

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

HELD ON TUESDAY 7 JUNE 2005

Present: Councillors R Burnip, P J Campbell,
J Haggan, B Joyce, T Longstaff,
C Patching, W R Peardon and
R G Wharrier

Also Present: Councillor D Myers – Executive Member
for E-Government and Scrutiny Liaison

1 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs S Mason.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor C Patching be elected Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED that Councillor R Burnip be appointed Vice-Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

4 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 10 May 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed subject to the following amendments:-

(i) **Co-locating Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement Teams with Police Officers (Minute No 3(ii) refers)**

Paragraph 2 be amended to read as follows:-

“The Chair commented that the Police had Officers based at the Council in the past and it was understood that the authority had not charged for office space. He felt that the current proposal by the Police to levy a rental charge was a failure to reciprocate and was contrary to the spirit of partnership working.”

The Chair added that this matter had now been resolved and a rental charge was not to be imposed for co-location.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

(ii) **East Durham Link Road and Hawthorn Prestige Industrial Estate (Minute No 4 refers)**

“The Chair commented that it was pleasing to note that progress had been made on bringing forward the link road. The Committee endorsed the progress made and the significant contribution to the regeneration of the District that was to be provided by the East/West linkage”.

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- 5 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 24 May 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the information contained within the Minutes, be noted.

6 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

- (i) **Funding – Easington and District Citizens Advice Bureau (Minute No 2 refers)**

The Chair commented that it was pleasing to note the continuing financial support to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and welcomed its increasing involvement in partnership working.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

8 **TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny Support Manager with regard to tackling anti-social behaviour through partnerships, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The report detailed the work undertaken by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in examining how the Council aimed to address anti-social behaviour through partnership working. It represented a snap shot position between July 2003 and September 2004 and would be supplemented by follow up review reports.

The Scrutiny Support Manager took Members through the report. He briefly outlined the approach taken by the Committee which involved consideration of the key policies of those agencies within the Community Safety Partnership, Member visits to each of the partner organisations to discuss areas of best practice with questionnaires completed on their behalf and receiving presentations.

As part of its investigation some benchmarking activities were carried out to establish how the Council's approach compared with other authorities. Benchmarking with Blyth Valley District Council who had achieved a two star status for its community safety service had shown that the District of Easington compared favourably in tackling anti-social behaviour.

The report also provided details of the Committee's findings in relation to how anti-social behaviour was tackled and the mechanisms by which the Council in partnership with other agencies used enforcement initiatives to deal with the problems.

In terms of prevention the Committee recognised that early intervention could prevent incidents from escalating and a number of initiatives were discussed ranging from high profile uniformed presence across the District to those aimed directly at young people, details of which were set out in the report. The introduction of Street Wardens had been extremely successful in combating anti-social behaviour. The Committee was pleased to note the mainstreaming of these posts and the establishment of an Anti-Social Behaviour Unit.

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Members also examined the range of support services available to both offenders and their families. The Committee acknowledged that drug and alcohol misuse was one of the main reasons for anti-social behaviour and this review had identified a gap in service provision in relation to substance misuse.

With regard to reporting anti-social behaviour it was recognised that there was a need for effective co-ordination. At present reports were made from a variety of avenues such as EDC reception staff, East Durham Homes Estate Managers, Envirocall and Street Wardens. Communication to the public on how to report anti-social behaviour and to which agency, should be co-ordinated between Councils and other key agencies through the Crime and Reduction Partnership. The use of front line services, call taking services and websites needed to be considered given the importance to be placed upon tackling anti-social behaviour within the 2005 Comprehensive Performance Assessment and the emerging E-Government improvement agenda.

To conclude, it had been acknowledged by the Council and consultees to the report that significant developments in a number of areas had been made in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour through partnership working. These developments needed to be examined as part of a review mechanism.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives added that this report was welcomed and was pleased to note that it had identified some of the gaps in service provision. In this regard, discussions were currently underway with East Durham Homes to improve joint working and work was being carried out with the PCT concerning the services available to deal with substance misuse.

The new Crime and Disorder Strategy would identify a new way of working and the Community Safety Partnership had been restructured accordingly.

Members expressed their appreciation to the Scrutiny Support Manager for the work involved in the preparation of the final report on the Committee's investigation.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the recommendations outlined in the report, be endorsed and the report be submitted to Executive for consideration.

9 **DISTRICT OF EASINGTON SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2004/2005**

Consideration was given to the report of the Scrutiny Support Manager which sought approval to the draft District of Easington Scrutiny Annual Report for 2004/5, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that in accordance with the Council's Constitution Scrutiny Committees had to report annually to Council on their work and make recommendations for future work programmes.

The report detailed the principles behind effective scrutiny within the Council and highlighted the co-ordinating role of the Scrutiny Management Board, reviewed the work undertaken by each of the Scrutiny Committees, set out the proposed areas of work for the future work programmes and proposed further ways through which the scrutiny process could be developed.

The report was to be considered by District Council on 7 July 2005 and any comments or amendments should be forwarded to the Scrutiny Support Manager prior to 17 June 2005.

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RESOLVED that the draft annual report be approved subject to any further amendments or comments from Members and submitted to full Council for endorsement.

10 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

E-Government Agenda

The Executive Member for E-Government and Scrutiny Liaison made reference to the use of laptop computers by Members, as part of the roll-out of the E-Government Agenda. Training was available for individual Members, if required.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

CERTIFIED TRUE RECORD

CHAIR

DATE

JE/MA/com.part./050601
14 June 2005