

**CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE**  
**SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**  
**TUESDAY, 19 AUGUST 2008 AT 4.00 P.M.**  
**IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK**

**PART 1**

PRESENT: Councillors

Jones, R. (Chairman)  
Jillings, J. (Vice-Chairman)

Bennett, K. L.	Grocott, M. R.
Bullock, L.W.	Mawle, D. L.

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. R. Green and Mrs. D. M. Todd).

**4. Minutes**

AGREED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 June 2008 be approved as a correct record.

**5. Feedback on the Safer & Stronger Communities Inspection undertaken by the Audit Commission**

The Head of Environmental Health informed the Committee that the Audit Inspectors had carried out the Safer & Stronger Communities Inspection in June 2008 as part of a County wide Inspection. Although the final report had not been received, the initial feedback had indicated that the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership had a number of strengths which included:-

- Effective tactical response to local problems by the Council and it's partners
- Effective joint planning by partners within the Joint Operations Group
- Commitment to community engagement with Community Forums and the Citizens Panel
- A proactive approach to raising awareness and enforcement issues
- Support for vulnerable households
- Positive and effective response to domestic violence
- Good achievement against challenging crime reduction targets

Areas for development were with regard to:-

- lack of performance data at local level
- Insufficient evaluation of activities and identification of benefits from lessons learnt
- Public perception of Anti Social Behaviour
- Limited information on funding and outcomes, i.e. Value for Money
- Inadequate monitoring of some indicators
- Need to improve performance management
- Need to improve information sharing.

It was explained that the report when received would be a County wide assessment. It was considered that performance was improving and that action plans would be implemented to address areas of concern. The Committee was informed that problems had arisen with the Partnership Development Section not being fully staffed.

The Head of Environmental Health informed the Committee that the final report would be presented to them.

## **6. Neighbourhood Watch, Business Watch and Shop Watch**

The Committee received a presentation from Vicki Singleton, Neighbourhood Watch Community Engagement Officer, Chase Division, Staffordshire Police. Packs containing various information booklets and leaflets were circulated at the meeting, including a Directory of Useful Information which listed relevant contact telephone numbers.

It was reported that Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were set up across this and other countries. In Cannock there were currently 185 Schemes and 76 in Rugeley, with enquiries being received from a further 5. The Schemes were free and made up from 'caring' neighbours rather than as sometimes perceived 'nosey' neighbours. The more younger generation were also taking part.

Over the last 12 years, levels of crime had reduced. Neighbourhood Watch also helped to address such problems as graffiti, speeding and lessened the risk of burglaries. The main objectives were to reduce crime, fear of crime and raise community spirit, with neighbours sometimes meeting for the first time.

Advice was given on ways to help reduce crime with importance being stressed to keep doors and windows closed as 27% of properties were burgled this way. Members of the Schemes reported anything suspicious to the police. Research had shown that where Schemes were run, those areas were less likely to attract crime.

The Neighbourhood Watch Community Engagement Officer advised the number of crimes that had occurred was checked daily and residents were informed by way of a recorded message to phones in order to inform them of any problems. Crimestoppers enabled information on crime or criminals to be passed on anonymously without fear of reprisals or direct contact with the police. Calls were free from land lines and most mobile phones.

Residents were encouraged not to open their door to strangers and not to buy from or sell to doorstep callers. Bogus callers were often professional criminals who tricked their way into homes to steal money and valuables. Identifying those that were genuine was difficult and women and children were sometimes used to commit this type of crime. 'No Uninvited

Trader Signs' were being erected in certain areas with the prior agreement of residents.

It was reported that Neighbourhood Watch Schemes were actively promoted with Officers attending various meetings and that Street Wardens and PCSOs also helped to establish them. Business Watch, Golf Watch, Shop Watch and other similar schemes were also being run with a Student Watch initiative commencing in September 2008 in partnership with the Street Wardens.

Residents identified as most vulnerable were visited and plans were in line to have one point of contact for all agencies with a tick sheet to be completed, with the resident's permission, to enable other relevant parties to be aware of a particular problem. This would enable older people to live independently for longer.

The Chairman thanked Vicki, on behalf of the Committee, for her most informative presentation.

**7. Policing Green Paper 'from the neighbourhood to the national'**

The Head of Environmental Health informed the Committee that a Senior Officer from Staffordshire Police would attend the next meeting to provide a presentation on this item.

Members noted that it was intended that PCSOs would continue to have a non confrontational role in Staffordshire and would not be provided with stab vests or handcuffs. It was considered that the Street Wardens played an important role in talking to residents and relaying information to the Police.

**8. Work Programme 2008/09**

A copy of the Work Programme for 2008/09 was circulated at the meeting. The Head of Environmental Health explained that some agreed areas of work for policy development were not yet scheduled in the Work Programme. It was considered that as Members were not up for election in 2009 that these items could be rolled over to the following municipal year.

Members requested a separate visit be arranged to the CCTV office with a short meeting to follow.

AGREED

(A) That the Work Programme for 2008/09 be noted

(B) That a separate visit be arranged to the CCTV office.

---

CHAIRMAN