

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 5th April, 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, L Brown, P Hayes, D Hough, J Jackson, W Livesley,
M Parsons and J Wray

Apologies

Councillors G Wait

OTHERS PRESENT

Councillor Rachel Bailey- Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities

OFFICERS PRESENT

Caroline Simpson – Head of Development
Rachel Bolton – Section 106 Officer
Stuart Penny – Spatial Planning Area Manager North
Jan Griffiths – Community Safety Operations Manager
Peter Hartwell – Head of Safer Communities
James Morley – Scrutiny Officer

162 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2012 and the minutes of the meeting held on 1st March 2012 be approved as a correct record.

163 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

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

164 **PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN**

Ms Peters Rock, a member of Cheshire Area for Cheshire Action (CAFCA), addressed the Committee regarding the formation of CAFCA which was set up to make links between concerned groups across Cheshire. She suggested that cuts to locally based services were affecting a large number of service users and their family carers and that many public buildings in areas such as Knutsford were going unused. She went on to suggest that the Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee could work closely with the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny

Committee and the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee to find a way to give local services to local people in their local areas. She stated that CAFCA was currently drawing together groups of elderly people in Cheshire to represent their views and suggested that Cheshire East should consider the need for a Community Strategy that would not disadvantage elderly and disabled people by transporting them to regional centres and away from their local area and families.

The Chairman stated that while health and adult social care was not part of this Committee's remit, the Committee would assist the Council and local organisations where possible and support local initiatives from the community for organisations to adopt assets and services from the Council as part of the Localism Act 2011.

165 **SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS**

The Committee received a report from the Section 106 Officer Rachel Bolton on improvements implemented with regards to managing Section 106 monies (s106). The report contained a project plan which outlined further developments planned related to improving the process for the expenditure of s106.

Appendix 1 of the report was a spreadsheet tabled at the meeting which had been edited from the previous version based upon comments made by the Committee at a previous meeting. Rachel had prioritised the time limited s106 agreements for updating which were shown in the spreadsheet. The remaining entries would be updated as part of the project plan at Appendix 2. Additional information included in the spread sheet identified which ward the s106 was to be spent in, the scheme manager responsible for spending the money and the current status of plans to spend.

The project plan indicated the tasks required to make further improvements to the spreadsheet and developments to the s106 management process. These improvements included improved communication with ward councillors and ensuring that scheme managers communicate with Rachel to ensure status of spending is up to date.

The Committee was pleased with the improvements made so far and the project plan for future developments. Members welcomed that they would be able to use the spreadsheet to monitor s106 in their wards and contact scheme managers directly if required.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted and the Section 106 Officer be thanked.
- (b) That the Section 106 Officer be requested to return to the Committee in July with the full Section 106 Deposits Held spreadsheet completed to agree standard.

166 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY**

The Committee received a presentation from Stuart Penny the Spatial Planning Northern Area Manager about the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

The Government introduced CIL to ameliorate the adverse effects that developments could have on infrastructure in the area. Developments could increase the population of an area or the traffic attracted to the area which could result in the need to improve the infrastructure to cope with increased demand. CIL monies would be spent on infrastructure only and could be spent across a wider area than Section 106 (s106) agreement monies which needed to be spent in the area affected by a development.

CIL would be a charge that had to be paid on all developments and could not be avoided by developers. If developers were unable to pay the full amount in advance then a local authority could agree a series of instalments or payment in kind such as accepting land or assets as payment.

S106 agreements would still be an option however the Government was expected to advocate the use of CILs. In future CIL money could be spent in a wider area than s106 however the Government could legislate that a specified percentage had to be passed down to town and parish councils or neighbourhoods to be spent on local development. Currently the guidance was that a “meaningful” proportion of CIL monies should be passed on to neighbourhoods and local authorities would have to decide what a meaningful proportion was as part of their local plans.

The advantage of CIL would be that improvements to infrastructure contributed massively to communities and development. The money from developments could be used to make improvements that would benefit a larger area of the borough. The advantage of s106 agreements is that when an area was negatively affected by development then money would be spent to make improvements to the area that mitigated the affect of the development. The Committee believed that this was an important characteristic of s106 that needed to be maintained and that a meaningful proportion of CIL to be spent in local neighbourhood would have to be at least 50% and also maintain the use of s106 were appropriate.

The Council needed to develop a policy regarding the types of developments that would incur CIL requirements with remaining developments subject to s106. The development of the Council's Charging Schedule would be key to which developments incur CIL. Once developed the Charging Schedule had to be published for consultation and scrutinised by an independent examiner.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee recommend that the final decision, on what is a meaningful proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy acquired to be passed on to the local neighbourhood, should be made by Full Council.
- (b) That the Committee recommend to Full Council should define a meaningful amount to be passed onto neighbourhoods as not less than 50% of Community Infrastructure Levy.
- (c) That the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule be presented to the Committee before being it is published for consultation.

The Community Safety Operations Manager attended the meeting to present an update on Community Wardens Service. The Committee was presented with operational statistics since third quarter 2010/11 municipal year and the budget analysis for the service.

The Budget showed that employment costs had been reduced. This was due to a reduction in the pay grade of staff but the number of posts had been maintained at eight. Management costs had also been removed from the budget and two vacant posts had not been filled. On the spot penalties that Community Wardens had issued to offenders had resulted in customer receipts.

The operational statistics indicated the activities Community Wardens had been carrying out. There had been an increase in fly-tipping investigations with one successful prosecution in the last six months as prosecutions were difficult to achieve without eye witness evidence, cases were rarely taken to court proceedings.

RESOLVED – That the Community Safety Operations Manager be thanked and the update be noted.

The Committee received an update on the Council's CCTV service from the Head of Safer Communities. The Committee was presented with financial information relating to CCTV, the current learning and development plan for CCTV staff, an update on tree obscuration of CCTV cameras and a checklist for an audit of CCTV camera locations.

The Head of Safer Communities explained the changes in the budget figures for CCTV. Employee costs had reduced due to the changes in terms and conditions of staff. The budget for premises and recharges was moved into the Assets portfolio due to the introduction of the Corporate Landlord model. The customer receipts consisted of income the CCTV service had brought in from monitoring of CCTV cameras in Phoenix Park in Crewe on behalf of its owners. The CCTV service also contributed to savings throughout the Council by taking on work that had been previously bought in through contractors.

The purpose of the training plan was to ensure that the CCTV team all reached the same level of expertise and understanding. The budget for training was part of the Places Directorates budget for training and development.

The Head of Safer Communities presented the Committee with a list of cameras which had trees obscuring their line of sight. The Street Scape team had received the list and it was now its responsibility to trim the trees to ensure that cameras were now longer obscured.

The CCTV Camera locations checklist which formed the basis of the CCTV survey contained ten factors which contribute to the effectiveness of a camera's location. It was hoped that the survey would identify needs for improvement and would inform work to update and improve the service.

The Committee expressed concerns about whether the CCTV staff would be able to carry out their core duty of monitoring CCTV cameras effectively considering all of the extra responsibilities they were being given. No issues concerning distraction from core duties had been identified currently and the possibility of over loading the CCTV staff with secondary duties was continually being monitored.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the information provided by the Head of Safer Communities be received and noted.
- (b) That the Head of Safer Communities be requested to provide an update on the tree obscuration of cameras be provided at the next meeting.
- (c) That the Head of Safer Communities be requested to provide a list of the 30 least effective cameras based on the CCTV Camera location checklist, and identify the reasons for their inclusion in this list, to be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

169 **AGEING WELL PROGRAMME**

The Committee received a response to questions it had asked during an item on the Ageing Well Programme at the previous meeting.

RESOLVED – That the response be received

170 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered the Work Programme and discussed items for the upcoming meetings.

RESOLVED – That the Work Programme be updated

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.30 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)