

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 3rd November, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)
Councillor M Grant (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors A Barratt, G Barton, L Brown, D Hough, J Jackson, W Livesley,
M Parsons, G Morris and J Wray and Emily Lam

OFFICERS PRESENT

Kevin Melling – Head of Highways and Transport
Rosemary Kidd – Spatial Planning Manager
Pryce Evans – Ringway Jacobs
Martin Dowle – Community and Road Safety Manager, Cheshire Fire &
Rescue Service
Stephen Pickup – Deputy Chief Executive, Police Authority
Diane Bramall – Media Relations Officer
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

133 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2011 be approved as a correct record.

(a) That Emily Lam's apologies for absence be recorded.

134 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no members of the Committee present who wished to declare any interests.

135 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the Committee.

136 CCTV QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

At the previous meeting the Committee reviewed the draft report documenting the feedback that members gave at the meeting on 1 September 2011 on their site visits to Macclesfield CCTV Control Room. During the previous meeting the following resolutions were made:

(a) That the report with the agreed changes be forwarded to the Safer and Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder.

- (b) That the Scrutiny Officer be requested to ask the following questions of the Head of Safer and Stronger Communities.
- i. Are members of the public allowed to review CCTV footage themselves?
 - ii. Are CCTV tapes subject to the Freedom of Information Act?

The Head of Safer & Stronger Communities had provided the Scrutiny Officer with answers to the questions. The Scrutiny Officer stated that public could only request to view specific footage under subject access rights and would need to fill out the relevant form and pay a fee. Under data protection the Council would need to ensure that others were protected and reason for viewing was valid. In practice that meant any other individuals included in any footage viewed would need to be 'obscured' and registration numbers (and any other data that could be traced to another person) would also need to be blanked. There was a cost to that editing and hence the fee. Members of the Public could not otherwise request to review CCTV footage nor were tapes subject to the Freedom of Information Act.

The Committee also noted that the CCTV Control Room Site Visit report had been forwarded to the Safer and Stronger Communities Portfolio Holder.

137 **ROAD SAFETY PROVISION**

The Committee received a report from the Head of Highways and Transport and the Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service's Community & Road Safety Manager on the proposed arrangements for delivering road safety in Cheshire East. The Committee was asked to provide comment and support for the proposed arrangements prior to a formal agreement being set up between the Council and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS).

The proposed arrangements were that CFRS would fulfil the role of commissioned service provider for specified aspects of road safety education over the next four years starting from April 2012 with an initial set up period running until then. The road safety educational support by CFRS would compliment the wider road safety role of Cheshire East when delivering the three E's which were Education, Enforcement and Engineering. Cheshire East would provide the Engineering elements with the Police providing the Enforcement.

Questions were asked and the following information arose.

- Education was mainly to be aimed at primary school children to teach them about road safety as a pedestrian and cyclist on the roads. It was also aimed at children about to leave secondary school who would soon be learning to drive to teach them about the importance of safe driving.
- The agreement between the Council and CFRS was to be the first of its kind between any local authority and fire service and it would provide an opportunity to combine and make better use of each others resources. Members were happy that strong relationships were being built and hoped they would grow and develop in the

future.

- Members of the Committee felt that cyclists needed to be provided for by ensuring that the edge of roads used on main cycle routes were well maintained to remove the dangers to cyclists of unsafe surfaces. This would be important as many tourists came into the borough to use the cycle routes. Young cyclists were educated about safe use of the road on the bikability hosted by schools. Bikability had replaced the Cycling Proficiency Tests.
- Accident statistics were used to measure the success of education initiatives however it was difficult to attribute reduction in road incidents to education programmes. CFRS regularly review their processes to ensure effective and quality delivery of education programmes. Members of the Committee were keen to see more performance indicators to help them evaluate the performance of road safety initiatives.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee offered support the proposals to set up a formal agreement for Road Safety delivery between Cheshire East Council and Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service.
- (b) That the Head of Highways and Transport be requested to return to the Committee in 3 months with proposed targets and methods for measuring achievement of desired outcomes. The Head of Highways and Transport should also provide a breakdown of the global figures used in the report to illustrate figures for individual areas of the borough.

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POLICE REFORM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT

The Committee received a presentation from the Deputy Chief Executive of the Police Authority on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act and its effects on the Scrutiny Function.

The presentation explained that Police Authorities were to be abolished and replaced with elected Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs); elections were set to be held on 15 November 2012. PCCs would have statutory duties to maintain an efficient and effective police force, hold the Chief Constable to account, scrutinise police performance and monitor complaints. There would also be Police and Crime Panels comprised of representatives from the four Borough Councils in Cheshire whose role it would be to scrutinise the PCC only and not the constabulary as a whole. The role of local authorities' scrutiny functions was unclear at the time and guidance was being sought from the Home Office. It was also unclear at the time which funding streams would be transferred from local authorities to PCCs.

Questions were asked and the following information arose.

- The Committee was keen to receive more information on the changes being brought about by the act and requested that the Deputy Chief Executive of the Police Authority return to the Committee when more clear information was available.
- Members of the Committee questioned the ability of one person in the role of a PCC to carry out the work currently done by Police Authorities. Police Authorities currently had a number of people working very hard to carry out their work and one person would struggle to carry out the work load.
- It would be important in the future for PCCs to develop strong relationships with local authorities to ensure quality safer communities delivery. The strength of the relationship between PCCs and local authorities could depend on the person who was elected as PCC.
- Members felt that there should be a job description and person specification for the role of PCC. Members also felt that anyone who put themselves forward should be vetted to ensure they are trustworthy with classified information. The Committee was told that there was no person specification or job description but they may be produced once PCCs salaries were agreed. People could not stand for election if they had a criminal record although the Government had decided that potential candidates would not be vetted.
- It was suggested that most of the candidates for election in each area would come from the main political parties. Some Members expressed concerns about the potential of politicisation of the Police by having elected PCCs.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Deputy Chief Executive of the Police Authority be thanked for attending and the presentation be noted.
- (b) That the Deputy Chief Executive of the Police Authority be invited to return to the Committee in March 2012 to provide more information about the role of Scrutiny and the funding streams that PCCs will receive.

The Committee received a report from the Spatial Planning Manager on the activities of the Local Development Framework Panel (LDF Panel). The report provided an overview of the work of the LDF Panel during the past year and outlined the work programme for the forthcoming year.

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Council was required to prepare a statutory development plan to guide the future planning and development of towns, villages and countryside for the next 15 years. The Local

Development Framework (LDF) would be a single plan for Cheshire East and would replace the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Cheshire Structure Plan, Cheshire Waste and Minerals Plans and the Local Plans for Congleton, Macclesfield and Crewe and Nantwich.

The LDF Panel was established with Members representing all parts of the Borough to act as a sounding board to provide a steer to officers throughout the early stages of preparing the plan.

Policies for planning would be Borough wide but where required there may be adjustments to policies for specific areas.

Currently Section 106 was used to put money into local areas which were affected by planning developments. New proposals would spread the money across a larger area to ensure that strategic as well as local priorities were being met and the consideration was given to the wider impacts of developments than under Section 106.

The LDF process had an agreed timetable and was on target to provide a draft plan in 2012 and a core strategy would be sent to Planning Inspectorate in 2013 with site allocations being agreed in 2014. The only way that this process could be speeded up would be to reduce the time spent on consultation with the public. This wasn't seen by officers as an option as they felt consultation with people across the whole borough was important to give everyone a say.

The LDF document would have a life time of 15 years until about 2030. The core strategy would be relevant for the life of the document and site allocations would need to be reviewed after ten years. LDF document was a living document that would change over time but would still be centred on the same core strategy.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Spatial Planning Manager be thanked for attending.

140 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee gave consideration to the Work Programme. Committee members expressed an interest in receiving information on the Process and Policy for Anti Social Neighbours in private or rented accommodation in January or February. The Committee also noted the update on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act in March as well as the update on Road Safety Provision measures and targets in February or March.

RESOLVED: That amendments to the Work Programme be noted.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.40 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)