

**THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 7 MARCH, 2006**

**Present:** Councillor C Patching (Chair)  
  
Councillors R Burnip, P J Campbell,  
J Haggan, B Joyce, T Longstaff, Mrs  
S Mason and W R Peardon

**Also present:** Councillor D Myers, Executive Member  
for E-Government and Scrutiny Liaison

1 **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 14 February, 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

2 **MATTERS ARISING**

- (i) **Easington Primary Care Trust – Interim Declaration against the Core Standards  
(Minute Number 2 refers)**

The Scrutiny Support Manager explained that Mr Houghton from Easington PCT would be in attendance at the next meeting to report on the formal Declaration Against the Core Standards. Mr Houghton had indicated at a previous meeting that he was awaiting a set of questions by the Health Care Commission and copies would be sent to the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for consideration. The questions had not yet been published.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.

3 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 21 February, 2006, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

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

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION**

There were no members of the public present.

5 **ANY ADDITIONAL URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

In accordance with the Local Government Act, 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, Section 100B(4)(b) the Chair, following consultation with the Proper Officer, agreed that following item of business, not shown on the Agenda, be considered as a matter of urgency.

**6 TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR THROUGH PARTNERSHIP WORKING (AOB)**

The Chair explained that G Lodge and A Bailey had been invited to the meeting to provide an update on achievements on the work of the Anti Social Behaviour Unit following the work that had been carried out by the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

G Lodge explained that he worked on the strategic elements of anti social behaviour and A Bailey worked on the operational side. He explained that as part of the work of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee, Members had visited Blyth Valley Borough Council and the work the District Council now did was far advanced from what Blyth Valley did at that time.

A Bailey explained that since the previous year, the Anti Social Behaviour Unit had been re-structured and was now seen as best practice throughout the county. Specialist roles had been required and there were now two Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers and one Nuisance Vehicle Officer. There were also two Anti Social Behaviour Officers from the Police for the north of the District and two for the South. They co-ordinated Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Anti Social Behaviour Contracts then contacted the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers to obtain statements. The Police now funded the Anti-Social Behaviour Orders which cost approximately £5,000 per application. The Police also had Officers working on specific areas ie Hate Crime Officers and Youth Issues Officer.

It was explained that the Street Wardens were in the process of becoming Accredited Officers. There were eight Accredited Officers so far and they had the power to seize alcohol and take names and addresses. They were also equipped with Police radios and could call for back up if required.

With regard to enforcement, the Unit had procured new equipment to help combat anti-social behaviour. A mobile CCTV vehicle that was funded by the pathfinder, a deployable CCTV camera that carried out covert CCTV in hotspot areas, CCTV units had also been purchased for the Street Wardens vehicles. New legislation had come into force, the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act, which gave more powers to the Council to deal with nuisance properties, noise and selling vehicles on the roadside.

The Magistrates had now become involved and had contacted the Anti Social Behaviour Unit and invited the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer to the Courts User Group. He explained that there had been criticism from the public regarding the amount of foot patrols by the Street Wardens, although they carried out structured patrols in off peak times. The Street Wardens had been mainstreamed and covered the whole District. The District had also received funding for Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's).

He referred to the problem with youths drinking alcohol and explained that within the accredited powers they could now issue Fixed Penalty Notices for people dropping cans.

A Bailey explained that there had been a number of diversionary activities for young people. There was the Junior Street Wardens Scheme that targeted young people that were keen to make a difference in the area. Special projects were developed for them and they linked in with the Youth Forum.

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A Bailey explained that there was a lot of multi agency working ongoing. Funding had been secured for a Family and Prevention Service for families who needed support.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit was now located at Peterlee Police Station and had made a major difference in the way the Police and the Anti Social Behaviour Unit communicated and shared information. This had had a massive impact and the Anti Social Behaviour Unit were now seen as part of the team and got a better response from the Police.

G Lodge explained that from a strategic point of view, there were localised Street Safe Boards where ASBO's and local solutions to crime were proposed. Tasking and co-ordinating meetings were also held. At present there were 18 Street Wardens, 16 PCSO's, 25 Community Police Officers as well as the Police core shift. The Police had been asked to look at neighbourhood policing and Durham Constabulary felt that they were doing a lot of neighbourhood policing at present. The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit had been invited to speak to a Senior Police Officer, Chief Inspector Bastfield, as the District had been regarded as good practice around the work that was being carried out at a neighbourhood level.

It was explained that new legislation was to be introduced regarding alcohol restriction areas. Signs would be placed in designated areas and it was thought that there would be two in the Seaham Division and two in the Peterlee Division. The legislation was slightly vague but meant that if people were found drinking in the street then they would be told to stop drinking and Police could arrest them if they refused.

There was a lot of work on going regarding graffiti and criminal damage was a major problem and was a lot higher than the targets that had been set. Publicity work was being carried out on this subject and as much work as possible was being carried out to tackle the problem.

G Lodge explained that funding had been received to help families that were experiencing problems. £50,000 per annum had been received, of which £25,000 was to be used for intervention for families and £25,000 for other activities.

Members were advised that a campaign "Its Your Call" had ran from 21 November until the end of January. Posters were erected on bus shelters although not many calls had been received as a result of the publicity.

A Member requested more detail on the partnership work with the Magistrates. G Lodge explained that the Magistrates had been reluctant in the past to become involved with the Community Safety Partnership as they felt it would bias their work. Guidance had been received by the Home Office explaining that Magistrates needed to be involved in Community Safety Partnerships.

Members raised concerns regarding Police Officers attending Parish Council meetings and had been advised that in the future PCSO's would be given reports to these meetings. Concern was also raised regarding the areas covered by the PCSO's.

G Lodge explained that discussions were ongoing regarding how the Police engaged with people at a local level and there was a drive towards

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neighbourhood policing. Durham Constabulary felt that they were doing something similar to neighbourhood policing at the moment but there was always the problems of capacity of Officers to attend meetings. If they were at meetings they were not patrolling the area. The Police had been negotiating with the Council to perhaps bring in some structures where a Police Officer could come along on a regular basis to speak to District Councillors. There was to be a requirement from the new Police and Justice Bill for scrutiny of individual crime and disorder complaints. Councillors from the District Council and representatives from the responsible authorities ie PCT, Fire, Police, Drug Action Team would be involved. He added that he had been liaising with the Scrutiny Support Manager in this regard. The Pathfinder was hopefully going to extend into the North Peterlee area and this could lead to better use with regard to the PCSO's.

A Member queried the duties and powers of the Street Wardens as he had been informed by a member of the public that the Street Wardens did not get out of their vans to deal with certain situations. A Bailey explained that Street Wardens would deal with the situation if they felt it was appropriate but they would not deal with the incident if they felt it could lead to violence. He explained that he had previously been assaulted when trying to deal with situations and it was a very awkward decision to make.

A Member referred to Section 30 Orders regarding dispersal and the recent Order that had been in effect in Deneside and felt this had a tremendous difference in the area and queried if the Police would be looking at this method again. A Bailey explained that the Police would consult with the Council regarding Section 30 Orders but the Council could not instigate them. Section 30 Orders were very labour intensive.

A Member explained that in the Pathfinder area they were procuring two devices called Mosquitoes which gave off a high pitched noise but were only receptive to the hearing of young people and not adults. If successful, these could be used in other areas.

The Chair queried if there was liaison and connectivity between the enforcement work of the Council and East Durham Homes. A Bailey explained that he had worked closely with East Durham Homes on a number of cases throughout the District.

G Lodge explained that at the local Street Safe Board had representatives from East Durham Homes, Street Wardens, Police, Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinators were all involved.

The Chair commented that the work that was ongoing and which had been completed was a credit to the work of the Anti Social Behaviour Unit.

The Chair thanked G Lodge and A Bailey for their attendance.

**RESOLVED** that the information given, be noted.