

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 7th April, 2011 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)
Councillor W Livesley (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors E Alcock, J Crockatt, D Flude, M Hardy, D Hough, J Jones and
J Wray

In attendance

E Lam – Cheshire Police Authority (expert advisor)
Councillor R Bailey – Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities
P Hartwell – Head of Safer and Stronger Communities

Apologies

Councillors P Edwards and S Wilkinson

94 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None

95 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

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

96 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2011.

RESOLVED

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to minute 87 – Community Safety Wardens, being amended to highlight that E Lam expressed her concern that changes to the role of the wardens must not lead to gaps in services.

97 COMMUNITY PAYBACK

The Committee gave consideration to a presentation on Community Payback by the Senior Probation Officer.

Community Payback was introduced in 1973 as Community Service. In the last ten years it had gone through a range of name changes including Community Punishment, Enhanced Community Punishment, unpaid work and since 2005

Community Payback. The legal requirement was to perform between 40 and 300 hours of unpaid work, but all other references to the work performed is to Community Payback to avoid any misconceptions that the work was being carried out on a voluntary basis and to ensure that the public could have confidence that offenders were being punished for the offences they had committed and thus have greater confidence in the Criminal Justice System.

In terms of compliance (the number of offenders who successfully complete their Community Payback), 80.1% of offenders in Cheshire successfully completed their requirement. This was above the national average of 75.4% and made Cheshire Probation one of the highest performing Trusts.

Community Payback is undertaken in two principle settings:

- a) Agencies, e.g. Help the Aged, Barnardos, British Heart Foundation, in which offenders would be directly supervised by agency staff who report on the hours that they had worked.
- b) Projects e.g. the Community Garden, Ruskin Road Allotments etc, where offenders would be supervised in a group of up to 10 by a Community Payback Supervisor. Projects could be as varied as ground maintenance, painting and decorating, graffiti removal, 'Grot Spot' clearance and crime reduction projects.

Mr Skyner reported that he would happily receive nominations for projects; however larger projects were preferred which would allow for seven to eight hours work for seven offenders.

There were currently two Service Level Agreements in place with Cheshire West and Cheshire Council and Halton Borough Council, which covered works relating to parks, streetscene and Graffiti.

Mr Skyner went on to outline the changes to the Probation Service and highlighted that prisons would be privatised and Community Payback would go out to tender with contracts being awarded from 1 April 2012.

It was suggested that due to the budget cuts with Local Authorities, the Probation Service should look at taking over some of the services as the cuts may provide an opportunity to expand.

The Chairman highlighted that Community Payback was not part of Restorative Justice, which the Committee had previously been investigating.

RESOLVED

That Mr Skyner be thanked for attending the meeting and the presentation be noted.

98 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING GRANT

Consideration was given to the development of a Service Level Agreement (SLA) for neighbourhood policing in Cheshire East.

With regard to 7.2 of the report, it was highlighted to Members that the proposal to simplify the corporate financial management arrangements by paying individual Police and Fire Authority elements of the '2nd Homes Discount', which equated to £39,000, directly to these agencies, had now been put on hold until 2012/2013.

The SLA was designed to support the policing objectives to maintain the trust and confidence of the public and work with the public and partners to reduce those crimes and acts of Anti-Social Behaviour which the public are concerned about.

Members raised concern that the SLA did not specify how the money would be spent or made reference to PCSO's. It was agreed that the Committee should receive six monthly monitoring reports outlining where the money had been spent and the outcomes. The SLA should also make reference to the fact that the bulk of the money should be spent on visible policing such as PCSO's.

Members also raised concern that the SLA referred to the Authority as a 'partner' and agreed that as this was a joint agreement; it should be amended to refer to 'Cheshire East Council'.

With regard to paragraph 10.9 of the report, it was highlighted that the 'Transforming Policing Programme' was not embarked upon as a result of budget cuts but as a way of making fundamental changes to Cheshire Constabulary.

With regard to paragraph 2 – Developing Neighbourhood Services of the SLA, it was agreed that the second bullet point would be amended to read 'The consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams (including PCSO's funded by Cheshire East Council) capable of working with the community to establish and maintain control – to be visible, accessible, skilled, knowledgeable and familiar to the community'.

With regard to paragraph 5 – Exit Strategy of the SLA, it was agreed that the 3 month notice requirement should be retained.

RESOLVED

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the SLA subject to:

- PCSO's being included and paragraph 2 – Developing Neighbourhood Services of the SLA, being amended to read 'The consistent presence of dedicated neighbourhood teams (including PCSO's funded by Cheshire East Council) capable of working with the community to establish and maintain control – to be visible, accessible, skilled, knowledgeable and familiar to the community'.
- Any reference to 'partner' being amended to read 'Cheshire East Council'
- Performance reporting for Cheshire East being received by the Committee every 6 months and the Chief Superintendent attending that meeting to outline how the funding had been spent.
- That the 3 month notification period outlined in paragraph 5 – Exit Strategy be retained.

99 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the work programme. It was agreed that when the Council considers outsourcing services, this Committee should give consideration to how Community Safety Wardens could be used.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be approved subject to the amendment highlighted above.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)