

Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee Meeting held on 12 September 2017

Present: Simon Tagg (Chairman)

Attendance

Ann Beech	Rev. Preb. M. Metcalf
Tina Clements	David Smith
Maureen Compton	Bernard Williams
Keith Flunder	Paul Woodhead
Julia Jessel (Vice-Chairman)	Candice Yeomans

Also in attendance: Mark Deaville and Gill Heath

Apologies: Jeremy Pert

PART ONE

49. Declarations of Interest

Paul Woodhead declared an interest in the item on Staffordshire's Library Strategy in his capacity as a volunteer at his local library, and on the item on Staffordshire's Safer Roads Partnership as he was a member of a Community Speed Watch group.

50. Minutes of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 31 July 2017

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee held on 31 July 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

51. Staffordshire's Libraries Strategy

Members considered a report outlining a proposed Strategy for Staffordshire's Libraries offer for 2018-21. The paper included an assessment of progress to date following the implementation of the new delivery model in April 2016 and evidenced the impact of the introduction of Community Managed Libraries (CMLs), on which members received three case studies. The paper also outlined a proposed strategy for further service development supported by technology and described how the existing community focused model would be expanded to realise further MTFs savings.

The Libraries and Arts Service invited comments from the Select Committee on the current and proposed Library Offer. This would help shape the future development of Staffordshire County Council's Strategy for their Library Services from 2018-21. Members' views were also sought on the principles to determine where community management or self-service was considered as an option and on the principles proposed for the future planning of the Mobile and Travelling Library Service.

Members considered a range of statistics around membership, visits, virtual visits, items issued, pc bookings, the Summer Reading Challenge, bus passes issued and volunteers. During the first phase of transformation no libraries had been closed and all 43 libraries remained part of the statutory network, with 20 libraries managed and delivered by the Council and 23 libraries becoming Community Managed and Delivered by April 2018. 19 libraries would be managed and delivered by community organisations, or South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (SSSFT) by the end of October 2017. The Committee were informed that Library visits, issues and new members continued to decrease in line with national trends.

The Libraries Transformation Programme – part 1 had delivered savings of £1.675m, however further savings of £1.3m have been identified in the MTFs between 2018 and 2021 (part 2). There was a need therefore to continue transforming Staffordshire Libraries to enable the delivery of these savings and ensure a sustainable library service for the future. Consequently, subject to Cabinet approval and to comply with the statutory duty, it was proposed that Staffordshire Libraries explore and consult on the following:

- The introduction of self-service libraries
- An increased number of community managed libraries
- Options for any community libraries that have not yet transferred to Community Management
- Reviewing and re-modelling the Mobile and Travelling Library Service

Members' views were sought on the principles that would help to inform the criteria which could determine where community management or self-service could be considered as an option for each community:

1. Community Management could be considered at the least well used libraries.

OR

2. Community Management could be considered for any library where based on the existing model, the service considers that the opportunity for community management could be tested.
3. Self-service could be considered for all SCC libraries.

OR

4. Self-service could be considered for any library where the service considers that the opportunity for self-service could be tested, with the core staffed hours determined by the current level of use.
5. For some libraries this could result in consulting on more than one option.

The proposals would go to Cabinet in October and with their agreement a period of informal consultation would commence in November and December 2017, with a formal 12 week public consultation period from 5 January to 30 March 2018.

To ensure that the Mobile and Travelling Library Service could continue to deliver a service to rural or isolated communities, it was proposed that the public would be consulted on a set of principles which would inform the future planning of mobile routes, as follows:

1. Mobile and Travelling library stops will take account of the location of static libraries to ensure that duplication of service is not taking place. It is proposed that Mobile and Travelling Libraries will generally visit locations outside a 2 mile radius of a static library. However there could be exceptions identified through the public consultation that will need to be considered in the final proposals taking into account:

- a. The needs of areas of deprivation
 - b. The needs of hard-to-reach groups
 - c. How connected communities are in terms of access to transport to reach static libraries and accessibility to online services and information through internet access
2. Based on performance of the last 2 years, where a Mobile or Travelling library has not received at least 5 visitors within a community, a Mobile or Travelling library service will **not** continue.
 3. Each community identified as needing a Mobile or Travelling library service through this review will receive 1 Mobile or Travelling library visit at least once every 4 weeks. This will maximise access to the service across the county.
 4. The duration of the Mobile or Travelling library stops will be for a minimum of fifteen minutes. Length of stop time will depend on the level of use at each stop.
 5. Continuation of service to those in greatest need is a priority. We will consider carefully how the needs of the vulnerable, the elderly and other protected groups can be met if there is a recommendation to change the service in their community. Alternative ways of ensuring service delivery will be explored during the consultation and recommended in the final proposals.
 6. All routes and stops will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Members congratulated officers from the library service on the number of volunteers they had recruited and trained to date. However concern was expressed over any reduction in the level of service, and the decrease in library visits, issues and new members. In relation to the proposals for self-service libraries, concern was expressed over public safety and the possibility of damage or theft. Questions were also raised about the vetting system for the issue of swipe cards. Libraries have a significant role to play in providing health information, enhancing life skills and creating community cohesion and therefore it was essential that extensive consultation took place. Members were informed that the decline in issues, visits and membership was a national trend. The national task force is undertaking in-depth research on these trends and the outcomes will be examined and Staffordshire will consider whether there is any best practice, innovation or steps that we can take to halt the decline. With regard to concerns over safety, officers had spoken to a number of other authorities who had introduced self-service libraries and there had been no issues with security or damage. The library space would be closely monitored via CCTV, and a help desk would be available to respond to any queries or concerns. In relation to swipe cards, there would be a face to face induction, together with a requirement to sign up to an acceptable use policy. It was acknowledged that it would be really important to consult widely on how Staffordshire residents wanted to use the Library Service. Consequently the twelve week consultation would be extensive, and the Library Service would follow best practice guidelines.

In lengthy discussion, members reflected on their experiences in their own areas and agreed that it was important to share best practice and ideas for income generation. They noted that a number of libraries had been developed as community hubs and agreed that this helped to keep the community engaged and involved. The Select Committee were informed that the SSSFT and the CML's now had regular networking meetings to discuss issues, and share good practice and ideas for income generation. Members requested a further update on the future role and relationship with SSSFT, given the decline in footfall at libraries, and questioned whether their involvement in the management and delivery was a long-term sustainable solution. It was suggested that

members in the areas where libraries were managed by SSSFT could use their Local Member Priority Meeting Groups to investigate progress with the contract. Officers pointed out that they would be undertaking an annual review, and would use this as a basis for a robust conversation on the SSSFT's plan for the future. Members were reassured that there was continual forward planning as the service had to reflect societal and technological changes. Officers also looked at best practice regionally and nationally and investigated options for adapting this and bringing it to Staffordshire. Members also requested a more detailed breakdown of the nature of visits to libraries. Officers acknowledged that the service was data rich and that more work could be done around analysing this.

Members recognised that not all libraries needed to deliver the same things, and that the services offered by individual libraries should be tailored to the needs of the local community. It was queried whether it would be possible for other public services to connect in with the mobile library service when visiting rural communities. A question was also raised about possible links between local authors and the library service.

The Select Committee were informed that when the consultation had been completed and the results analysed recommendations would be brought back to them prior to being taken to Cabinet.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the comments from the Select Committee on the current and proposed library offer be used to help shape the future development of Staffordshire County Council's Strategy for the Library Services 2018-21;
- b) the principles outlined above to determine where community management or self-service is considered as an option be agreed;
- c) the principles outlined above which will inform the future planning of the Mobile and Travelling Library Service be endorsed;
- d) in areas where the local library is managed by SSSFT Members to consider investigating progress with the contract through their Local Members' Priority Meetings; and
- e) a more detailed breakdown of the nature of the visits to libraries be provided to Members in due course.

52. Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership

Members received a report and presentation on the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership (SSRP). They were informed that it was set up in 2001 with the aim of bringing partner organisations together to reduce road casualties in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. The current key partners were: Staffordshire County Council; Stoke-on-Trent City Council; Staffordshire Police; Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service; and Highways England.

The joint governance group for the SSRP agreed in January 2016 to strengthen the governance of the Partnership. This prompted a redesign of the governance arrangements, delivery model and staffing structure to ensure that the future work of the Partnership would receive appropriate direction and scrutiny. Members were informed that a key element to note was that the SSRP did not exist as an autonomous entity. It

was an informal collaboration designed to improve road safety through sharing resources and skills across all partner organisations. It planned to use a range of measures including Education, Engagement, Enforcement and Engineering to support a wider culture change that would see excessive speed and careless behaviour on our roads as socially unacceptable.

The Cabinet Member informed the Select Committee that twelve years ago 438 people were killed or seriously injured in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on our roads, which included 81 fatalities. Last year the figure was 370, which included 30 fatalities, a significant improvement. His vision was not only that this figure would constantly reduce but that it would become zero.

Under the new governance arrangements a Strategic Board was set up, comprised of political representatives of partner organisations and representatives from wider organisations such as public health and RoSPA. This provided strategic direction, and was responsible for financial decision making and scrutiny. There was also an Operational Board, comprised of senior members of partner organisations. This managed operational delivery and made recommendations to the Strategic Board. A Core Team was also established comprised of a Strategic Governance and Commissioning Manager from Staffordshire County Council, an Education and Training Co-ordinating Manager from Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, and an Insight and Intelligence Officer from Stoke-on-Trent City Council. Members were presented with a chart showing statistics of casualties by year and their severity. This showed a consistent downward trend. However the figures had shown an increase from 2015 owing to a change in recording practices and this would be monitored.

Members were given pictorial examples of the types of initiatives which came under Education, including a range of education provided at schools, immersive experiences with emergency services, posters, and running National Driving Offender courses on behalf of Staffordshire Police. Examples of Engineering initiatives included vehicle activated signs, the redesign of a junction on the A515 to make it safer, and modified crash barriers as part of a motorcycle safety exercise. As part of Engagement, examples included speed indicator devices, wheelie bin stickers, community speed watch and an event held for motor bikers. In relation to Enforcement Members were informed that there were three combined red light and speed cameras, 259 Gatso cameras, 3 average speed camera systems and 6 Camera Vans in the County.

Statistics on the outcomes of speeding offences showed that 50% of offenders chose to attend a speed awareness course, 35% accepted a fixed penalty, 10% received a court summons, and 5% were cancelled.

With regard to funding a large part of this came from offender courses such as Speed Awareness, which included a nationally set cost recovery element returned to the enforcement authority. There was also external funding from undertaking enforcement on behalf of Highways England (motorway roadwork enforcement and Smart motorway cameras) and Network Rail (a national project using cameras at level crossings).

A Road Safety Grant Fund had been launched in Summer 2017. This was open to community groups in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and involved £200k of

Partnership funding over 2 years. There would be a funding round every 6 months and grants would be considered for bids up to £5,000.

The Forward Plan for the Partnership included the following aims:

- Improve the use of data and intelligence to support road safety interventions
- Coordinate activity across partner organisations to avoid duplication or gaps in delivery
- Evaluate interventions to ensure they are effective and efficient
- Work with our communities to develop their input and involvement
- Review how enforcement is used and determine which future technology will be required
- Consider how to best use media and marketing to promote a change in driving culture

A Member commented on the expense of introducing a speed limit to a village and suggested that if a pot of funding was made available it may be better spent giving members the opportunity to buy into a pool of temporary or permanent speed control devices. He also queried what had caused the noticeable reduction in casualties year on year from 2007 in particular. It was pointed out that Community Speed Watch and local community initiatives such as “Ditch the Distraction”, “20 is Plenty” and “Think Bike” had had an immense impact and achieved positive results.

The Partnership was keen for Parish Councils and people from local communities to approach them with bids for funding for local projects from the Road Safety Grant Fund.

In relation to road traffic casualties Members queried whether it was possible to differentiate between major and minor roads, and also if Community Speed Watch Groups could be given the opportunity to use technology to be more proactive in catching people using mobile phones whilst driving. They were informed that it was possible to provide statistics for different road types. It was recognised that Community Speed Watch Groups wanted to develop and do more, for example around mobile phone use and weight restriction enforcement and the SSRP would continue to develop and investigate new technology in response to this. A Member expressed the view that there was a need to engage more volunteers on Community Speed Watch Groups as they also needed to address the issue of parking around schools. He queried whether it might be possible to use the Speed Awareness course to encourage people to volunteer to take social responsibility. It was also suggested that it would be helpful to share equipment across Groups. However, the Speed Awareness was a national course and there were restrictions on local content being included. The Partnership was trying to develop and support Community Speed Watch Groups more, and were aware that some Groups felt that they were not receiving enough support from the Police, and were having discussions on this around special constables and other interventions, within the limited resource available.

In a wide ranging discussion, it was noted that there were a number of enforcement issues including HGVs with foreign number plates, littering, smoking in cars and generally anti-social and dangerous driving. The Cabinet Member assured the Select Committee that enforcement was an issue that would continue to be investigated and Government would continue to be lobbied on road safety legislation. In relation to inconsiderate parking around schools it was suggested that Members could challenge

their MP around the introduction of a ruling that if a child lived within the catchment area they should walk to school, or impose a ban on parking within a certain distance of schools at particular times of the day. Members agreed that prevention was better than cure, and the Cabinet Member pointed out that a lot of effort was made to educate children in schools and suggested that Members may find it interesting to go along to one of these high impact information sessions. A Member pointed out that there was a vehicle at Lichfield Fire Station which simulated a road traffic collision in a very realistic way, which could be used as a powerful teaching experience for children. Whilst it was recognised that Staffordshire was a leader in road safety there would be no complacency and work would continue to improve standards.

A Member commented that it should be possible to use the statistics to identify the best way of investing limited resources to reduce accidents as much as possible by looking at a breakdown of collisions in specific areas. They also queried whether additional guidance could be provided to Utility Companies undertaking work on roads, particularly around the positioning of signage and temporary traffic lights. A Member pointed out that under pilot legislation that was in place, a number of London Boroughs were charging Utility Companies £2,500 per day that the roadworks were in place. It was agreed that this could prove beneficial in encouraging work to be done more quickly and efficiently. The Chairman requested an email response on the option to levy a charge in this way. It was also requested that a link to the presentation be included in the Members' E-bulletin.

RESOLVED – That:

- a) the new governance structure and operating model of the Staffordshire Safer Roads Partnership be noted;
- b) the wide range of initiatives use to promote road safety across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent with reference to the 4 Es: Education, Engagement, Engineering and Enforcement be noted;
- c) the need for ongoing review and development of road safety measures to continue to reduce road casualties be endorsed;
- d) the Cabinet Member investigate whether it is feasible to charge utility companies when roadworks take place and respond in writing to the Chairman; and
- e) the presentation be made available to all Members via the Members' E-bulletin.

53. Work Programme

The Select Committee received a copy of their draft 2017/18 Work Programme. They were informed that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had met with the Scrutiny and Support Manager to discuss this, and it had been agreed that an additional meeting should be scheduled for 4 April 2018. Members noted the following amendments: that

- the item on the Impact on Staffordshire of Britain's Vote to Leave the European Union (EU), to Include the EU Funding Programme be referred to the All Party Member Group on External Relations
- the item on Superfast Staffordshire Broadband – Going Forward should be referred to the All Party Member Group on Improvement
- the item on the Sportshire Strategy and Major Events Evaluation should now be dealt with as a briefing note
- the item Heritage Lottery Fund Bid should now be dealt with as a briefing note
- the item on Hanford Energy be referred to the Corporate Review Committee

- the item on the Constellation Partnership be referred to the Corporate Review Committee
- the item on Rights of Way be the subject of a discussion between the Vice-Chairman and the Cabinet Member for Communities

RESOLVED – That the above amendments be noted.

Chairman