

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING

Minutes

MONDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2020

PRESENT: Councillor D Shaw (Chair)

Councillors J Aberley, G Bentley, K Hoptroff, B A Hughes,
B Johnson, J T Jones, K Martin, T McNicol, T Riley, P Roberts,
L Swindlehurst, P Taylor, P Wood and N Yates.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor M Bowen, M Gledhill, L A Malyon, I Plant, J Porter and
S E Ralphs MBE.

APOLOGIES: Councillors I Herdman and R Ward

168 **TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.**

DECIDED: That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Panel held on the 2nd December
2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, subject
to, Councillor Johnson's apologies being recorded.

169 **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS, IF ANY.**

There were no substitute members.

170 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS:**

Agenda No.	Member Declaring Interest	Nature of Interest
Agenda Item 8 – Flyposting, banners and advertisements	Cllr B. Johnson	Other – Director of a business which produces 'A' boards

171 **QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, IF ANY.**

No questions to Portfolio Holders had been received.

172 **LOCAL POLICING TEAM ANNUAL UPDATE.**

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Chief Inspector Mark Thorley was in attendance accompanied by Sergeant Rob Peacock, to provide the annual Policing Team update.

Overall, crime was down by 15% compared to 10% nationally. Policing in the wake of austerity continued to be a challenge, however the Moorlands Policing Team continued to work hard, found new and innovative ways to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, work ever closer with partners for the benefit of the community, with some notable successes but also the occasional spike in acquisitive crime.

The following statistical information was provided:

- Less serious violent crime with injury, 40% reduction (290 less crimes)
- More serious violent crime with injury, 34% reduction (21 less crimes)
- Burglary residential, 12% reduction (19 less offences)
- Criminal damage, 21% reduction, (160 less offences)
- Theft from motor vehicles, a 40% increase (45 more crimes)
- Theft of motor vehicles, a 9% increase which had increased since October (6 more crimes)
- Police visibility was at 73%, compared to 63% nationally
- Public space violence had reduced by 13%, compared to 15% nationally
- Anti-social behaviour, 6% reduction (115 less incidents)
- 2% reduction in collisions classed as killed or seriously injured

The past year had again seen travelling criminals target the Moorlands, the nature of the geography would always mean that this was a vulnerability, but the recently created Force Road Policing Unit would now support the Local Policing Team, by patrolling and targeting the road networks to identify and apprehend those travelling criminals, using intelligence led tactics to provide a tailored and effective response.

As well as the challenge to deter travelling criminals the team had seen the actions of a small number of local criminals impact heavily on vehicle crime offences.

Most notably in the Cheddleton and Leek areas where two separate offenders, during the summer months targeted insecure vehicles parked overnight. Both were identified, one recalled to prison, the other after a number of court appearances, was remanded in custody.

Prior to and upon release from prison, the Police continued to work with prolific offenders to ensure the motivation to commit crime was removed or reduced. To date neither had yet re-offended.

Staffing levels remained the same for the area, apart from a Civilian Vulnerability Co-ordinator who would be in post shortly, to work within the harm reduction hub at Leek.

The Chair complimented the officers who were involved with a problem which concerned teenagers in the Werrington area, which was successfully resolved, and congratulations were passed on to the officers in Leek for the work they had carried out to reduce crime. The excellent work of the PSCOs in Biddulph was also mentioned.

A member of the Panel explained that he and a number of constituents were concerned about the level of drugs use in the area. Chief Inspector Thorley advised

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that the matter of drugs was high on the agenda and that Sergeants reported to him on a fortnightly basis. Should anyone wish to report any specific concerns then these could be emailed to the Chief Inspector or directly to Staffordshire Police.

Discussion took place around the area outside schools being dangerous due to a lack of school crossing patrols and a high volume of cars. Members also raised a recent problem with theft from walls and enquired about the speed of Armed Response Officers locally. These concerns were shared by the Officers and the Panel was advised that PCSOs were tasked to patrol outside schools. There hadn't been a great deal of theft from walls reported and members were encouraged to report any issues. The Armed Response Unit could be deployed where necessary, 24 hours a day and provided good response times to the area. Other neighbouring Forces could also be called upon should the need arise.

Alleged exploitation of young people, the use of drugs and gases in Cheadle was debated by the Panel. Warrants, Stop Searches and work in schools had been carried out but should any member be of the opinion that matters were not being addressed, then they should report this directly to Chief Inspector Thorley. In the meantime, he would contact the Sergeant for this area. It was also explained to the Panel, that some gases could be purchased legally, it was the use of the gases that was the problem. A request was made for a Police presence in Caverswall, as a similar issue with gas cylinders had been identified at this location.

Further discussion took place around dangerous dogs, theft of pets, recruitment of special constables and the use of the new Staffordshire Smart Alert system. A member queried how the Police visibility was measured and it clarified that this was a record of the time Officers' radios were outside of the Police Station.

DECIDED:

- 1) That the update be noted;
- 2) For statistics on the number of convictions be provided at the next annual update.

173 **CHILDREN'S MEALS IN HOLIDAYS. (VERBAL UPDATE)**

Further to this matter being debated at Full Council in October 2019, Councillor Ralphs updated the Panel on the work she had undertaken on this important issue. Over the last few months, meetings had taken place with various people which included, head teachers and heads of governing bodies, with a view to provide school meals from a school hall during the school holidays, on a trial basis. The next stage of the process was to investigate how this trial could be funded, and to look into the viability of this being linked to the SPACE Programme.

Members welcomed this challenging task and offered their support. A request was made for the children in the rural areas to be accommodated and members highlighted the need to meet with various local schools, in relation to the logistical arrangements for the provision of meals during the holidays.

A member of the Panel advised that some of the most vulnerable children did not attend school and suggested that the foodbanks were also contacted.

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DECIDED:

- 1) That the update be noted;
- 2) For the Leader to be invited to attend a meeting of the Panel in 6 months time.

174 FLYPOSTING, BANNERS AND ADVERTISEMENTS. (PRESENTATION/VERBAL UPDATE)

At the request of the Panel, Ben Haywood, Head of Development Services and David Smith, Principal Officer Communities and Partnerships, provided a presentation on flyposting, banners and advertisements.

The presentation covered the following topics:-

- Definition of an advertisement
- Control of adverts
- Consent of adverts
- Examples of adverts which do not require consent
- Adverts with deemed consent
- Adverts which require consent
- Advertisement consent
- Other consents
- Enforcement

Officers were given examples of advertisements on trailers, outside football grounds and on railings and asked if these required consent. A trailer would require consent if it has been adapted principally for advertisement and this was also the case for adverts on the exterior of a football ground.

Councillor Atkins was particularly concerned about the number of banners and amount of flyposting around Leek town centre, which made the area look unsightly. She didn't object to the advertisement of temporary events, but felt that the Council should adopt a proactive policy which enabled the Council to remove such advertisements and prosecute repeat offenders. The number of 'A' boards situated in the town centres were also mentioned as they were a potential hazard. There seemed to be a similar problem in Werrington outside the shops, close to the junction with the main road, therefore, officers agreed to look into the issues raised. The Officers advised that 'A' boards were not included within the policy for flyposting and were generally classed as an obstruction to the highway. A member of the Panel had a different opinion on the use of 'A' boards, as he thought that these were beneficial to the businesses on the high streets.

DECIDED:

- 1) That the presentation be noted;
- 2) For the presentation and advertisement guide be emailed to members;
- 3) For the Enforcement Team to take a look at the advertisement banners and 'A' boards in Leek and Werrington;
- 4) For the Flyposting policy to be reviewed.

175 DOG FOULING ORDER

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The Panel gave its consideration to a report which detailed proposed changes to the Dog Fouling Order, which was due to cease to have effect on 20th October 2020.

Staffordshire Moorlands was currently covered by four Orders which made it an offence if a person in charge of a dog at the relevant time did not:

- remove dog faeces forthwith if the dog defecated;
- put and keep a dog on a lead if required to do so by a Council Officer to prevent the dog causing annoyance or disturbance to any other person or the worrying or disturbance of any animal or bird;
- keep a dog on a lead in specified areas;
- stop a dog from entering specified areas.

The Orders would cease to have effect and thus need to be extended or replaced if the Council wished to continue to have the power to take action in respect of dog fouling and nuisance behaviour.

The latter two orders (Dogs on a Lead Order and Dog Exclusion Order), had not been used since their introduction in 2011. It was proposed that these Orders be allowed to expire in October 2020. The Panel had concerns in relation to this proposal and did not want these orders to expire.

DECIDED:

The Panel **RECOMMENDED CABINET:**

- 1) **NOT** to allow the (Dogs on a Lead Order and Dog Exclusion Order) to expire;
- 2) **AGREE** to carry out public consultation on the draft Order appended to the report;
- 3) Subsequently **APPROVE** the draft Order by Delegated Decision unless the responses from the consultation necessitate material changes to the draft Order;
- 4) In the event of a new order being approved prior to 20th October 2020, formal notice of discharge of the existing Orders should be published simultaneously with the introduction of the replacement Order.

176 **WORK PROGRAMME**

At this point of the meeting, members discussed the possibility of a Your Housing Group Drop-in session being arranged, prior to the next meeting of the Panel. This would enable members to discuss specific tenant issues with a member of staff, rather than discussion taking place during the scrutiny meeting.

Members raised queries in relation to air quality monitors and were advised that they could liaise directly with Daniel McCrory, Senior Pollution Officer for such matters.

DECIDED:

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- 1) That the Panel's Work Programme for 2019/20 be agreed;
- 2) For the Your Housing Drop-in session to be arranged.

The meeting closed at Time Not Specified

_____ Chairman _____ Date