

AGENDA ITEM: 7 b

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

7th FEBRUARY 2012

COMMUNITY SAFETY and LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1 To inform Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board of the progress made to date by the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2 It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Board approves the actions of the Community Safety and Leisure Scrutiny Panel since the last update, which was presented to this Board at its meeting of 10th January 2012.

PROGRESS OF THE PANEL

- 3 **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA).** This Scrutiny panel has a statutory responsibility to address the actions of the Council in regard to RIPA on an annual basis. Consequently the panel met on the 18th January and received information that there were 24 applications received of which 23 were progressed and one did not proceed. Again, considerable care was exercised in determining what powers were granted. The panel was informed that over the last year there had been several Orders targeted at "fag houses", where illegal sales of untaxed and counterfeit cigarettes were being made. The only way to gather evidence for a prosecution was to observe a sale actually taking place and the powers available under RIPA were vital for this work. Another issue particularly in the latter part of the year was the sale of

fireworks to under-age persons made from private properties. Some of the fireworks sold were unsafe and potentially lethal and RIPA is used to obtain appropriate information to tackle this.

- 4 A proposed change to RIPA legislation was that future Orders would need to be approved by a Magistrate. This would be an added burden for Middlesbrough as it would add another layer of administration to the process. The panel was informed that any application to the Magistrate would still be vetted in-house prior to submission. At the present time there was no cost for issuing warrants, however there was a possibility that this could change.
- 5 **Coroners Service.** The panel has now received information from a number of organisations regarding the coroners service. At the last panel meeting on 18th January the panel discussed the information received to date and also the intention to hold a round table meeting with various representatives which contribute to the running of the coroners service and the information for inquests.
- 6 The panel has given direction for this meeting to be held on the 8th February when it is anticipated that representatives from the Police and the Coroners Officers, Pathologist and the Coroner will be in attendance.
- 7 As this round table meeting is scheduled for the day following this Board meeting I will report on its outcome at the next meeting of this Board.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8 No background paper was used in the preparation of this report: -

COUNCILLOR FRANCES McINTYRE

**CHAIR OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND LEISURE
SCRUTINY PANEL**

26th January 2012

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