

## **CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**  
held on Thursday, 10th May, 2012 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, P Hayes, J Jackson, M Parsons,  
J Wray and F Keegan  
Emily Lam – Police Authority

### **Apologies**

Councillors D Hough, W Livesley and G Wait  
Councillor R Bailey – Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Peter Hartwell – Head of Safer Communities  
Jan Griffiths – Community Safety Operations Manager  
Kevin Melling – Head of Highways and Transport  
Abigail Webb – Community Safety Development Manager  
Laura Woodrow-Hirst – Antisocial Behaviour Team Leader  
Zandra Neeld – Performance and Planning Manager  
Julie Davies – HR Strategy and Policy Manager  
David Hallam – Principal Conservation and Design Officer  
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

### **1 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED – That subject to the following amendments the minutes of the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2012 be approved as a correct record.

(a) That Emily Lam's presence be noted.

(b) That the following be added to minute 166:

- a. The Committee believed that in many cases neighbourhoods should be provided with 80% of CIL funds.
- b. RESOLVED - That the Committee recommend to Council that 80% of Community Infrastructure Levy funds should be passed on to neighbourhoods in most cases.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### **3 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no Members of the Committee present who wished to declare a party whip.

### **4 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN**

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

### **5 CCTV CAMERAS SURVEY**

The Committee was presented with a list of CCTV cameras which were being obstructed by obstacles such as trees and poor lighting issues. The cameras on the list were rated high, medium or low priority based on antisocial behaviour, community safety and public interest in the need for the camera.

The Community Safety Operations Manager explained that options available to the Council to address tree obstructions were to trim the tree, remove the tree subject to requirements of relevant tree preservation order (TPO); or move the camera. Any work that was possible would have to be conducted by Streetscape or Highways depending on which was responsible for the area. The Head of Safer Communities informed the Committee that a review of camera locations was currently being carried out based on crime and disorder statistics and camera suitability to determine whether cameras were worth keeping or needed to be moved to be most effective. It was expected that review of all 300 cameras in Cheshire East would be completed by October 2012 to feed into the Council's budget process for the following year.

The Committee was pleased that a long term appraisal of cameras was being carried out however there was a need to deal with the short term problems of current cameras locations being obstructed by trees or poor lighting. The Committee believed that the CCTV service needed to develop better relationships with Streetscape, Highways and Planning to put procedures in place to deal with and monitor issues in an effective way. The Committee was informed that some work had begun on this recently and a pilot of the review was being carried out in Sandbach which would be completed in early June 2012.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee request a report by the Head of Safer Communities on the conclusion of the CCTV camera review be presented to the Committee in September 2012 before the review is finalised in October 2012.
- (b) That the Committee receive a report by the Head of Safer Communities on the progress made to deal with the current obstructions to cameras and a plan for dealing with obstructions in future be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.
- (c) That the Chairman write a letter to the Council's Principal Forestry and Arboricultural Officer to express the Committee's concern about

the high number of obstructions to CCTV cameras caused by trees and request that measures be taken to assist in the removing of obstructions.

## **6 CHESHIRE ROAD SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The Committee discussed the Cheshire Road Safety Partnership (CRSP) with the Head of Highways and Transport. The CRSP was established as a partnership between the Council, the Police Service and the Fire and Rescue Service which was committed to improving road safety in Cheshire East.

The work of the partnership was based on three priorities; Education, Engineering and Enforcement. Education pertained to the role the Fire and Rescue Service played in educating children and young people about safer road use as pedestrians and cyclists and as future motor vehicle drivers. Engineering pertained to the responsibility of the Council to maintain public highways and ensure safety measures were appropriate and effective. Enforcement pertained to the role of the Police to monitor road use and enforce the law.

Currently the Fire and Rescue Services education programmes had a good uptake from schools and a performance framework had been developed which would enable the service to evaluate the effectiveness of the programmes. The Council were conducting route reviews and developing road maintenance programmes to coordinate the work being carried out on the borough's road network. The Police were conducting local forums which helped to identify local issues with roads in Cheshire East to consider were to target enforcement.

Members of the Committee asked questions and the following points arose:

- The safer routes to school review was separate from the routes review which was concentrated on key and strategic routes in Cheshire East such as the A50 and A34.
- The decisions on where road safety measures were needed were guided by accident statistics.
- Highways had been working closely with Local Area Partnerships (LAPs) to identify priorities for highway maintenance and 20mph zones.
- The routes review would take into account all road users including cyclists. Ensuring safety throughout cycle routes and adding cycle lanes to roads was part of the engineering programme.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

## **7 ANTISOCIAL NEIGHBOURS IN PRIVATE AND LET HOUSING**

The Committee received a report from the Community Safety Development Manager and the Antisocial Behaviour Team Leader on policy and procedures for dealing with antisocial neighbours in private and let accommodation.

Residents in Private own or rent housing did not have the same access to preventative measure with regards to assistance with antisocial behaviour (ASB) and neighbour disputes as those who were part of a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) scheme. In many cases this had led to feuds and disputes becoming unresolved and escalating as residents were unable to afford access to legal aid at their own cost. In order to assist those in private housing who could not afford legal aid to deal with disputes, the Antisocial Behaviour Team used a one off grant from the Home Office to commission the services of the Manchester City Council's mediation service. The ASB Team bought support for 54 cases of residents in private housing needing early intervention and mediation. Once there had been 54 cases or the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013 was passed the Council would be unable to offer support to residents in private housing as the ASB team was too small to offer the support itself. The RSLs have their own processes for dealing with antisocial behaviour in social housing.

The main service that was offered to private housing residents was mediation which was designed to help residents resolve their disputes themselves before any issues escalated into antisocial activity between neighbours. If mediation didn't work the ASB team had various options including involving the Police and private landlords.

The Committee ask questions and the following points arose:

- Police dispatchers had access to the Council's case information and background to help inform officers who were dealing with incidents.
- The ASB team couldn't attribute any successes directly to their mediation work however case studies and reduced repeat offence rates could demonstrate the impact of the service. This would help to justify the value of the service and contribute to securing additional funding.
- Three out of the four posts in the ASB team had recently been mainstream funded due to a cut to grants. One part time post was still being funded by the Police however it was unsure whether this would continue past 31 March 2013. The Head of Safer Communities would look into the possibility of mainstreaming this post if funding was lost as he had no doubt about the value of the ASB teams work.
- The Committee was pleased with the work of the ASB team and would support it in securing additional funding for its support of residents.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Committee request the Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) team return to the Committee in September 2012 to provide evidence of

positive outcomes due to early intervention and proposed budget requirements for 2013/14.

## **8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

The Committee agreed to defer this item on Equality and Diversity until the next meeting.

## **9 HERITAGE CRIME INITIATIVE**

The Committee received a report on the Cheshire East Heritage Crime Initiative from the Principal Conservation and Design Officer. The Committee was asked to support the officer's recommendations for the implementation of the Heritage Crime Initiative (HCI) in Cheshire East and Cheshire East Council become a member of the Alliance to Reduce Crime against Heritage (ARCH) and a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with English Heritage, Cheshire Police, the Crown Prosecution Service and other associated organisations.

Heritage contributed significantly to tourism and community identity. Heritage related tourism generated £255.8 million in Cheshire in 2009. Heritage was a finite resource that could not be replaced which made heritage crime an important issue to address. The majority of crimes in Cheshire East which were illustrated in Appendix 2 involved the theft of materials such as lead from churches. Theft of materials resulted in damage to buildings and high costs of repair as well as increased cost of insurance premiums or insurers refusing to offer any insurance at all.

The principle of the MoU and the wider HCI was to develop an agreed approach to recording crime, preventing crime and taking action against those responsible, across the country. The intention of HCI was that communities, civic societies and heritage interest groups would become active in detecting and potentially preventing heritage crime.

Members of the Committee expressed concerns about the level of impact the initiative may have on preventing heritage crime. The Committee wanted to see a more proactive approach to preventing opportunities for crime and deterring criminals rather than simply reporting crimes. However the Committee was content that some effort was being made to tackle the issue and hoped that further initiatives in future would assist in the prevention, not just detection, of heritage crime.

RESOLVED:

(a) The report be noted.

(b) The recommendations of the Principal Conservation and Design Officer be supported by the Committee.

## **10 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee gave consideration to the Work Programme

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be updated

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.20 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)

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