

At a meeting of the COMMUNITY AND SAFER CITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held in the CIVIC CENTRE on TUESDAY, 12TH JANUARY, 2010 AT 5.30 P.M.

Present:-

Councillor Heron in the Chair

Councillors Ball, Copeland, Paul Maddison, Scaplehorn, D. Smith, Speding, Timmins and J. Walton

Apologies for Absence

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

Minutes of the last meeting held on 8th December, 2009

Councillor D. Smith enquired on the status of the maps detailing hotspots for 101 numbers, which were to be circulated to Members.

Claire Harrison, Assistant Scrutiny Officer, advised that Liz St. Louis would provide Members with more up-to-date maps when they became available.

1. RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 8th December, 2009 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

Declarations of Interest (including Whipping Declarations)

There were no declarations of interest.

Policy Review – Anti Social Behaviour – Evidence Gathering

Mr Ken Wilson, Nexus, submitted a report (copy circulated) providing an overview on the extent of anti social behaviour in bus stations and how it is addressed by partners.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor D. Smith enquired as to where the CCTV footage was relayed to.

Mr Wilson, advised that the CCTV footage at the main bus stations was monitored at the Control Room within The Esplanade. CCTV footage in bus shelters was recorded on site, where it would be picked up and then reviewed at Nexus House.

Councillor Copeland commented on the practical difficulties of providing lighting within the concrete bus shelters.

Mr. Wilson advised that it was a long protracted process in dealing with electricity suppliers but they were striving to implement better facilities in bus shelters.

Councillor Timmins enquired on the equipment used for CCTV and lighting bus shelters and how vandal proof they were.

Mr. Wilson advised that the CCTV cameras were encased in a solid metal housing to try and make them as secure as possible, but nothing was 100% guaranteed. In terms of bus shelters themselves, they had started to use more robust materials when building, to reduce potential for damage.

Councillor Speding enquired on the possibility of employing marshals/security personnel on buses in the future, similar to what has been implemented on the Metro.

Mr. Wilson advised that there was a big difference in the costs and standards of service between employing private security of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was very expensive for the provision of PCSOs to cover just one area, so to cover all areas, costs may add up to £750,000 which was a great deal of money to ask the public to pay.

Councillor Speding advised that he appreciated Mr. Wilson's comments but Sunderland already operated with taxi marshals and if public expenditure had been used for CCTV cameras, then security should be on the buses.

Mr. Wilson advised that match funding had been provided to equip buses with CCTV, but public money was not used for the ongoing operational costs.

Mr. Wilson also advised that there were plans for bus station security to be extended to include Concord and Hetton areas.

In response to Councillor Paul Maddison's query, Mr. Wilson advised that bus drivers were given general training in dealing with anti social behaviour and were instructed not to leave the cab but contact the bus control room who would then contact the Police.

Councillor Copeland enquired on the procedures involved when an incident occurred on the bus and whether the bus driver would go directly to the police station.

Mr. Wilson advised that it would depend on the nature of the incident but in most cases the driver would stop the bus and wait for the Police to arrive rather than drive to the police station directly.

In response to Councillor Scaplehorn's query, Mr. Wilson advised that there were relatively few prosecutions through the security measures that were in place as they were mainly a deterrent.

Councillor Speding enquired as to the partnership working that Nexus did with youth groups and other organisations.

Bill Blackett, ASB Strategy Manager, advised that this had been reviewed and that there was an ASB delivery group which involved all partners and organisations discussing elements of youth issues. This provided a more joined up approach in dealing with issues.

Mr. Wilson informed the Committee of a pilot scheme being implemented at Gateshead which involved youth workers engaging with youths in bus shelters and trying to arrange organised activities for them to participate in. If the scheme was deemed successful, it could be introduced into Sunderland.

2. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) Reports and Performance Update (April-September)

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide the Committee with the findings from the inaugural Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and a performance update which included those areas identified by the Audit Commission (AC) as being the focus of improvement during 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

In relation to paragraph 4.10 of the report, Councillor J. Walton enquired as to the status on extending the polycarbonate glasses scheme.

Mr. Blackett advised that there was an issue due to the extra costs incurred to licensees to extend the scheme and he would look into the matter further.

Councillor J. Walton also enquired on the number of primary fires per 100,000 population as mentioned in paragraph 5.3 of the report.

Gillian Robinson, Corporate Performance Monitoring Manager, advised that she would look into what the performance indicator targets related to, and report back to Members of the Committee..

Councillor Copeland commented that she had received the Fire Authority figures requested at the last meeting and informed Members that during the

period of 2002-2008, the call-outs to house fires in Southwick had dropped significantly. Councillor Copeland suggested this was due to the number of demolitions in the area.

The Chairman commented that the figures did seem to correlate with the amount of empty properties in the area and the measures being taken.

3. RESOLVED that the Committee note the continued good progress made by the Council and the Sunderland Partnership, as described in the CAA reports, and those areas requiring further development to ensure that performance is actively managed.

Strategic Planning Process 2010/2011

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to apprise the Committee of the proposals for the Strategic Planning Process 2010/2011 and the role of the Committee in the process.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding queried where the Strategic Planning Process fit in with the Service Improvement Plans.

Jon Beaney, Policy Manager, advised that the process for this year needed to be refined and that this year was very much an interim period. It was anticipated that next year, Members would be involved more fully from the start of the process.

Councillor Speding enquired how an individual Councillor representing a Scrutiny Committee could have influence on what is decided at another Committee.

Mr. Beaney commented that the cross cutting issues were difficult but were something which needed to be addressed through joint working with Councillors.

Councillor Copeland enquired as to what would happen if a Member had a priority in their particular Ward, yet the relevant Committee did not wish to review it.

Mr. Beaney reiterated that there were a number of protocol issues that would need to be ironed out for the year ahead. Work was underway to engage with Members so that everyone was working together.

4. RESOLVED that:-

i) Members' concerns be noted in relation to being able to raise issues at Committees that they are not appointed to;

- ii) the Committee note the contents of the report and the key issues identified by the self-assessments undertaken in respect of services of relevance to the Committee.

New Home Office requirements in relation to Anti Social Behaviour

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to provide an overview to the Committee on the new Home Office requirements in relation to anti social behaviour.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Timmins commented that he was delighted to see some of the success stories through the Fire Service's enhanced involvement in the community.

The Chairman commented that it was great to see these services start to bear fruit.

Councillor Copeland wished to congratulate Victim Support on the fantastic job they performed and also gave her backing to the idea to publish the names of perpetrators given Anti Social Behaviour Orders.

5. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

Review of Councillor Call for Action mechanism and introduction of a selection criteria for dealing with issues of local concern – further revisions to initial proposals

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to seek the views of the Committee on the proposed revision of the current Councillor Call for Action mechanism and proposed introduction of a selection criteria for dealing with non-mandatory referrals for use by the Sunderland Partnership, Scrutiny Committees and Area Committees to address issues of local concern.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

Councillor Speding referred to his previous comments under the Strategic Planning Process item and that he had reservations with the proposed process, including the role given to LSP.

6. RESOLVED that the report be received and the Committees' comments be submitted to the next meeting of the Management Scrutiny Committee.

Forward Plan – Key Decisions for the period 1 January 2010 – 30 April 2010

The Chief Executive submitted a report (copy circulated) to update Members on the position with regard to the Executive's Forward Plan for the period 1 January 2010 – 30 April 2010.

(For copy report – see original minutes).

7. RESOLVED that the report be received and noted.

(Signed) R. HERON,
Chairman.