

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
6 JUNE 2012**

Present: Councillors Peach (Chairman), Day (Vice Chairman), Kreling, Nawaz, Johnson, Forbes, JR Fox

Also Present: Ansar Ali Police Authority Representative

Officers in Attendance:	Gary Goose	Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager
	Peter Gell	Strategic Regulatory Services Manager
	Jawaid Khan	Community Cohesion Manager
	Adrian Chapman	Head of Neighbourhood Services
	Paulina Ford	Senior Governance Officer
	Dania Castagliuolo	Governance Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul Phillipson.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Ansar Ali declared that he was a possible candidate for the Police and Crime Commissioners elections.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 7 March 2012

The minutes of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 March 2012 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for Call-in to consider

5. Strong and Supportive Communities: Introduction, Overview and Work Programme

The purpose of this report was to provide the Committee with an overview of the issues, opportunities, priorities and challenges in connection with the Strong and Supportive Communities theme, with the aim of establishing a scrutiny work programme for the year.

The committee were asked to discuss the content of the report and agree a scrutiny work programme for the year.

A presentation was delivered to the committee by the Head of Neighbourhood Services and lead officers from that service area. The following key points were highlighted:

- The responsibility of the committee:

- To review and scrutinise the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy priority of creating strong and supportive communities
- To review and scrutinise the planning, decisions, policy, development, service provision and performance relating to the following service areas:
 - Neighbourhood Services
 - Cohesion
 - Cultural Services
 - City Centre
- To act as the statutory Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

Service Area Review for Safer and Stronger Peterborough Team

Achievements with support of the Scrutiny process:

- The Co-located, multi-agency, multi-disciplinary Safer/Stronger Team at Bayard Place
- Intent to deal with the causes not just the symptoms of crime had been declared
- The continued development of the Neighbourhood Committees
- The Citizen Power programme had been continued
- Community action plans for all areas had been developed

The priorities for 2012/13:

- To continue to drive down crime and reduce the number of victims making Peterborough even safer
- To continue to make people feel even safer
- To improve the quality of life of people in our communities
- To ensure that communities influence decisions made in their local areas through Community Action Plans

This will be done by the Safer Peterborough Partnership Performance Framework which will aim to illustrate:

- 1) Peterborough's rate of improvement compared to the other 329 Community Safety Partnerships in England and Wales
- 2) Peterborough's month on month change in levels of crime, with a view to meeting or exceeding the 10% reduction target for 2014
- 3) Issues that affect citizen's quality of life

Suggestions for the Work Programme were:

- Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels
- Annual Community Safety Plan
- Citizen Power Peterborough final programme report
- Neighbourhood Committee Review and final report
- Peterborough City Council's Consultation and engagement Strategy
- Implementation of relevant aspects of the Localism Act

Comments and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried whether the rate of fly tipping had increased or decreased from last year. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that they only had one month's data with regard to fly tipping so it was difficult to tell as there*

was no previous data. The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised members that he would obtain the data from the last year.

- Members commented that they were pleased that crime types were being identified and that they were being mindful of vulnerable people. They felt that agencies needed to deal with antisocial behaviour quickly before the problems escalated
- Members asked to be informed on what action was being taken with regard to youth crime prevention. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed the committee that they used early intervention to prevent youngsters turning to crime by looking at troubled families who may be out of work and working together with the Children's Services Model.*

Service Area Review for the Strategic Housing Team

Achievements with the support of the Scrutiny Process (Housing Needs):

- The transformation of the Housing Needs Service front line operations including the implementation of a telephone triage service
- The Housing Needs Service:
 - Dealt with 15,630 telephone contacts and 9,131 face to face interviews with clients in 2011/12
 - Helped 1,134 households who presented as Homeless to them during 2011/12
 - Supported 208 households who found themselves with mortgage arrear problems, with 56 mortgage rescue packages being progressed. This was the highest number in the region
- The National Reconnections Pilot project in Peterborough reduced rough sleeping from 88 to 9 individuals

Achievements with Support of the Scrutiny Process (Housing Programmes):

- The Empty Homes work had resulted in 127 empty homes being brought back in to use
- The remodelling and simplification of Housing Related Support funding to partner agencies
- 213 houses had loft and cavity wall insulation installed with grant assistance to reduce fuel poverty
- 56 A rated condensing boilers were installed
- 25 properties had external wall insulation fitted to reduce fuel poverty
- The team worked with Warm Front to bring £425,213 of Warm Front funding in to the city which resulted in 120 properties receiving energy efficient measures

Achievements within the Care and Repair service:

- The Home Improvement Agency dealt with 6,004 requests for assistance from disabled, elderly and vulnerable residents of the city
- They adapted 306 homes to ensure that the properties met the disabled clients needs
- They carried out 1,354 minor aids and adaptations to clients homes to ensure they could leave hospital and return to their home as quickly as possible and to prevent accidents and admissions to hospital
- 3,010 clients received help through the Handy Persons Scheme ensuring they could remain living independently in their own homes
- They continue to maximise income for their clients by completing benefits checks

Suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme:

- The Peterborough Homes Allocations Policy
- The Homelessness Strategy
- The Empty Homes Strategy
- Potential introduction of Selective Licensing

Comments and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members questioned whether Reducing Rough Sleeping was for local residents or just for residents from the EU community. *The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised members that there was a specific scheme for EU Nationals called National Reconnections Pilot and there was also help for rough sleepers regardless of their nationality. Members were also advised that a team went out frequently day and night to engage with rough sleepers.*
- Members suggested that the Allocation of Housing could be discussed in association with antisocial behaviour. Members felt that some problems may be attributed in some areas due to the street scene looking untidy. *The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed members that street scene issues were being worked on in the Draft Allocations Policy which would be sent to the Chairman.*
- Members queried whether there was any intention to include homeowners in the Housing Allocations Policy. *The Head of Neighbourhood Services advised the committee that they would not be dealt with through the Housing Allocations Policy but through work being carried out by the Strategic Regulatory Services Manager. Members were informed that more and more prosecutions were coming forward and that the intelligence and information from ward councillors was needed to help with these.*
- Members were concerned whether elderly people who could not look after their properties were receiving the necessary assistance. *The Head of Neighbourhood Services informed members that elderly people were referred to Care and Repair if they needed assistance.*
- Members advised officers that some people in their wards had been waiting for over two years for a Care and Repair grant. *Officers requested that members emailed details of their constituents to them so that this would be dealt with.*
- Members asked for the criteria of Selected Licensing. *The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that all landlords of properties would need to licence their properties with the Council and the properties would be controlled by the Council. If it was decided to progress with this model then it would go to Full Council for approval and would be brought to Scrutiny at a future meeting for discussion.*

Service Area Review for the Regulatory Service Team

The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised the committee that the following issues were being looked in to:

- Health and Safety
- Food Safety
- Housing Enforcement
- Environmental Protection
- Protecting the Environment and the public
- Alcohol Licensing and Preventing Illegal Sales
- Licensing (Taxi's Ice Cream Vans etc)
- Trading Standards
- Animal Health

Suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme:

- Tackling illegal alcohol and tobacco sales

- Tackling and preventing poor and dangerous food standards
- Raising Health and Safety Standards

Comments and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members commented on the number of licensed premises there were in the Millfield area that sold alcohol which were causing problems for residents. They queried on whether any action was going to be taken regarding this issue. *The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised members that legislation was going to change to limit the number of premises and additional premises from operating in that area.*

Service Area Review for the Cohesion Team

Achievements with Support of the Scrutiny Process:

- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) project aimed to support parents to better engage in their children's education
- Provided support to most vulnerable groups e.g. taxi drivers, young people and faith communities
- Support of the disabled community to have a greater voice and engagement with public services
- Tackled tensions through closer engagement with different community groups and partners

Suggestions for the Scrutiny Work Programme:

- The Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan for 2012/13
- Effectiveness of the current Cohesion Strategy in tackling the current priorities:
 - 1) Reducing community tensions
 - 2) Engaging young people and raising their aspirations (19-24 year olds)
 - 3) Engaging and empowering communities through improved access to Neighbourhood Services

Comments and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members commented that it would be encouraging to see the way the council was investing in Cohesion. *The Community Cohesion Manager informed the committee that mainstreaming cohesion was being done by the Council dealing with it also as a critical friend.*
- Members were not happy with the heading 'Reducing Community Tensions' as they felt this would indicate that there were existing tensions within the community. *The Community Cohesion Manager advised the Committee that he would take this back to the Cohesion Board to work on a new heading.*
- Members commented on the lack of diversity during Neighbourhood Committee meetings and suggested that this be measured at future meetings. *The Community Cohesion Manager advised members that they were exploring the feasibility of working with an academic institute about measurement of how people felt when attending Neighbourhood meetings. This could be done depending on the cost implications.*

Service Area Review for Social Inclusion

Key Themes relevant to the Strong and Supportive Communities Committee:

- 1) Financial Inclusion

- 2) Voluntary and Community Sector
- 3) Gypsies and Traveller

Suggestions for Scrutiny Work Programme:

- Gypsy and Traveller policies and procedures
- Voluntary Sector commissioning, grant funding and support

List of items for the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee to focus on during 2012/13:

1. Programmes 5 and 6 of the Single Delivery Plan
 2. Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels
 3. Annual Community Safety Plan (statutory requirement)
 4. Citizen Power Peterborough final programme report
 5. Neighbourhood Committee Review final report
 6. Peterborough City Councils Consultation and Engagement Strategy
 7. Implementation of relevant aspects of the Localism Act
 8. Peterborough Homes Allocations Policy
 9. Homelessness Strategy
 10. Empty Homes Strategy
 11. Introduction of Selective Licensing to improve standards in private rented housing
 12. Tackling illegal alcohol and tobacco sales
 13. Tackling and preventing poor and dangerous food standards
 14. Raising Health and Safety Standards
 15. Effectiveness of the 2012/13 Cohesion Strategy in tackling current Cohesion Action Plan priorities
 16. Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan for 2013/14
 17. Gypsy and Traveller policies and procedures
 18. Voluntary Sector Commissioning, grant funding and support
 19. Cultural Services – delivered through Vivacity
 20. City Centre – Management, events, services, functions etc
- Members informed officers that they were still waiting to hear from the Citizens Power Project. *Officers advised members that a report would be brought to the committee in July and then November following this the project would be closed.*
 - Members suggested that an item on Restorative Justice would be relevant to the Committee.

ACTIONS

The Strategic Regulatory Services Manager to obtain fly tipping data from last year and report to the committee.

The Head of Neighbourhood Services to send a copy of the Draft Housing Policy to Councillor Peach.

Selected Licensing to be brought to July's committee meeting.

The Community Cohesion Manager to discuss with the Cohesion Board an alternative heading for 'Reducing Community Tensions'

6. Review of 2011/12 and Work Programme 2012/13

The purpose of this report was to provide the committee with a review of the work undertaken during 2011/12 and to develop a work programme for 2012/13.

The Senior Governance Officer presented the report and asked that the Committee considered the 2011/12 year in review and make recommendations on the future monitoring of these items where necessary and that the committee determined its priorities and developed a work programme for the forthcoming year.

This report was also presented to advise new members of the remit of the Committee.

The Senior Governance Officer advised the committee that some items may be information items and could be sent to the Committee as briefing notes rather than a formal report. The Committee were asked to think about themes, challenges or any issues they felt needed to be brought to the committee.

The following suggestions were put forward by Members:

- Housing and Neighbourhood Issues.
- Members asked for Annette Joyce and Vivacity to report more than once a year to the committee
- The Issue of Fly tipping and the impact it has had on communities
- Members asked when the Neighbourhood Implementation Scrutiny Task and Finish Group were going to report to the committee. *The Senior Governance Officer informed the committee that this report would be delivered at the next Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting in July.*
- Members suggested that Selective Licensing and Homelessness was added to the work programme.

The Senior Governance Officer suggested to Members that items could be grouped into themes for the committee meetings and this could be discussed at the next Group Representatives meeting.

ACTION

The Governance Officer would circulate the date for the Group Reps meeting.

The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 8.56 pm

CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank