.

RESOLVED - That:

- a) the additions be noted; and

- b) a letter be sent to the Chairman of the Corporate Review Committee to seek clarification on future scrutiny, as outlined above.

South Staffordshire District Deal 2

The Select Committee received a briefing report on the South Staffordshire District Deal 2.

Staffordshire County Council and South Staffordshire District Council have agreed a revised District Deal, which will further strengthen the strong two-tier partnership working between the two councils. It is based on a recognition that many outcomes and initiatives, relating to both the economic growth agenda and building the community asset base, are best delivered at a local level.

It will also be used as a tool to formalise a local devolution deal consistent with Devo Staffordshire (the county approach), to share and utilise appropriate and available resources to deliver on agreed priorities at a district, community and individual level.

The new District Deal was set out very differently to the first deal that was agreed in January 2013. It very much focused on broader outcomes that drove specific projects and continued to strengthen two tier working, in particular through a commitment to change the culture around working together going forward. It also addressed wider public sector reform by engaging partners in broader change programmes, including the One Public Estate programme.

Members received a full copy of the Deal, in order for them to see the outcomes and initiatives that it covered.

RESOLVED – That the briefing note be received.

Chairman