

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

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

PRESENT

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

Councillors J Crockatt, D Flude, D Hough and J Jones

Substitutes:

Councillors A Thwaite and B Silvester

In attendance:

E Lam – Expert Advisor
P Hartwell – Head of Safer and Stronger Communities
T Potts – Community Safety Manager

Apologies

Councillors A Barratt, M Davies, M Hardy and J Wray

75 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

76 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

None

77 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN

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

78 SAFER CHESHIRE EAST PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE TO NI47 - ROAD SAFETY

The Chairman recapped on the current situation regarding the Committee's concerns on road safety. He explained that at the last meeting of the Committee, Members had requested the Strategic Director - Places and relevant Portfolio Holder attend a future meeting to discuss Cheshire East's proposal for road safety and the highways procurement contract.

It was highlighted to members that since the publication of the agenda, the Director – Places had submitted his apologies for the meeting and therefore the Head of Safer and Stronger Communities was deputising for him.

The Head of Safer and Stronger Communities informed Members that an Officer Working Group had been established to devise proposals for how road safety could be dealt with in the future. The work of this group and work on the highways procurement contract would be completed in time for the Committee's meeting scheduled to be held on 3 March.

The Committee raised strong concerns that the neither the Portfolio Holder or Strategic Director were present at the meeting and agreed that the Chairman write to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council expressing the Committees dissatisfaction. It was therefore agreed that this item should be deferred until the meeting scheduled to be held on 3 March 2011.

Members highlighted the importance of road safety being in the highways contract and questioned whether or not the authority was currently fulfilling its statutory obligations.

The Committee also agreed that it was unable to fulfil its scrutiny role, as it had not received the relevant detailed budget or fees and charges information. The Head of Safer and Stronger Communities agreed that this would be circulated to the Committee.

RESOLVED

- That the Head of safer and Stronger Communities be thanked for attending the Committee meeting.
- That the Chairman writes to the Chief Executive and Leader of Council expressing the Committees dissatisfaction with regard to the lack of attendance by the Director – Places and Portfolio Holder at the Committee meeting.
- That the Director – Places, Portfolio Holder, Strategic Highways and Transportation Manager and Alex Waller from the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Authority attend the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 3 March 2011.
- That the relevant budget information be circulated to the Committee as soon as possible.

79 REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY WARDENS

At the Committee meeting held on 6 January 2010, it was agreed that as the economic landscape had changed since the review of the Community Warden Service commenced, the Community Safety Manager would bring a report to the Committee containing:

- A revised job specification – after speaking to StreetScene, Enforcement Officers etc to highlight any gaps in need.
- A deployment proposal outlining how many Community Safety Wardens would be required and where they would be placed/used.
- How performance would be measured.

- How Community Safety Wardens would be managed.

The Community Safety Manager attended the meeting to update Members on progress made. He reported that following the announcement in budget cuts, it had been agreed to reduce the number of Wardens to 8 at a saving of £130,000. It was proposed to split the Wardens into two teams, north and south and that any team leader issues were still being considered.

With regard to the role of the Wardens, he was currently investigating the duties and expectations of partners as well as the statutory and non statutory responsibilities. The possibility of joining the service with the Civil Enforcement Officers was also being investigated.

It was reported that performance was measured through call logging, over the past 8 months the following incidents had been logged:

- 137 reports of abandoned vehicles, 48 of which were not taxed and 20 were subsequently taken away.
- 134 anti social behaviour reports.
- 500 stray dogs reports, 287 of which were collected and 230 rehomed.

The Wardens had also issued 40 fixed penalty notices and 8 cases had been taken to court

Future work included the adoption of powers from the DVLA to deal with untaxed vehicles and the possible merge with the Civil Enforcement Officers.

Following consideration of the update Members were supportive of the visible presence that the Wardens offered and made the following comments and observations:

- That a more radical approach was required, including the possibility of joining up all departmental Cheshire East Wardens. However, in the past, there appeared to be a resistance to this proposal.
- That the Wardens should be task orientated.
- That in order to prove the value of the service, performance needed to be measured, and the service reviewed again in 6 months time.
- That there appeared to be very few fixed penalty notices issued, which should be addressed as a matter of priority, as prosecution would prove the value of the service.
- That a breakdown of hotspots be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.
- That there should be one unified service with a core set of skills and one management system.
- That there appeared to be inconsistencies in the financial figures given to Members and that this should be addressed by the next meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That the Community Safety Manager be thanked for the update.
2. That the comments highlighted above be taken into consideration when drafting the full report.
3. That the full report be brought back to the next meeting of the Committee.

80 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the work programme. It was agreed that:

- The Strategic Director for Places and the relevant Portfolio Holder attend the meeting scheduled to be held on 3 March 2011 to discuss the Committees concerns regarding road safety.
- A discussion take place at the meeting scheduled to be held on 7 April 2011, on the possibility of setting up a Task and Finish Group to investigate bringing all Wardens under one management structure.
- The submission timetable for Preliminary Flood Risk Assessments be considered at the meeting scheduled to be held on 7 July 2011.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be amended to reflect the issues highlighted above.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)