

**At a meeting of the COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY, 2011 at 5.30 p.m.**

**Present:-**

Councillor Heron in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Copeland, Ellis, Emerson, Maddison, Scaplehorn, Timmins and J. Walton.

**Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were submitted to the meeting on behalf of Councillors O'Connor and J. Scott.

**Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

**Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**Alcohol, Violence and the Night-Time Economy – Northumbria Police**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with an overview on Northumbria Police responses to alcohol related violence in the City Centre.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Chief Inspector Sean McKenna presented the report and briefed Members on the key operations to tackle alcohol and violent crime which included Operations Barracuda, Calculate, Jaws and Guardian.

Councillor Ball enquired in relation to the use of cocaine and alcohol together and if people arrested, were automatically tested for drugs.

Chief Inspector McKenna advised that Officers were encouraged to authorise drug tests if the incident had involved violent behaviour but was not standard in all arrests. If drugs were found, then the perpetrators could be referred to drug intervention programmes.

In response to Councillor Maddison's query, Chief Inspector McKenna commented that judging by the Police searches, the vast majority of people entering the City were not using cocaine with alcohol and that on reflection of the crime figures, it was not a major problem in Sunderland.

Councillor Copeland enquired as to how the pubs and clubs checked for drug use in their establishments.

Chief Inspector McKenna advised that the visits through Operation Barracuda included wiping services to check for cocaine. Licensed premises had a number of policies in place and many had conditions on their licences to carry out checks. Some establishments may have toilet attendants also. Under the Best Bar None scheme there were also requirements to have policies and procedures in place.

Councillor Copeland referred to a recent visit of the night time environment that Members of the Committee carried out and wished to raise concerns that there had been evidence of drug use in the alcoves of Sunderland Minster, where the lighting was poor.

Chief Inspector McKenna advised that he would pass this information onto the Neighbourhood Teams for further investigations.

Leanne Davis, Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager also advised that she would take this intelligence back to the Environmental Services Teams to investigate.

In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Chief Inspector McKenna commented that they had used the knife arch over the last year but it was found that once it was constructed in a particular area/ establishment, that it had to remain there for the evening, therefore they had found the hand held detectors to be more successful.

The Chairman raised concerns that the eradication of the Security Industry Authority (SIA) would affect the level of Door Supervisor Standards.

Chief Inspector McKenna commented that they were yet to find out what would replace the SIA but there was a need for some form of constraint for door staff as the nature of their job involved a level of confrontation and there were concerns there could be an erosion of the quality of door staff over a period of time.

The Chairman referred to the figures for violent crime and commented that he believed these to be quite good for a city of Sunderland's size and all agencies needed to be given credit, especially on the well executed exercises carried out.

In relation to the comments on Door Supervisors, Councillor Scaplehorn stated that many of the staff spoken to, during the Committees site visits had expressed concerns over the plans to abolish SIA. Councillor Scaplehorn also commented that there seemed to be very little in the way of publicising efforts at targeting people who supplied drugs.

Chief Inspector McKenna advised that there had been some major successes against the supply of drugs and that any information received is tackled robustly.

In response to Councillor Ball's enquiry, Chief Inspector McKenna advised that they had focused a great deal on the detection of violent crime, with greater detection rates they were tackling crimes which may have gone unpunished otherwise and this was a reason why the figures had increased.

Chief Inspector McKenna also advised that more people were coming forward in identifying possible suspects which helped the Police, along with CCTV, etc.

The Chairman agreed on the need for more people to come forward to volunteer information and then thanked Chief Inspector McKenna for his attendance.

2. RESOLVED that Members note the content of the report as evidence for part of their review.

### **Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy: Progress Report**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform Members of the ongoing progress in relation to this year's Policy Review: Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Claire Harrison, Acting Scrutiny Officer presented the report and informed Members of a meeting arranged with Bridget Phillipson, MP for her views on the policy review.

The Chairman also informed the Committee that the Task and Finish Group would be rearranged so that Members could attend the funeral of the former Leader of the Council, Councillor Colin Anderson.

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to brief Members of the Committee on the recently published Police and Social Responsibility Bill.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Stuart Douglass, Safer Community Manager presented the report and was on hand to answer Members queries.

In response to Councillor Maddison's enquiry, Mr. Douglass advised that there would be a process to remove the Commissioners if necessary, with specific clauses in the Bill where they could be suspended if they had caused a serious offence or staff could be appointed to cover should a Commissioner fall ill. The Home Secretary could intervene also.

Councillor Scaplehorn enquired if the Commissioners for each force / area would have overall responsibility and if they would support such schemes as Neighbourhood Watch.

Mr. Douglass advised that the Chief Constable would deliver the priorities, which could revolve around issues such as Anti Social Behaviour and that there may be the potential for some resources from this grant.

In response to Councillor Scaplehorn's enquiry, Mr. Douglass commented that the LMAPs had an operational agreement with the Force Commanders so he did not believe the Commissioners would have any involvement with them.

Councillor Timmins commented that he had concerns over the new Panels/Boards and if they would have to declare interests which would affect their ability to report back to Council.

Mr. Douglass advised that there wasn't any detail in the Bill as yet on the scrutiny of the Panel but Sunderland would have representation at a local level.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 2.1 of the report and queried what the powers of seizure in connection with the breach of a byelaw would mean.

Mr. Douglass advised that he would look into the matter and report back on the issue.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Work Programme 2010-11**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) providing for Members information the current Work Programme for the Committee's work during the 2010-11 Council year.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

## **Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the Period 1 February 2011 – 31 May 2011**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with an opportunity to consider those items on the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 February 2011 – 31 May 2011 which relate to the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. HERON,  
Chairman.