

Secure Sub-committee

Wednesday, 7 February 2024

Present: Councillor A Newman (Chair)
Councillors R O'Keefe, G Bell, D Cox, J Cruddas,
J Johnsson, J Kirwin, J Mudzingwa, O Scargill,
J Walker and M Wilson

Apologies: Councillors L Bell

20/23 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received from Councillor L Bell.

21/23 Appointment of Substitute Members

There were no substitute members reported.

23/23 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

Councillor O'Keefe declared a non-registerable personal interest in Item 5: as she has a family member who works for North Tyneside Council.

24/23 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2024 be agreed and signed by the Chair.

25/23 Anti Social Behaviour

The Secure Sub-committee received a joint update from the Director of Public Health, the Head of Environment and Safer Neighbourhoods and the Team Leader Community & Public Space Protection on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in North

Tyneside Council.

The sub-committee was informed that whilst North Tyneside is one of the safest places, residents are informing the council that they are feeling less safe and crime, including anti-social behaviour, is one of the most important issues and in most need of improvement.

Officers highlighted that the Council is only able to deal with ASB and not criminal behaviour, and that this distinction was sometimes confusing for those not working directly with ASB. The committee stressed that it hoped that work on tackling ASB would lead to stopping individual acts becoming criminal behaviour.

That while ASB reported to the police has decreased, low-level anti-social behaviour reported to the Community and Public Spaces Protection Team has increased by 23% in the last 5 years.

Officers mentioned that there did appear to be some disparity between what the reality of the figures were showing and the perception of rising ASB. Officers talked about how the Council was reshaping how it approached ASB with Multi Agency working, co-location of partners agencies and the Mayor's ASB taskforce.

A question was asked about how Operation VITA decided which areas to concentrate their work in. the geographical location was intelligence led and moved to where the crime / ASB figures directed the joint NTC and Police led project.

A discussion took place about resident and member expectations about ASB case reviews. Officers stated that sometimes there could be a discrepancy between what residents would like to see happen and what was possible. Officers were aware that this was a case of expectations not being in line with what officers were able to do and in within what timescales. ASB cases often involved multi-agency coordination and extensive data / evidence gathering before action can be taken. This combined with what data protection allowed in terms of sharing, could lead to the view that cases were not progressing, and officers always attempted to manage expectations were possible.

Officers shared with members that they often act as mediators between residents, but there is an external mediation service that has been using a small

number of times.

In terms of where grants were used, officers said that the locations that were led by both ASB / crime data / intelligence and any relevant conditions set by the grant provider (e.g. for use only in preventative, youth, location etc projects).

A question was asked regarding retail crime / shoplifting and the increase in groups of kids and officers responded that the Police were now doing more to tackle this issue. Members stated that this was not their experience.

A discussion took place around tenancy agreements and what council officers could do in terms of reported ASB and breaches of tenancy agreements. Officers stated that a Secure tenancy more strongly protects tenants against eviction, and that officers always encourage reports of ASB to come in as early as possible in order to gather evidence in any case of breach of tenancy. It was stressed that eviction is never to first option, and officers work with other internal teams and external agencies to try and solve ASB issues. Officers also discussed that the process of eviction can be lengthy, and they are limited with what they can share due to information governance.

A hub for Businesses was discussed where advice could be given, and officers agreed to send out more information on the hub to all members.

Members agreed that ASB and crime did not exist in a bubble, and that drivers such as poverty existed to create and exacerbate issues in areas of North Tyneside. Officers accepted their role in addressing ASB and preventing the escalation into criminal behaviour. Mention and weight was also given to the issue of ASB created by private properties, and officers stated that Environmental health also had scope for addressing problems with private landlords and tenants if necessary.

The Chair and committee thanked the officers present, and their teams for the work carried out in the borough.

26/23 Work Programme

The Chair encouraged Members of the sub-committee to put forward any ideas

they may have for suggested topics for inclusion in the work programme.

27/23 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on 18 March 2024 6.00 pm in room 4.01.