

COUNCIL – 7 JANUARY 2019

STATEMENT BY COUNCILLOR LIZ COLLING

CHAIRMAN OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Headlines

Overview and Scrutiny, working with a range of people, has made a lot of progress in the last two months. Since my last statement on 5 November: a 'call-in' meeting has been held; one 'task and finish' group has commenced including two dynamic public consultative events.

November 'call-in' Board meeting

The 'call-in' was in relation to introducing winter charges in some free car parks which would help pay for a new residents' free virtual pass entitling them to some discounted parking.

After a lively meeting with some public speakers and various 'guest' members, the Board make recommendations to Cabinet to

- not introduce a winter charge for this year in view of supporting the wider economy,
- endorsing the support for residents (free pass),
- working with the County Council to reviewing and simplifying the complex parking arrangements in the Borough .

December Board meeting (incorporating work of the various review groups)

This was quite a substantial meeting with annual progress reports on important areas including: safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from harm; effectiveness of the action plan to control the impact of herring gulls and kittiwakes in and around town centres / harbours; and progress with the various review groups.

Safeguarding

Members referred to the need for 'online' training opportunities given time pressures on everyone and also ensuring safeguarding awareness was embedded within communities. They endorsed the Council's proactive and planned safeguarding work.

Gulls and Kittiwakes Action Plan

Members referred to safeguarding the health and safety of residents particularly children. They noted that progress had been made but felt that the issues remained and actions needed to be maintained and pursued. However, 'disruption and dispersal' programme effectiveness (removing eggs and nests to counter gull 'muggings') in the coming year coupled with more scientific research needed to be

robustly reviewed in due course. The Council's Legal officers were to be asked to check the legality of the 'disruption and dispersal' programme given concerns raised by the RSPB and the effectiveness of the programme and research findings needed to be considered in one year to inform future plans.

Cinder Track

This has been excellent work, demonstrating partnership working involving the Council, North York Moors National Park Authority, numerous community groups, volunteers and the public.

A Restoration Plan has been developed to restore and maintain the track for future generations delivering benefits to residents and visitors to provide leisure and health & wellbeing, boost the rural economy as well as a natural habitat for wildlife.

Subject to planning approval (National Park), funding opportunities will be pursued for £3.5million to deliver the capital investment to restore the track supported by £20k for an ecological survey and then an annual £70k required for maintenance

Tackling Single Use Plastics

I would like to thank Cllr Cluer for raising the original motion last year and pursuing progress as well as attending this meeting. The motion essentially had a two-fold attack 1) to reduce and eliminate the use of single use plastics within the Council (offices and suppliers/contractors) and 2) to support local communities and businesses across the Borough to also tackle single use plastics through education and supporting development of local networks.

It is important to promote and pursue robust actions now and provide assurance of actions being deliverable in good time. Some actions could be achieved through a checklist/toolkit of sustainable alternative product options to single use plastics. Other actions could be developed through adapting actions being undertaken by other organisations.

Over the last year, a small member working group met a few times and council services have been working together to develop an Action Plan (some actions for the current year, most actions for early 2019).

There has been particularly good engagement with schools including a consultation exercise undertaken in November 2018 of which the results are being gathered. Actions from the schools events include putting forward design (logo) ideas for eliminating single-use plastics. The work with schools had been led by the Council's Policy Team with Cllrs Cluer and Bill Chatt, as one of the relevant portfolio holders, who had proposed a schools presentation before the Council meeting on 1 March

2019 which would include members judging the logo entries. Members may still need to be sent appointments for this schools session.

O&S endorsed the work undertaken and Action Plan and that consideration needed to be given to a single service lead co-ordinating work to ensure delivery of actions. Through this co-ordination we still need a short headline strategy (underpinned by the Action Plan with any appropriate revisions) which I hope may be presented to O&S later this month.

'Task and Finish' - Scarborough Town Centre Strategy and Supporting Volunteers Strategy

The Scarborough Town Centre Strategy review aims to create a sustainable, buoyant centre for all ages and will mainly be reviewing consultation feedback from stakeholders and the public, considering further evidence and making recommendations on the value of the identified themes for the proposed Strategy.

The themes include creating a mixed use environment (retail, residential accommodation, community hubs etc.), developing potential as a 'university town', evolving the daytime economy through to a night-time economy, and creating and marketing a Scarborough 'brand'. It links to other emerging strategies, e.g. Scarborough Harbour.

Public consultation events took place at the Royal Hotel for stakeholders on 28 November and the public on 4 December 2018. The former had been very well attended with around 100 people who were enthusiastic (notwithstanding the terrible lighting!) recognising that collective partnership action was needed now to create a sustainable centre and that there were numerous challenges, e.g. tracking down absent landlords to help make use of empty properties mainly above shops. The latter event had also attracted good interest with about 60 people present (and good lighting!).

People had also been asked to outline what they thought should be the geographical boundaries of the town centre which would aid planning purposes and funding opportunities etc. Numerous ideas had been generated at both events which will be written up to help identify common themes.

The Supporting Volunteers Strategy review will be looking at recognising the value of existing volunteer groups and support offered by Council services but will mainly be reviewing any gaps, duplication and how volunteers could be best used and supported. Services across the council work a lot with volunteers but there's no council 'pool' of volunteers so there's potential to improve co-ordinated support, communications and information for volunteers and maximise their potential.

Other organisations, e.g. North York Moors National Park, have developed good volunteer support strategies which are publicised. Their strategies recognise the independence of volunteers and value their input from the outset including decision-making. In her dual role, Lisa Dixon has consulted her colleagues there so we hope to invite a Park rep to brief us on how they work with volunteers. It is also important to ensure that volunteers' voices are heard early and throughout the review.

Both reviews aim to report their findings and recommendations to the Board's meeting in March 2019. It's possible that full draft strategies may not be ready (these take time) but the groundwork would have been set.

Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme

This is constantly evolving and much of the above (review groups etc.) covers the work programme. The meeting on 23 January will review development of the Council's Communications Strategy which should be of interest to everyone given the potential for effective communications with residents and other stakeholders. There are other topics which need further consideration as potential items of interest, e.g. review of the Whitby Market.