

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

**Present:-**

Councillor Heron in the Chair

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

**Also in Attendance:-**

Councillor Tate.

**Apologies for Absence**

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

**Minutes of the Last Meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 2011**

Stuart Douglass, Safer Communities Manager, referred to page 4 of the Minutes, in particular the Chairman's query on powers of seizure in connection with breaches of byelaws. Mr. Douglass clarified that this included such things as being able to seize any equipment used in the breach of a byelaw, such as trespassing and such like.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> February, 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 – Draft Report**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) informing of the draft final report on the work of the Committee'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 the final report would come before the Committee at its April meeting and would include final recommendations.

In response to Councillor Maddison's query Leanne Davis, Drug and Alcohol Strategy Manager, advised that the Safer Sunderland Partnership TVs were leased throughout 20 locations across the City and that she could bring a copy of the DVD used for broadcasts back to the Committee.

Councillor John Scott enquired as to the progress on tackling the issue of people pre loading before a night out and also what age groups this occurred more with.

Ms. Davis advised that the North East Regional Office had undertaken research on the issue which could be brought to the Committee.

Councillor Emerson suggested that the Rowntree Foundations study of pre-loading should also be considered.

2. RESOLVED that Members' suggestions be investigated and the draft report be received and noted.

### **Domestic Violence Support in Sunderland**

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide Members of the Committee with information about domestic violence and an overview of the current position in Sunderland.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Kelly Henderson, Safer Communities Officer/Violent Crime, presented the report and circulated promotional material on their latest programmes and initiatives.

In relation to the "Call to End Violence Against Women and Girls" Action Plan, the Chairman enquired if it tackled domestic violence with football as the cause, a problem which was being experienced in Scotland at present.

Ms. Henderson advised that the plan had only just been released but she would look into if anything was included in relation to football.

Councillor Ellis enquired if there were any programmes to work with children and education early on, which would also tie in with tackling bullying.

Ms. Henderson advised that a campaign was already underway in tackling bullying and promoting healthy relationships and that they were aware that educating from an early age was a key area of work.

In response to Councillor Maddison's query, Ms. Henderson advised that they could not say if rising unemployment and debt was a main cause of domestic abuse.

The Chairman commented that he was pleased to see the implementation of the Special Court as victims should be protected and that he was also pleased to see a new agenda on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls.

The Chairman also commented that children may disclose details of experiencing domestic abuse to their teachers and queried if any work was being carried out with Headteachers.

Ms. Henderson informed the Committee that there were a number of campaigns running in the schools but there was a lot of work still to be done on the issue.

The Chairman referred to the refuge home which was located in his Ward and commented that it was a fantastic facility which Members should visit if they have the opportunity.

Ms. Henderson advised that she would be happy to arrange such visits if required.

Councillor John Scott commented that the report referred to Wearside Women in Need and enquired if there was a Wearside Men in Need.

Ms. Henderson advised that there was a perpetrators hostel in the City and that there was a high proportion of men (1 in 6) that suffered from domestic abuse. Northumbria Police were pushing for these men to come forward and work was also being done on Gay, Lesbian and Transsexual abuse, so officers were aware of the issues.

The Chairman commented that the whole system was getting better and a lot more open, with the new Court system showing benefits, but there was still a lot of work to be done.

3. RESOLVED that the report be received and Members' commented be noted.

### **Extended Schools Provision and Out of Schools Hours Activities**

The Executive Director of Children's Services submitted a report (copy circulated) to inform the Committee of the access by children and young people to activities delivered from school sites out of school hours as part of the Extended Schools provision.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Ruth Barker, Extended Services Manager, Schools and Communities, presented the report and advised that they had surveyed all schools in the City in order to obtain a full and accurate view of what was available in Sunderland.

Councillor John Scott referred to paragraph 3.2.3 of the report and the fact that Sandhill School did not have control of their facilities after 5.00 p.m. or at weekends as part of a Private Finance Agreement. Councillor Scott enquired what kind of checks were performed on the private company, CRB checks for example.

Raj Singh, Extended Services and Attendance Group Manager, advised that the company would follow the same regulations as other schools in relation to CRB checks etc.

In response to Councillor John Scott's enquiry, Ms. Barker advised that ultimately it would be the Governing Body's decision in setting budgets, not the Headteacher.

Councillor Emerson commented that there was a great deal of provision in the East area, which was due to end in May because of funding issues.

Ms. Barker advised that in using the cluster school provisions, there should still be a great deal of after school clubs available.

Councillor Emerson commented that this may produce difficulties for those children having to travel around the area, with a lack of transport.

Councillor Ball commented that Bluewatch were responsible for a great deal of provision which was dwindling so there could be a loss of support that children needed.

Mr. Singh advised that officers shared Members' concerns and there was a proactive policy in place for the City of Sunderland. A strategy had been established which could be moved across to the schools giving them the tools needed to manage, but it would be putting pressure on the governing bodies with Local Authority influence being limited.

Councillor Copeland referred to Southwick Primary School and the past issue of not being able to access the playing field after hours. Councillor Copeland commented that it was now only used by paying football groups, so children did not have access, which she believed was insulting to the community.

Ms. Barker advised that from the school's perspective they were responsible for safeguarding and to make sure procedures were in place, all of which came at a cost.

The Chairman advised that the Headteacher had tried to open up facilities for community use but it did come at a high cost. This legislation meant costs would come out of the school's budget and primary schools already had very tight budgets, making it very difficult for them to open up after hours.

Councillor Copeland commented that she understood the problems faced and was trying to get the Youth Outreach Workers to help.

The Chairman agreed that it was annoying that these schools' fields/facilities could not be used.

Mr. Singh advised that engagement of the community and available facilities was what they had been developing over the years, but it was a balancing act between cost and liability.

The Chairman enquired if Service Level Agreements would be made with the schools in terms of supplying school meals and such like.

Mr. Singh advised that would be down to individual schools now and how they wished to continue the legacy that the Local Authority had developed.

The Chairman referred to the timetables provided in the report and commented that some of the services offered were excellent with some of the programmes highlighting how much work had been done in the City at tackling Anti Social Behaviour.

The Chairman also commented that those Council Officers, Education staff and Police should all be commended for their efforts.

4. RESOLVED that the Committee note the out of school activities programme for children and young people.

### **Annual Report**

The Office of the Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) for Members' approval of the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee report as part of the overall Scrutiny annual report 2010/11 that is to be presented to Council in June.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

5. RESOLVED that Members' approve the Community and Safer City Scrutiny report 2010/11 for inclusion in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2010/11.

### **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).

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

### **Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the period 1 March 2011 – 30 June 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 March 2011 – 30 June 2011 which relate to the Community and Safer City Scrutiny Committee.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

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

(Signed) R. HERON,  
Chairman.