

Minutes



Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Date: 14 December 2017

Time: 10.00 am

Present: Councillors J Guy (Chair), M Al-Nuaimi, C Evans, M Evans, C Ferris, P Hourahine, J Hughes, L Lacey and M Spencer

In Attendance: Liz Blayney (Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer), Daniel Cooke (Overview and Scrutiny Officer); Paul Jones (Head of Streetscene and City Services), Steve Davies (Senior Strategy Manager); Inspector John Davies and Chief Inspector Mike Richards.

Apologies: None

1 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Phil Hourahine – Board Member of Newport Transport
Councillor Mark Spencer – Board Member of Newport Transport
Councillor Charles Ferris – Board Member of Newport Transport

2 Minutes of the Meeting held 16 November 2017

The minutes of the meeting were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments:

On Page 6 – ‘**Some** Members were disappointed that a representative from the Police could **not** be present to answer specific questions.’

‘**Some** Members were disappointed that alternative options, such as paying the police to employ more staff to undertake the parking enforcement in Newport, had not been explored within the report.’

3 Decriminalised Parking / Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE)

The Chair introduced Chief Inspector Mike Richards and Inspector Rob Jenkins to the Committee. The Chief Inspector advised that CPI Mark Button would be meeting Welsh Government Officers next week to discuss Civil Parking Enforcement in Gwent, and its aim to make the transition, if adopted by the Local Authorities, as seamless as possible.

The Chair gave a brief discussion of the history of the traffic wardens across Gwent and Newport.

The Chief Inspector advised the Committee that Newport is one of three forces in Wales that still did not enforce parking. The Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) are used primarily to enforce parking and advised the number of Officers had recently increased with another intake of staff. It was advised that the focus of the Police had changed and

developed over the last five years, with current Police main focus on being Threat, Harm and Risk.

The Committee were told that it had been reported in a news article that the number of tickets being issued having been reduced by 1000, and though the figures are not being disputed, it was explained that the demands of the Police force are changing. Examples were given of two large drug busts which took place recently, as well as the diverting of resources and Officers to teams to combat the sexual exploitation of children and cyber investigation to stop online grooming. It was noted that there was a need to balance, but the force prioritised deploying services to more vulnerable members of the public.

The Committee asked the following:

A Member queried the annual salary of a PCSO. In the additional information report it stated the cost to the Police to implement suitable traffic enforcement would be in excess of £50k per year, and would only cover the city centre with one Officer. It was also queried what the implications would be if the Council did not take over parking enforcement. Members were advised that the starting wage for a PCSO is £20k. Members were also advised that the Police expect the Local Authority to come in line with other authorities currently enforcing parking. The Police would not walk away from enforcement, however the Police were anticipating that the Council would be able to adopt Civil Parking Enforcement duties before December 2019. The Chief Inspector then explained that discussions by Senior Officers within the Police and Local Authorities be needed if the Local Authority were not in a position to enforce after this date.

Parking issues around schools was then discussed, in particular around the Rogerstone and Caerleon areas. Members also discussed the bollards in the city centre which had been lowered previously over the years. It was asked whether the parking enforcement would cover the school areas. Members were advised that when applying for the enforcement powers it would cover the whole city and resources would need to reflect this. The Officers explained that there are different levels of cover which would apply across the city. Modelling undertaken had anticipated an increase in resources needed in the city centre. It was also advised that part of the model included a mobile response element which would help alleviate congestion in school areas and areas other than the city centre. Members were also advised that use of the bollards in the city centre would be reviewed.

The Police were told of further parking issues in the Caerleon area, particularly in the afternoons as cars are parking on road markings and causing safety concerns for children coming out of school. Members sought reassurance that neighbourhood policing would not be cut similar to parking enforcement. The Police assured the Members that they were strongly committed to neighbourhood policing, and would take on board the idea of having a mobile unit around the Caerleon area depending on resources.. The Police stated the importance of multi-agency work, and the Police would continue to work alongside the Council before the potential implementation of CPE in December 2019, about the use of resources.

Members discussed an incident from earlier this year in which an illegally parked car by Friars Walk triggered a suspected terrorist attack. Members asked the Chief Inspector whether the Council Enforcement Officers would be able to contact the Police with instances of illegal and dangerous parking. Members were advised that there would be a strong relationship between the Council Enforcement Officers and the Police. There would be numerous Police Officers on foot patrolling the City Centre who would be able to respond to instances of dangerous parking. Members asked for written assurances of this in the future.

Concerns were raised about the cost of new signage and road markings, and Members queried if the decision to take over parking enforcement would improve the perception of the City. Members were advised that signs need to comply with Welsh

Government standards, although signs would be replaced over a longer period of time. Many of the existing signs would be compliant and the cost in the report is the worst case scenario of replacing all signage and road markings. The Police advised that if the Council take over parking enforcement it would allow the Police to get more involved with more serious criminal activity and more issues the public want them to deal with, which in turn would improve people's perception of the City.

Members queried how much work would need to be done in advance if Council decided to go ahead with enforcement, and concerns were raised if Welsh Government were to not agree that the Council was in a position to take on CPE.

Members were advised that Welsh Government were supportive of authorities wishing to apply for enforcement. It was explained that the scheme needs to be cost neutral for the Council..

A Committee Member moved that the Committee vote on whether or not to make the recommendation for Council to adopt Civil Parking Enforcement. It was suggested that this be amended to include confirmation of the hours for free parking are maintained where they currently are in the City as the Committee were concerned that they might be replaced with ticketed parking. The Head of Streetscene explained that should the Council proceed with Civil Parking Enforcement, under Welsh Assembly Government legislation all parking restrictions and charges remain the same while Welsh Assembly Government considers the application. After this process, the decision on parking restrictions and charges was a Members decision. The Committee took a vote on this amendment and it was lost with three Members voting for and four Members voting against.

Conclusion

The Committee **unanimously agreed** to recommend that the Council pursue the adoption of Civil Parking Enforcement powers.

The Chair thanked the Police and Officers for attending and for their direct responses to Members questions.

4 Forward Work Programme Update

The Committee discussed the forward work programme, in particular the items on the next two Committee meetings.

The City Centre Public Spaces Protection Order was scheduled to be discussed at the next meeting, and the Committee were advised that the Public Protection Manager along with a representative from the Police would be in attendance to discuss if amendments are needed for the order.

Actions

The Committee **agreed** to note the items scheduled for the next two meetings.

The meeting terminated at 11.00am.

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