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**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**15 September 2008 – 6.00 pm**

**PRESENT:**

Councillor Williamson (in the Chair), Councillors Barker, Burroughs, M Coleman, Field, Grey, S Hacon, Hewitt, Page, Pettit, Reynolds and Weymouth.

Miss K Edmonds (Senior Member Services Officer), Mr R Hodds (Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer), Mr P Astle (Service Manager – Environmental Health), Mr T Howard (Head of Regeneration and Environment).

Councillors Ritchie, Light and Cherry (Waveney District Council) and Lorraine Light (Waveney District Council Scrutiny Officer).

Superintendent Jim Smerdon and Inspector Nick Russell (Norfolk Constabulary).

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Collins.

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2008 were confirmed.

**2. TRAVELLERS' ENCAMPMENT**

The Chairman reported on legal advice from the Councils Solicitor stating the process for obtaining a prohibition order from the Home Office. The Chairman also detailed the advice from the Councils Solicitor on the Council's power under Section 77 of the Criminal Justice and Order Act 1994 to give a direction to people residing in a vehicle or caravan on land without the land owner's permission, to vacate the land and possible action to be taken if the direction was not complied with.

Notes from the meeting held between Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk Constabulary to discuss the travellers' encampment that occurred in August were tabled. A Member asked the question why intelligence was not shared between neighbouring police forces and why the police did not know the travellers were coming. Superintendent Jim Smerdon reported that operation 'Seaboard' would now be reinstated in order for all the police forces in the county to share intelligence.

A Member informed the police that they had raised this issue due to the 2000 traveller encampment stating that recommendations after that event had been produced and agreed and that these were not being adhered to now. Members discussed the fact that the police were unable to move travellers on if they had pregnant women, young children and animals and the police stated that this is a Norfolk County Council proposal that they will not be

moved on and should be taken into account before trying to move the travellers on. A Member stated that they had heard that two police patrol cars had reported the travellers heading towards Great Yarmouth and were told not to turn them away and to let them into Great Yarmouth. In response Superintendent Jim Smerdon stated that this decision was made as turning them away from Great Yarmouth would be illegal. The Member asked how long the banning order would last and it was reported that this lasts for a four day period. Superintendent Smerdon stated that anybody could decide to be a traveller and could travel anywhere they wished to.

The Committee then discussed the recommendations listed on the traveller encampment de-brief between Great Yarmouth Borough Council and Norfolk Constabulary. Recommendations 1-6 were discussed and it was reported that strengthening of security on car parks in the Borough and gathering of intelligence of traveller movements could be carried out, restarting operation seaboard and establishing a mini silver command. It was reported that item 5 "police pod with police officers" was dismissed as it was felt that by placing police officers in the middle of a traveller encampment, this would be seen as accepting that the travellers could stay. The Committee discussed looking into a more official travellers' site and it was agreed that discussions should be carried out with Norfolk County Council on this issue. It was reported that the Head of Regeneration and Environment would look at the top ten vulnerable sites in the Borough which would then have trigger plans attached to them. The Chairman stated there was a need to address protection, prevention, diversion and removal action which would be taken on all sites within the Borough. A Member asked why a working party could not be created to work alongside the travellers and then look into the issue of more travellers' sites. A Member pointed out that consideration needed to be given to the fact that the travellers could be funnelled here by other authorities and this may need investigation.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Head of Regeneration and Environment in conjunction with the Police and Norfolk County Council be asked to produce an Action Plan to be presented to the Scrutiny Committee on 24 November 2008.

### **3. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAMS**

The Committees' attention was drawn to the questions and issues to be raised with Norfolk Constabulary and Inspector Russell reported that Safer Neighbourhood Teams' targets are crime driven and are raised with kin networks. Safer Neighbourhood Teams' effectiveness is measured every three months against their targets and an outside contractor is used to complete customer satisfaction surveys. The Police Community Support Officers visit residents within the Borough and inform them of the action that they have been carrying out. It was reported that there are nine kin networks within the Borough and an overall meeting of the Kin Chairman is held. A Member pointed out that the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in their area were not advertising the Kin meetings, street briefings or drop-in surgeries and therefore they were then unable to liaise with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Another member pointed out that the Safer Neighbourhood Teams were not as visible now in their area as they were when they were first introduced. A Member stated that regular Safer Neighbourhood Team briefings were being held in their area although these were not being advertised and felt it should not be down to Ward Councillors to advertise the Safer Neighbourhood Team briefings and the Police stated that this issue would be addressed. It was agreed that an Inspector and a Sergeant from the Safer Neighbourhood Teams would meet with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and the Borough Councillors to look at ways that they were able to work together.

**RESOLVED:**

(i) That a recommendation be presented to Cabinet that all Borough Councillors should work more formally with the Safer Neighbourhood Teams and to have a nominated Councillor who would receive a monthly briefing from Superintendent Smerdon on issues occurring in the Borough.

(ii) That the Safer Neighbourhood Team review be presented to the Environment and Economy Advisory Group at their meeting on Monday, 22 September 2008.

**4. DECRIMINALISATION OF CAR PARKING**

The Committee considered the Parking Services Manager's report which detailed the current situation on decriminalisation of car parking within the Borough of Great Yarmouth. It was reported that Great Yarmouth Borough Council had written to Norfolk County Council to request a delegated traffic warden service within the Borough. Superintendent Smerdon informed the Committee that all Police Officers were able to issue tickets for parking problems and that parking issues could be raised with the Kin Networks which the Safer Neighbourhood Teams would then address. Members were advised that the decriminalisation of car parking within the Borough would not be addressed until 2010 and that any money received from on street parking would pay to strengthen parking resources within the Borough.

**5. JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL FOR LSP/LAA's IN NORFOLK**

The Member Services Manager and Scrutiny Officer detailed the arrangements for the joint panel which would be set up and detailed the terms of reference. The Committee were asked to nominate a representative to attend these meetings.

**RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Williamson be nominated to serve on the Joint Scrutiny Panel.

**6. WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09**

The Committee were asked to consider the updated work programme and it was reported that the Town Hall Uses and Repairs Report would be presented at the next meeting along with the Accommodation of Staff Report. A member had asked for pay and display car parks to be added to the work programme as an issue to be addressed. Performance indicators would be presented at the next meeting. A member asked for community projects being carried out by Norfolk Constabulary to become an issue to be addressed on the work programme.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee were informed that the next meeting would be held on Monday, 20 October 2008 at 6.00 pm.

**8. CLOSURE OF MEETING**

The meeting ended at 7.20 pm.