

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 18 JUNE 2007 AT 4.00 P.M.
CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PRESENT: Councillors:

Jones, R. (Chairman)
Faulkner, B. (Vice-Chairman)

Easton, Mrs. M.	Kraujalis, J. T.
Easton, R.	Pearce, Mrs. L. J.

(Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L. W. Bullock and Mrs. D. M Todd).

1. Services Provided to the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee by Head(s) of Service(s)

The Select Committee received a presentation from the Partnership Development Manager and the Head of Environmental Health on the services and responsibilities that fall within the remit of the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee.

The Partnership Development Manager reported that the Council at their meeting in April approved a report on the review of committee structures and the role of the Select Committees.

He explained that the following services were in the Safer and Stronger Communities Portfolio and the issues they covered:-

Policy, Performance and Partnerships

- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Community Strategy;
- Local Area Agreement (LAA) – particularly Safer and Stronger Communities Block;
- Management of Safer and Stronger Communities Fund;
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
- Own Your Streets;
- Community Engagement and Consultation;
- Partnership Development Unit (PDU).

(A copy of the Local Area Agreement District Delivery Plan 2007-2010 was circulated at the meeting).

- Environmental Services
 - CCTV;
 - Communal Alarms;
 (There is an overlap with other services in the Environment Portfolio).

- Housing
 - Targets residents, both tenants and others, in conjunction with partner agencies, Police, Education etc., to achieve a reduction in overall crime, public reassurance and fear of crime;
 - Practical measures to reduce crime, e.g. Own Your Streets campaign and Safe as Houses;
 - Resident involvement;
 - Respect Agenda which is the central theme to the improvement plan for the Estate Management Team in Tenancy Services and procedures were being redrafted and revised.

It was explained that further Own Your Streets campaigns would be carried out and they had been well received. The Safe as Houses Scheme provided further security to homes where domestic violence had occurred and currently no repeat incidents had occurred.

Copies of the Respect Agenda were available at the meeting and it was reported that certain proposals contained therein would be obligatory from 1 April 2008.

The Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee remit included:-

- Reduction in overall crime, public reassurance and a reduction in the fear of crime;
- Review and scrutiny of community safety arrangements, including crime prevention and crime reduction programmes, Street Wardens, road safety, the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership;
- Building respect in communities and reducing anti-social behaviour, community engagement and consultation activities, equality and diversity;

It was reported that the State of Cannock Chase Report 2005-06 would be published shortly and this had identified that Cannock Chase was the most deprived area in Staffordshire. Cannock and Rugeley Town Centres falling within the 18% and 19% most deprived areas in England and Chadsmoor High Street within the worst 24%.

The top priorities of local people in making somewhere a good place to live were low level of crime, health services, affordable decent housing, clean streets and education provision. The issues they considered to be most in need of improvement being, activities for teenagers, low level of crime, road and pavement repairs, clean streets and job prospects.

With respect to community safety 46% of people said they were fairly/very afraid of becoming a victim of crime, although this was a reduction compared to 2004. The fear of crime appearing highest at night. Domestic burglaries equated to one per day and this was a 42% reduction compared to 2001/02. There had been 908 vehicle crimes in 2005/06, this being down by 24% over the last 4 years.

Violent crime was increasing, 25 crimes/1,000 population in 2005/06 compared to 20/1,000 in 2001/02. However, almost a quarter of reported incidents related to domestic violence. Reporting of domestic violence had increased by 40% since 2002 with a 20% increase in family domestic violence between 2004/05 and 2005/06 which was significant compared to a 4% increase in partner on partner violence.

People's fear of being mugged/robbed and physically attacked by strangers had reduced by 7% to 54% and 43% respectively in 2006.

Reported Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents had increased per month, although it was considered that the public did not have a clear understanding of ASB. Significant percentages thought it included assault, theft of vehicles and burglary but few were aware that it included noisy neighbours. The main ASB problems identified were litter, dog fouling, off road motorcycling, nuisance neighbours and vandalism.

The Head of Environmental Health explained that the following Environmental Health Functions were in the remit of the Safer and Stronger Communities Portfolio:-

Street Warden Service

This currently consisted of 1 Manager and 5 Street Wardens who covered geographical areas in normal office hours. They had no enforcement powers but played an important part of the Council's Safer and Stronger Communities activities and were valued by the Police. Additional funding had been provided to enable evening patrols to be carried out. Notable achievements had been the Street Wardens contribution to the Beacon Authority Award and the Junior Street Wardens scheme.

Environmental Protection

This included the following functions:-

Regulation of Industrial Processes
Air Quality Monitoring
Smoke Control
Contaminated Land
Noise Complaints
Public Health Nuisances
Pest Control
Littering, dog fouling and fly tipping enforcement

Of the above, Noise Complaints and littering, dog fouling and fly tipping enforcement were relevant to the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee.

Licensing

This was relevant to several portfolios and covered:-

Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing
Hackney Carriages and Private Hire
Gambling premises
Street Trading
Lotteries
Sex Establishments

Equality and Diversity

The Partnership Development Manager explained that the Head of Commercial Operations had provided a presentation on Equality and Diversity which was now part of the remit of the Committee. Copies of that presentation, together with copies of these presentations, would be forwarded to Members of the Select Committee.

2. Development of the Work Programme 2007/08

Discussion took place on items to be included in the Work Programme.

RESOLVED:-

That the following issues be included in the Work Programme of the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee for 2007/08.

- That the Head of Environmental Services provide a presentation on the Communal Alarms system, including an explanation of the current charging policy and eligibility criteria.
- Information on the powers available to the Council with respect to nuisance neighbours and ASB by occupiers of non-council housing

- That a representative of the Youth Service be invited to attend the Select Committee, together with local young people to ascertain their views and concerns with regard to facilities and recreational opportunities in the district.
- That the Select Committee considers the outcome of the work undertaken by Lichfield and Tamworth Councils with respect to under-age consumption of alcohol and drugs and alcohol-fuelled crime and disorder.
- In relation to the above items the Select Committee ensures that it is mindful of the remit and work programme of the Children & Young People's Select Committee and the Healthier Communities, Housing and Older People Select Committee.
- That the Committee explore ways of encouraging and empowering local residents to take responsibility for their neighbourhood and help find solutions to the community safety problems that affect them.

CHAIRMAN