

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY 2014**

Present: Councillors Lee (Chairman), Kreling, Over, Johnson, Forbes and Fox

Also Present: Councillor Casey Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Recreation and Waste Management

Officers in Attendance: Gary Goose Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager
Adrian Chapman Head of Neighbourhood Services
Dominic Hudson Strategic Partnerships Manager
Lisa Helin Strategic Client Manager
Dania Castagliuolo Governance Officer

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Simons and Councillor Day. Councillor Over was in attendance as Substitute for Councillor Simons.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of Interest.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013

The minutes of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 19 November 2013 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.

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SITTING FOR ITEM 5 AND 6 ONLY

5. Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan 2011 – 2014

The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager introduced the report, which was presented to the Committee to seek their views and input in to the development of the new Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan.

The success of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan from 2014 onwards would be a key determinant to the quality of life of people who lived, worked and visited the area.

The development of the plan would be further informed by a detailed strategic assessment and information obtained through public consultation events and the neighbourhood panel process.

The plan would be further discussed at the Safer Peterborough Partnership Board meeting in January, and returned to the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting. Members were asked to note the direction of travel of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan, to make suggestions as to items for inclusion therein and to note that the draft plan would, when produced, return to the Committee for discussion and debate in order that an agreed version could be recommended to Cabinet for approval.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried what the national average was for theft from person. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised Members that the national average was around 30%.*
- Members queried whether any of the crime indicators had increased or decreased since the last report. *Members were informed that there was a monthly change overview that they could refer to on page 39 of the report. If a rolling trend had been maintained this was because the winter had been mild, freezing weather deters criminals.*
- Members queried whether dwelling burglary had decreased. *Members were informed that there was a sustained period during 2013 where dwelling burglary was less than 50% which then crept back up to 50% over the month of December.*
- Members queried what action was being taken with regard to the issue of pick pockets in the city centre. *Members were advised that the success in tackling pick pockets had been down to the joining of partners who were working together to raise awareness among the elderly and other target groups. The message had been given without raising fears. There had been further success on the investigation side where a female pick pocket from Corby had been caught in Peterborough and received a four year prison sentence with an Antisocial Behaviour Order.*
- *Members were advised that a further successful area of work was the development of four Microbeat areas where a bulk of the work carried out was around Quality of Life issues. By tackling early signs of crime areas would improve. If areas were left to degenerate, people would not take pride in their neighbourhood. The Safer Peterborough Partnership was looking to start work on the Westwood and Ravensthorpe area, concentrating on low level crimes.*
- Members commented that on page 11 of the report, the background was set for the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan and queried whether there was anything the Committee had not covered in previous meetings that required scrutiny. *Members were advised that the significant changes of structure within the Local Authority and its effect on the efforts to drive down crime and disorder, could be an issue they may like to look in to.*
- Members were concerned for the high number of crimes reported in rural areas and requested up to date figures.
- Members queried when they would receive a draft of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan. *Members were advised that the Safer Peterborough Partnership would like to receive ideas from the Committee of what they would like included within the plan.*
- Members suggested that no radical change should be made to the Peterborough Partnership Plan.
- Members commented that most crimes committed were alcohol related. *Members were informed that alcohol would feature largely in the Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan and there would be a closer working relationship with Council's licensing department and the constabulary to try to resolve issues around alcohol.*
- Members commented that page 31 of the report was headlined, Vulnerable People and Groups, and queried how the Safer Peterborough Partnership dealt with people with mental health issues and the vulnerable who got caught out by internet fraud and pyramids. *Members were informed that Vulnerable People and groups was part of the current plan and this theme would continue through 2014 onwards. There were Countywide services in place for victims and Witnesses Needs Assessments conducted, which looked at different levels of vulnerability. Locally there was a Victims Champion in place to help vulnerable people.*

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee recommends that the refreshed Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan remains a three year plan.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee agreed for the Governance Officer to circulate the report regarding Crime and Disorder in Rural Areas to Members.

The Committee also agreed for the Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager to:

1. Circulate a briefing note covering:
 - a) Crime In Rural Communities
 - b) The impact of the restructure and how it will effect efforts to reduce crime and disorder.
2. Circulate information on attendance of Peterborough City Councillors at the Police and Crime Panel meetings.
3. To bring the draft Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan to the next meeting on 26 March 2014.
4. Report back to the Committee on internet fraud calls and if the necessary questions were asked to determine whether a person was vulnerable and if the local police were informed.
5. Investigate the possibility of refusing alcohol licenses in troubled areas within the city and the possibility of reducing the hours in which local shops were allowed to sell alcohol.
6. Investigate the possibility of adding a supplementary tax on alcohol licenses in the city.

6. Fly-Tipping Prosecutions

The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Manager introduced the report and advised Members that the report was an update on Fly-Tipping prosecutions undertaken by the local authority. Fly-Tipping was the term used to describe the act of the illegal dumping of rubbish. The most common fly-tipped waste was household waste. The type of waste had in the past included a single plastic bag, larger items such as furniture, white goods such as fridges and freezers, tyres, a bathroom suite and hazardous waste such as oil drums. Hazardous or not, the dumping of waste was illegal and came with a serious cost to the offender. Fly tippers, if found guilty, could be fined up to £50,000 in a Magistrates Court, face unlimited fines in the Crown Court as well as Community Punishment Orders or prison sentences of up to five years. The relevant legislation was Section 33 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The Council was required to forward figures to Government in relation to allegations of Fly-Tipping. The most recent figures showed the following for the first six months of this current financial year:

- 3806 registered issues of fly-tipping and associated offences
- 1097 investigations for fly-tipping and associated offences
- 1839 disposal by fixed penalty notice
- 76 warning letters were issued
- 7 cautions were issued
- 47 prosecutions were instigated

These figures indicated an extremely high level of activity by the Neighbourhood Environmental Enforcement Team.

Members were asked to note the level of activity in relation to fly-tipping and associated offences and the approach taken by the council to ensure the city maintained a clean environment.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members were concerned that the current system the Council had in place for rubbish collection was not cost effective and suggested Peterborough went back to free collections as they felt this would alleviate the issue of fly-tipping.
- Members suggested that scrap collectors could be encouraged to go and collect the big items of household waste.
- Members commented that the speculation of their constituents was 'why should they pay for the rubbish to be picked up when it gets collected for free if they dump it'.
- Members queried how many people had been convicted of fly-tipping in the last 18 months. *Members were advised that the report demonstrated lots of investigation and people who were investigated would have to pay fines and this was far more beneficial than taking people through court for prosecution.*
- *The Head of Neighbourhood Services gave the committee a brief update on action being taken to prevent fly-tipping. Peterborough City Council was working closely with colleagues from the contracting team and Enterprise. A whole new approach was being pulled together which included piloting and reporting prosecutions in the newspapers and on the internet, to gain public awareness.*

ACTION AGREED

1. The Committee agreed for the Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager to circulate a briefing note to Members reporting on the cost of previous free twice yearly household item collections compared to how much the removal fly-tipping was currently costing the city.
2. Members agreed for the future pilot to be reported on at a Committee meeting.

7. A Strategy for Culture, Recreation and the Arts for Peterborough

The Cabinet Advisor to the Cabinet Member for Recreation and Waste Management introduced the report which engaged Committee Members on the approach the council was taking, and framework for, a new Strategy for Culture, Recreation and the Arts for Peterborough. Whilst the Strategy would be a council document, the intention was that it was a strategy for the whole of Peterborough. Culture and leisure were long-established priorities of the council. Five years on from the publication of the last strategy a fresh look was being taken at the council's approach and priorities.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members commented that Peterborough lacked a portable stage and suggested that one was invested in. *The Cabinet advisor to the Cabinet Member for Recreation and Waste Management advised members that the possibility of Peterborough having its own portable stage was being investigated. This was a good idea as it would prevent hire fees.*
- Members commented that Peterborough was a cold spot on the indicators. Money was being received from the National Portfolio Organisations and if Peterborough could not turn round the money, then the funders would take the money elsewhere.
- Members commented that there were lots of fields covered in the diagram on page 49 of the report and queried what few subjects would have the best and biggest impact. *Members were advised that one of the hidden agendas within the Culture Strategy was to make it exciting and attractive to the big funding organisations. Education was key and music was one of the cultural pillars of the strategy.*
- Members suggested that social media was used to advertise events as a lot of the events in Peterborough went unnoticed.
- Members commented that the report did not mention excellence and community events. There were talented people in Peterborough and they needed to be accessing the right support.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee agreed for the Culture Strategy to be brought to the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting in June 2014.

8. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Notice of Intention to Take Key Decisions

9. Work Programme 2013/2014

This was an opportunity for Members to review the Work Programme for 2013/14 and discuss possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

Members noted the work programme and agreed for the following items to be added to the work programme:

- Fly-tipping Pilot
- Cultural Strategy

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.35pm

CHAIRMAN

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