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Meeting	Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	18 July 2016
Present	Councillors Gunnell (Chair), Richardson (Vice-Chair), Funnell, Hunter, Kramm and Mason
In attendance	Councillor Carr
Apologies	Councillor Dew

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## **8. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

## **9. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **10. Attendance of Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods**

The Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods was in attendance to outline the priorities and challenges in his portfolio.

Referring to the priorities that had been set for the previous year, the Executive Member stated that there had been a major commitment to the Community Safety Unit and multi-agency working. He drew attention to Operation Erase and the work that was taking place to reduce the level of alcohol related behaviour.

The Executive Member stated that his priorities for the current year included the development of the joint community safety

approach, as this was working very effectively. He was seeking to encourage joint working across all directorates and to develop stronger links between the Safer York Partnership and the Business Improvement District. The Executive Member stated that budgetary pressures would continue to present specific challenges. He also drew Members' attention to issues in respect of Hate Crime, the national terrorist threat, the escalation of cyber crime and online radicalisation. He stated that there was also ongoing work in respect of tackling anti-social behaviour, although incidents of this type of behaviour in York were less than in other cities.

The Executive Member also drew the committee's attention to the work that was taking place in respect of house building and tackling homelessness. He gave details of the number of homelessness interventions that had taken place. The Executive Member stated that there had been a slight increase in the number of rough sleepers but that beds were available for them and the issue was in respect of engagement.

Members questioned the Executive Member and the representative of North Yorkshire Police on the following issues:

- Residents and Tenants Associations
- The figures for core policing in the city centre
- The neighbourhood team arrangements
- The plans that were in place in the event of a terrorism attack or major incident, including the staffing resources and the emergency planning arrangements that were in place.

Members were informed of the launch by the Police of Community Messaging. This was a national initiative and Members' support was sought in encouraging residents to sign-up.

The Executive Member was thanked for his attendance at the meeting.

**Resolved:** That the report of the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods be noted.

**Reason:** To ensure that the committee is kept updated on the priorities and challenges of those parts of the Executive Member's portfolio which fall within the committee's remit.

## 11. **2015/16 Finance and Performance Outturn Report**

Members gave consideration to a report which detailed the 2015/16 outturn position for both finance and performance across services within City and Environmental Services and Communities and Neighbourhoods.

Members commented on the underspend by ward committees. Officers stated that the process for ward committee expenditure was working well but that it had taken time to become embedded.

Officers were asked about the indirect costs of the flooding. They stated that it was not possible to give a tangible figure in respect of the reduction in the number of visitors to the city during the period of the flooding although comparisons could be made with previous years.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is kept updated on the latest finance and performance position.

## 12. **Safer York Partnership Bi-Annual Performance Report**

Members considered a report which provided an overview of the data contained within the Safer York Partnership bi-annual performance report.

Members questioned the representatives from the Safer York Partnership and North Yorkshire Police on the following issues:

### Anti-Social behaviour

Officers stated that initiatives such as Operation Erase were working well and were having a positive impact in reducing levels of anti-social behaviour. The co-operation between train companies, licensees, the Police and other agencies was also working very well in tackling the particular issues that were occurring on Saturdays. Members agreed that it would be useful for an update on Operation Erase to be given at their meeting in November.

## Cycle Theft and Cycling Offences

Members asked if the lack of secure cycle storage in the city centre was a factor in cycle theft. Officers confirmed that cycle theft continued to be a priority and was an ongoing issue. There had been a recent increase in the number of incidents but strategies such as promoting the marking of property were ongoing. In response to questions from Members, officers gave details of the action that was taken in respect of cyclists who breached regulations, for example by cycling on the pavement.

## Street Begging

Officers were asked about the situation in respect of street begging. They stated that this was a cyclical problem and they outlined the approach that was taken, including involving support service providers as appropriate. Officers outlined some of the challenges regarding enforcement to tackle this issue. It was noted that there had been an increase in the number of rough sleepers in the city but that this was not always associated with homelessness and that there were other contributory factors.

## Hate Crime

At the request of Members, details were given of the number of hate crime and hate incidents that had been recorded. Officers stated that, in line with the national trend, there had been a slight increase in June 2016 although this had not continued. Members commented on the need to take seriously the issue of hate crime. It was suggested that education programmes in school were crucial in tackling this issue. Officers stated that the Hate Crime Strategy and the Community Safety Strategy were due to be refreshed and it was suggested that it may be useful for the committee to be involved in this process. Although both documents were due to run until March 2017, it had been agreed that because of the change in delivery, the reviews would take place before this. Members requested that a copy of the current Hate Crime Strategy be circulated to the committee.

## Drug related Crime

Officers were asked if statistical information could be provided in respect of drug related crime. Members were informed that

although a significant amount of crime was committed by drug users, it was difficult to define a crime as being drug related unless the offender stated that they had committed the crime to support a drug habit. Further consideration would be given as to the data that could be provided to the committee regarding this issue.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the committee is kept updated on crime levels in the city.

### **13. Attendance of North Yorkshire Police**

Deputy Commander Charlotte Bloxham from North Yorkshire Police had been invited to attend the meeting. She was thanked for her attendance at the meeting and for the contribution that she had made to agenda items 5 and 6. Members requested that Deputy Commander Bloxham be invited to attend future meetings at which the Safer York Partnership Performance Reports were presented.

### **14. Draft Alcohol Strategy 2016-2021: Public Consultation**

Members considered a report which presented a draft city-wide alcohol strategy (Annex A to the report) which was currently out for public consultation. Members were asked to consider the strategy and to contribute to the consultation process. Members noted that the strategy had been developed at the request of the Health and Wellbeing Board and it was due to be given further consideration by the Board at their meeting in September.

Members requested that they receive a list of the consultees for the draft strategy and the organisations that were involved in the drafting of the document.<sup>1</sup>

It was agreed that Members would forward any comments on the draft Alcohol Strategy to the Scrutiny Officer who would collate these on behalf of the committee.

Resolved: (i) That the draft Alcohol Strategy be noted.

(ii) That Members' comments be forwarded to the

Scrutiny Officer by 31 July 2016.

Reason: To ensure that the engagement and consultation process takes into account the views of Members of the Communities and Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee.

Action Required

1. Obtain information requested

MC

**15. Housing Registrations Scrutiny Review - Draft Final Report**

Members gave consideration to a report presenting the findings and recommendations from the Housing Allocations Scrutiny Review and which asked Members to endorse the recommendations so that they could be fed into the ongoing Allocations Service Development officer review. This final report would subsequently be included as an annex to the officer review report due to be presented to the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods in August 2016.

Members' attention was drawn to recommendation (v). Officers outlined some of the factors that would need to be taken into account if a mixed approach to allocations was to be implemented.

The members of the Task Group were thanked for their work on the review. Thanks were also expressed to the housing officers for their time and support during the review.

Resolved: That the Task Group's recommendations, as detailed in paragraphs 57 to 60 of the report, be endorsed.

Reason: To inform the ongoing Allocations Service Development Officer Review and to conclude the scrutiny review in line with scrutiny procedures and protocols.

**16. Housing and Planning Act 2016**

Members considered a report which provided an update on the legislative changes arising from the introduction of the Housing

and Planning Act 2016, as they related to the housing service and to consider the impact on tenants.

Officers drew Members' attention to Part 4 of the Act, including the issues in respect of "higher value" housing stock.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee is aware of the legislative changes and the impact on tenants.

#### **17. Work Plan 2016/17**

Members gave consideration to the committee's work plan for 2016/17.

Members requested that the committee receive statistical data on drug related crime within the city as part of future Safer York Partnership biannual updates.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the following additions:

- Draft Community Safety Plan (September meeting)
- Refresh of the Hate Crime Strategy
- Update on Operation Erase (November meeting)

Reason: To ensure that the committee has a planned programme of work in place.

Councillor Gunnell, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm].