

Scrutiny Topic Proposals - Feasibility Report

Summary

1. This report provides detailed information in support of two topics proposed for scrutiny review by this Committee, and asks Members to decide whether or not they should proceed to scrutiny review.

Background

2. In June 2015, this Committee considered its annual workplan and identified a number of possible topics for further consideration. It was noted that some aspects of the proposed topics may have been considered as part of previous reviews carried out by the committee and for this reason it was agreed that Members would first receive copies of the final reports arising from all previous reviews completed over the last two years.
3. In July 2015, the Committee narrowed down their list of topic proposals to 'Goose Management' & 'Stag & Hen Parties', and requested an overview paper for each.

Consultation Feedback on Possible Scrutiny Review Topics

4. Goose Management
The presence of large numbers of wild geese in the centre of York creates a number of operational and safety problems, these include large amounts of droppings in paved areas, parks and gardens making these sites unwelcoming and unusable; damage to vegetation through grazing, and intimidation of children and other animals. Public opinion is divided as to whether these issues are significant or not.
5. The Head of Parks & Open Spaces has provided a briefing note on the Council's management of the city's goose population together with a summary of the Council's previous decisions taken in response to complaints and its treatment of goose eggs since 2000 – see Annex A.

6. The Head of Parks & Open Spaces will be in attendance at this meeting to answer any questions arising and to assist members in their consideration of this topic proposal.
7. Stag & Hen Parties
The issues arising from Stag and Hen parties falls within the remit of the AVANTE Group (Alcohol Violence and Night Time Economy) which is made up of representatives from the Council, North Yorkshire Police (NYP), British Transport Police (BTP), Public Health, Pub Watch, the Universities, etc. This Committee has been provided with a separate update on the work of AVANTE, shown elsewhere on this agenda.
8. Through its work AVANTE has identified a number of issues on a Saturday during the day in the city centre and at the train station. These issues do not relate solely to Stag and Hen parties, but people who visit the city for the day to consume alcohol.
9. In response, NYP and BTP have for some time been carrying out an operation on a Saturday 'Operation Erase' to try and deal with some of these issues, and this Committee receives bi-annual updates from the Safer York Partnership detailing that work. Furthermore, a sub group of AVANTE members, including train operators and Make It York, has been formed to look at how to tackle the growing issues on a Saturday.
10. The Head of Community Safety has provided a detailed update on the work of the sub-group for Members consideration – see Annex B, and will be in attendance at this meeting to answer any questions arising.

Council Plan

11. Both scrutiny topics support the Council's priority to focus on frontline services, ensuring residents are protected and safe from harm.

Recommendations

12. Having considered the information provided in support of the two proposed scrutiny topics – 'Goose Management' and 'Stag & Hen Parties', Members are recommended to:
 - i. Note the information provided by the Head of Parks & Open Spaces and the Head of Community Safety.

- ii. Agree whether the Goose Management topic is suitable for scrutiny review.
 - iii. Agree whether in light of the ongoing partnership work to tackle alcohol related issues in the city on a Saturday, a review of Stag & Hen parties would be beneficial at this stage, or whether it would be more productive to defer the review until the new code of conduct has been in place for 6/12 months in order to assess its effectiveness.
13. If a decision is taken to proceed with either or both of the topic proposals, Members are recommended to:
- iii. Identify a suitable remit for the review(s), which include a number of clear objectives
 - iv. Agree a suitable timeframe for completion of the review(s)
 - v. Set up a Task Group(s) to carry out the review(s) on behalf of the full Committee.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all* **All**

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: N/A

Annexes:

Annex A – Briefing Note on Goose Management

Annex B – Detailed Update on AVANTE’s Response to Alcohol Related Issues in York on a Saturday