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Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member For Economy And Strategic Planning
Date	23 November 2021
Present	Councillor Waller (Executive Member for Economy and Strategic Planning and Craghill (Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods)
	This meeting was held in consultation with the Executive Member for Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods (for Agenda Item 4, Review of Formal Enforcement Action and Enforcement Policy)

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### **23. Declarations of Interest**

The Executive Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests or any prejudicial or discloseable pecuniary interest that they might have in respect of the business on the agenda. None were declared.

### **24. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 October 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Executive Member.

### **25. Public Participation**

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

### **27. Review of Formal Enforcement Action and Enforcement Policy**

The Executive Members considered a report which enabled them to review the formal enforcement action undertaken in 2020-21 by:-

- Public Protection (Environmental Health, Trading

- Standards and Licensing)
- Housing Services
- Community Safety
- National Trading Standards Regional Investigation and
- National Trading Standards eCrime teams

The Head of Public Protection, Head of Community Safety and Housing Standards and Adaptions Manager were in attendance to present the report and respond to questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- Actions such as prosecutions in 2020-21 had been more limited because officers were deployed to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Crown Prosecution Service guidance had advised that alternatives to proceeding with prosecution be taken wherever possible due to pressure of Covid.
- The report asked the Executive Members to approve a consultation with the public and businesses to examine enforcement policies, determining which areas need prioritising and how measures introduced during the pandemic, such as Covid Marshals, can be utilised in the future.

In relation to Community Safety enforcement, officers noted:

- The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team covered three geographic areas and tackled environmental crime, low-level anti-social behaviour, domestic noise nuisance, fly tipping, dog fouling, nuisance begging, selling or busking and street urination.
- The Domestic Noise Patrol Service ran between 9pm and 3am on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Enforcement was seen as the last approach, with behaviour change sought first by the team.
- Staff illness and absences due to the Covid-19 pandemic had stretched resources and there had also been an unprecedented number of calls regarding noise nuisance.

In relation to the Housing Standards and Adaptations Service, it was noted:

- Housing had been especially relevant in recent years during the pandemic, as they had become places of work and refuge, as well as homes.

- Activities performed by the team included Licensing Scheme for Houses with Multiple Occupation and complaints from tenants, which had to be responded to differently during the pandemic.
- A number of successful funding bids were made to Government, including funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of £100,000 for pilot work on minimum energy efficiency standards and the (then) Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government of £162,000 to enable 128 enforcement officers to be trained across the region.

Comments from Executive Members and responses from officers included:

- As part of the policy review, it was suggested to compare the number of enforcement actions taken against the number of complaints received in order to measure the success rate of efforts to present the need for enforcement.
  - Officers stated that this could be achieved and was already being done in some areas e.g. idling.
- In order for enforcement action to be taken against people littering or allowing dog-fouling, officers had to physically see the act taking place, which made enforcement difficult. Officers encouraged people in the community to inform Community Safety with any information that may help to prevent these.
- Planning enforcement issues on construction sites often overlapped with public protection concerns, and it was suggested that the review consider options on becoming more proactive in dealing with these issues.
- Disruption and noise from building sites were a problem for many residents of the city, and it was important that the public see that the Council is taking all necessary steps to reasonably alleviate this, as well as understand what can practically and legally be done to assuage this.
- The consultation should include examples of where the Council has undertaken educational services around community safety.
- 689 noise warning letters had been sent out in the year, which was an exceptional amount.
- Mobile CCTV cameras were being used specifically for monitoring fly-tipping offences. The Community Safety manager was due to be selecting sites on known

hotspots on which to deploy these cameras in December 2021.

- Members thanked officers for their work over the year.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the report and action taken be noted, and that officers are asked to undertake a full review of the Council's enforcement policy in the coming year.
- ii. That the additional workload in some areas compared to previous years be noted.
- iii. That officers be thanked for the work that they have done during a difficult time during the pandemic and lockdowns where guidance was rapidly changing, whilst implementing enforcement and giving advice to businesses and residents.
- iv. That the public and all councillors be consulted on policies to update the Council's enforcement policy and reporting back of steps taken to enforce as well as promoting activities which will encourage positive behaviour and reduce harm before enforcement is required.
- v. That work be undertaken with North Yorkshire Police and Safer York Partnership to develop a holistic approach, involving the Communities Team, and Ward Teams, Business Improvement District, Retail Forum, traders' associations, landlord associations, parish councils and town council, residents associations, schools and other bodies to ensure a city wide approach to show the collective work of statutory officers and partners to tackle enforcement issues, with clear performance reporting showing the distinct work of the Council's enforcement teams.
- vi. That a communications plan be developed which reminds residents of the work that is done by the team, and how to contact them to request help, or provide information which can assist with enforcement.
- vii. That a report on the outcome of mobile CCTV camera use to tackle fly tipping be brought to a future decision session.
- viii. That an investigation of enforcement issues on construction sites be undertaken.

Reason: To ensure enforcement activity undertaken in 2020-21 has been reviewed in accordance with the Council's enforcement policy and approve a review of the policy, with appropriate consultation with the public and businesses, in 2022.

## **27. Review of City of York Council's One Year Business Support Strategy**

This report provided an update on progress achieved on the delivery of City of York Council's One Year Business Support Strategy. The Strategy was part of a suite of strategic documents that formed the Council's One Year Recovery and Renewal Plan, a Plan that sought to address the very significant and immediate impacts of Covid-19 across all aspects of life in York. The Director of Housing, Economy and Regeneration and the Economic Growth Manager were in attendance to present the report and respond questions.

Key points raised during the presentation of the report included:

- The One Year Business Support Strategy was a part of the broader One Year Covid Recovery Strategy agreed by Executive in 2021.
- Key aspects of the Council's support for businesses during the pandemic included the quick and efficient delivery of government funding and micro-grants to businesses, the latter to support businesses beyond the scope of government support.
- The strategy was comprised of four key themes: networks, targeted support, sector development and workforce skills and training, which were detailed in the report.
- An allocation of £500,000 from the Council's Additional Restrictions Grant had been made to develop an innovative business support voucher scheme which was open for applications.
- Over 600 free Federation of Small Businesses memberships had been provided to businesses which provided a wide range of support services.
- Growth managers had supported 287 businesses in York since the beginning of 2021.
- There had been 97 inquiries from businesses and investors seeking to create jobs in York since the beginning of 2021, of which over half were still live.

The Executive Member commented:

- That he thanked officers for their work during extraordinary circumstances and ensuring that businesses got the help they needed during the pandemic.
- He was grateful for the support officers provided for the lobbying to government over the issue of businesses missing out on initial grants.
- He thanked officers for the skills work done to translate government announcements made about available funds to
- 3,500 businesses had been provided with funds channelled to them through the Council during the pandemic, out of a total of 7,000.
- National comparative data showed that York had experienced a strong response to, and recovery from, the economic issues the pandemic created.
- He requested that future reports had a greater application of measurements on what interventions delivered, for example on the outcomes of the business support vouchers provided.
- He drew attention to the potential for green jobs in the city, and the work done during the pandemic to provide infrastructure for training for such jobs, e.g. electric car charging and stated that it was important that York puts itself at the forefront of this growing economic sector.

Resolved:

- i. That the contents of the report be noted.
- ii. That officers be thanked for their work during the unprecedented circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- iii. That a detailed response on the potential of creating green jobs through the support of the city's climate ambitions be requested.

Reason: To support the Council's delivery of business support activity in York.

CLLR A WALLER, Executive Member Member  
[The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 10.50 am].