



## Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel - 11 September 2017

The Council was committed to ensuring the safety and protection of people using its services.

Legislation and statutory guidance made it necessary for the Council to ensure that it had policies and procedures in place to ensure that children and adults at risk of abuse and neglect were safeguarded when using services provided by or on behalf of the Council.

The Council approved a Child Protection Policy in 2006 and subsequently updated the policy to incorporate adults at risk of abuse and neglect in 2014. The introduction of the Care Act in May 2014 necessitated some changes and a revised policy was agreed by the Council in 2016.

The Council had established an officer group, chaired by the Executive Director (People) to co-ordinate the Council's response to safeguarding.

Recent actions included: providing safeguarding training for staff members; reviewing procurement and contract management procedures; introducing a new staff safety system; and on-going provision of training for licensed taxi drivers. The Council had also supported the work of the Moorlands Together Safer and Stronger Communities Partnership to safeguard the local community.

The Council was required by Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board to complete a safeguarding audit (under s11 of the Children Act 2004) and judged itself to have met each of the standards.

**DECIDED:** That the Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel **NOTED** the actions taken by the Council in response to its safeguarding duties.

### 68 POLICY ON ENFORCEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES.

The Panel considered a report which presented a revised policy that aimed to further improve the Council's approach to tackling environmental crimes such as littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.

The Council revised its approach to responding to environmental crimes in December 2014 with the aim of adopting "a more flexible approach through the multi skilling of a large number of employees with existing enforcement capability within their job roles".

This approach had been reviewed and has resulted in the development of a revised Policy on the Enforcement of Environmental Crimes.

The policy suggested adopting a triple-track approach to responding to environmental crimes involving education, enforcement, and cleansing.

Under the new policy, enforcement activity would primarily be carried out by the Council's Environment Enforcement Officers and the Geographic and Specialist Service Supervisors for Street Cleaning, Parks and Waste. Responsibility for the enforcement of environmental crime would move from Regulatory Services to Democratic and Community Services to strengthen the link between the response to environmental crime and other forms of anti-social behaviour, and also to further develop the links to other locality-based activity delivered by the latter service.

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Officers would normally issue a fixed penalty notice where an offence of abandoning a vehicle, littering, fly-tipping, fly-posting or dog fouling had occurred and may also consider recovering the cost of removal. There were a number of situations when the Council would consider that the issuing of a fixed penalty notice may not be appropriate and instead would seek to prosecute under the relevant legislation.

Hot spot maps of reported environmental crimes would be produced on a quarterly basis to help guide activity and, in addition, the Geographic and Specialist Service Supervisors would provide a monthly briefing highlighting areas for the enforcement officers to prioritise.

The policy set out a formal approach to payment by instalments, in the interests of fairness and consistency, with the aim of both assisting those whose circumstances would make it difficult for them to pay the full amount within 14 days and also as a means of improving payment rates.

The policy also reiterated the Council's approach to environmental crimes committed by young people aged 17 or under.

Discussion took place around the hours of work of the Enforcement Officers and the need for officers to be available at weekends, particularly after football matches. Members also commented on the requirement to focus resources and use data more effectively.

The increased number of abandoned vehicles was highlighted and members enquired into the length of time it took for vehicles to be removed. Specific cases would be looked into after the meeting. It was felt by some members that the level of fine wasn't a sufficient deterrent.

Panel members expressed the view that litter, dog fouling and fly-tipping was a problem in the both the town centres and rural areas. Suggestions were made such as to change the regulations to make it a requirement for dog owners to carry two bags at all times and for a high profile campaign to take place in relation to littering.

**DECIDED:** 1) That the Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel **NOTE** the content of the report.

2) That the Community Overview & Scrutiny Panel **RECOMMEND CABINET** approval of the proposed Policy on Enforcement of Environmental Crimes.

### 69 WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel reviewed the Work Programme and agreed the items listed.

At this point in the meeting, members raised their concerns in relation to the County Council's review of the bus service and agreed to set up a working group.

**DECIDED:** That the Panel's Work Programme be agreed and a Bus Service Working Group be arranged.

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The meeting closed at 3.15 am

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairman \_\_\_\_\_ Date