

At a meeting of the COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 5TH APRIL, 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.

The Chairman wished to take the opportunity to thank Councillors O'Connor, Timmins and J. Walton, who were stepping down in their role as Councillors, for the many years of service they had given.

Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 8th March, 2011

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 8th March, 2011 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

Policy Development and Review 2010/11 – Draft Final Report

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members with the final draft report from the evidence gathered in relation to this year's policy review into Alcohol, Violence and the Night Time Economy.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Claire Harrison, Acting Scrutiny Officer, presented the report and advised that information referring to pre loading had been added under paragraph 8.1.6 as requested by Members.

Councillor Scaplehorn referred to paragraph 8.4.9 and commented that it should be made clear that members of the public were ringing the helpline in relation to complaints about public licensees.

Councillor J. Walton requested that the wording of paragraph 8.2.5 be altered as it suggested a different alternative to the figures.

Ms. Harrison advised that she would look into the requests.

Councillor Scaplehorn enquired as to the situation with supporting the street pastors.

Stuart Douglass, Safer Communities Manager, advised that they were still looking at trying to help support the street pastors and were in talks with the Partnership on the possibility of funding.

The Chairman wished to thank all those who had presented evidence during the course of the Committee's review and requested that Michelle Gates, Safer Communities Officer, be added to the list of acknowledgements.

2. RESOLVED that:-

- i) the Committee's comments be added to the final draft report; and
- ii) that the agreed final report be presented to the Cabinet for approval at its June 2011 meeting.

Performance Report Quarter 3 (April – December 2010)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with a performance update relating to the period April to December 2010. The report includes for this quarter:-

- Progress in relation to the LAA targets and other national indicators;
- Results of the annual budget consultation.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Gillian Robinson, Corporate Performance Monitoring Manager, presented the report and advised that it also included a summary of the findings from the Annual Budget consultation.

In response to Councillor J. Walton's query, Ms. Robinson advised that she would look at rewording paragraph 3.2.

Councillor Ellis commented that the report was based on levels of reported crime and enquired if any work was being done on estimated crime that does not get reported.

Ms. Robinson advised that there was perception data collected on feelings of safety.

Mr. Douglass informed the Committee that other types of crime, such as domestic violence, may not get reported and he was aware of some national benchmarks on unreported crime and he would check with his team on the issue.

In response to Councillor Copeland's query, Mr. Douglass advised that the increase in burglary/dwellings was not related to Class A drug use, according to a study by Northumbria Police the link was due to the increase in the value of scrap metal which resulted in copper boilers etc. being stolen from properties not occupied.

Councillor Timmins commented that the pressures of society and unemployment were reflecting on the way of living.

Mr. Douglass accepted that there was a rise in the figure and was an issue which could be looked into and brought back to a future meeting of the Committee.

Councillor Ball raised concerns that the number of sexual offences had increased.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee considered the continued good progress made by the Council and the Sunderland Partnership and those areas requiring further development to ensure that performance is actively managed.

Consultation: More Effective Responses to Anti Social Behaviour

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with information about the Home Office Consultation: More Effective Responses to Anti Social Behaviour.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Michelle Coates, Safer Communities Officer, presented the report advising that the Partnership was currently working on a response for the consultation and that she would be happy to attend a future meeting of the Committee once the Government had provided more information.

Councillor Maddison referred to paragraph 4.5 of the report and queried if parents would be informed if a PC or PCSO required a person aged 10 or over to leave a specific area.

Mr. Douglass advised that there was no guidance on how it would operate as yet but the presumption was that a parent would be informed, similar to Operation Griffin, where parents were written to. Mr. Douglass suggested that this query could be included in the response.

Councillor Copeland queried the make up and role of the Neighbourhood Justice Panels.

Mr. Douglass advised that it was based on a pilot, carried out in Somerset, with the Community Justice Panels looking at finding resolutions between offenders/victims

without going through the expensive justice system. Mr. Douglass also advised that he was not aware at this time as to how people would be appointed on the Panels as there was no detail in the consultation at present.

Councillor Copeland commented that she found the concept quite disturbing as it would be very difficult for the victims confronting the offenders, with the possibility of receiving retribution and that she believed this would be a backwards step and opposed the idea.

Ms. Coates advised that she would include Councillor Copeland's concerns in the response.

Councillor Copeland commented that sometimes when there were big issues in a Ward, Councillors needed to take a step back.

Mr. Douglass commented that these were points well made in relation to intimidation where there was a history of neighbourhood problems and he would raise the question over protection for members of the Panel and ask for more detail on the matter.

Councillor Timmins commented that the prospect was very worrying and that he felt it was the parents of possible perpetrators that needed confronting when issues occurred.

Councillor Copeland advised that she had been a member of the Youth Offending Panel and dealt with youths from a different area to herself and she felt this was a safer way and this should be promoted more as it worked very well.

Mr. Douglass wished to draw the Committee's attention to the Community Trigger proposal and the fact there were no links back to Committee functions.

The Chairman commented that Scrutiny should be involved in such complaints/calls for action and requested the Committee's concerns be included in the consultation response.

The Chairman wished to thank the Safer Communities Team for the guidance they had given to the Committee over the course of the Policy Study and also wished to thank the Licensing Section for their advice.

4. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted with the Committee's comments to be fed into the consultation process.

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 April 2011 – 31 July 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 April 2011 – 31 July 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 support and attendance and closed the meeting.

(Signed) R. HERON,
Chairman.