

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

OF THE SERVICE DELIVERY ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WORKING PARTY

HELD ON TUESDAY 12 JULY 2005

Present: Councillor D Raine (Chair)
Councillors H High, Mrs E Huntington,
Mrs A Naylor and C Walker

Also Present: A Bailey – Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer
H Clark – Private Sector Initiatives Officer
S Wood – Estate Management Co-ordinator
J Morton - Senior Street Warden

1 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was submitted on behalf of Ian Vickers.

2 THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING held on 15 April 2005, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were agreed.

3 PERFORMANCE OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT

It was agreed that this item be considered first on the agenda as the Officer had other commitments.

Consideration was given to the report of the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer which advised Members of the performance of the Anti-Social Behaviour Unit, Environmental and Street Wardens for the first quarter 2005/6, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

A Bailey explained that the Street Wardens performance report would be considered with the anti-social behaviour report as the unit relied on the Street Wardens figures for anti-social behaviour.

A Bailey advised that the Street Wardens incident report detailed the number of incidents reported during 2004/5 compared with the 2003/4 figures as well as the first quarter of 05/06.

Details were provided of the numbers of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders together with the number of fixed penalty notices issued in the quarter up to 15 June 2005.

Members were advised of ongoing initiatives which included library watch, youth shelters, airwaves radios, prosecution of juveniles, CCTV for Easington Colliery, junior Street Wardens and littering posters.

Details were given of police operations in partnership with the District Enforcement Team in hot spot areas. The hot spot areas were as follows:-

- Hovingham Close, Peterlee – youth disorder
- Wingate – truancy in minor ASB
- Welfare Crescent, Blackhall Colliery – youth disorder

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- Attlee Avenue, Blackhall Rocks – youth disorder
- Bevan Crescent, Shotton Colliery – youth disorder
- Eastlea, Seaham
- Red Star Park, Seaham

A Member asked if the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer felt that ASBOs were working. A Bailey explained that there were only a small amount of ASBOs in the area and worked in two ways, they either stopped the person offending or if the person re-offended they were sent to prison. He felt that they did work. An ASBO Unit had been established which looked at all ASBOs throughout County Durham. Once the unit had been operating for a number of months, a report would be produced which showed how many times youths were arrested and would give a clearer picture on how ASBOs were working throughout County Durham.

A Member explained that there was a major problem in King Edward Road in Dawdon. The Street Wardens and Police had both been involved but the situation was still untenable. The off-licence attracted the youths and he asked if there were any actions to be taken against off-licences. A Bailey explained that the Street Wardens were aware of the situation and the Police were patrolling the area. Sergeant Robinson was the Licensing Officer and all information/intelligence was passed onto him. A lot of complaints were received regarding off-licences selling alcohol to under age youngsters and the only way to tackle this was to test purchase. A Bailey explained that he would refer this matter to J Malcolm, the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer for that area.

A Bailey explained that 8% of the Police's calls were now dealt with by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers and the Street Wardens. The Police would be advised if the Street Wardens were too busy to deal with the calls. J Morton explained that the Street Wardens were aware they had to prioritise their work.

A Member referred to Shotton Village News and two letters that had been printed regarding the bridge and the walkways in Shotton. They were full of litter and dog fouling. He explained that the play equipment in Victoria Playground had also been vandalised.

J Morton explained that there had been no complaints reported in that area although the Street Wardens did patrol on a regular basis.

Members expressed concern that there was no representative from the Police at the meeting. A Bailey explained that Sergeant Young had left the unit, PC Appleyard was in New Zealand and PC Bowman was now the Nuisance Vehicle Officer and the positions had not yet been filled.

T Taylor explained that since the charges were introduced for removing rubbish there had been a large increase in fly tipping. She felt it would be worthwhile to have a representative from Envirocall to attend future meetings.

T Taylor explained that she had concerns regarding a family in Attlee Avenue in Blackhall. The family had been targeted because they were involved in the estate walkabouts. A Bailey explained that he was aware of the situation and this was being dealt with.

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A Bailey explained that the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 would come into force in August 2005. The new Act gave a vast array of powers to Council Officers and a number of fixed penalty offences had been created, details of which were outlined in the report.

Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers had been signed off as accredited officers and would now be able to carry out certain police functions such as confiscating alcohol and tobacco from under age children, removal of vehicles causing an obstruction and be able to demand names and addresses from people engaged in anti-social behaviour or criminal damage. The Street Wardens were undergoing training at present and would be accredited once completed.

The Chair thanked A Bailey and J Morton for their report.

AGREED that:-

- (i) the information given, be noted;
- (ii) a representative from Envirocall be invited to attend the next meeting.

4 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

Consideration was given to the report of the Estate Management Co-ordinator which gave details of the team's performance statistics relating to anti-social behaviour and estate management by area and type, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The report included details of the number of issues resolved by Estate Officers and Estate Assistants by team and type together with the number of referrals to repairs, Envirocall and the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team.

Details of estate walkabouts, incidents dealt with by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer and warning letters issues were also provided.

The Estate Management Co-ordinator gave details of areas of concern that had been identified by the Estate Officers in each of the teams.

The Estate Management Co-ordinator explained that he was currently investigating alternative methods of clearing rubbish from houses in East Durham Homes' ownership.

The Chair thanked that Estate Management Co-ordinator for his report.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

5 DISTRICT OF EASINGTON PRIVATE LANDLORD ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Consideration was given to the report of the Private Sector Initiatives Officer which provided an update on the progress of the Private Landlords Accreditation Scheme, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

H Clark explained that the scheme had now been running for three years. The buy to let market had slowed down considerably in the District. A few landlords had been lost from the scheme due to them cashing in on the sudden rise in property prices over the last year, some properties had doubled in price.

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The vetting procedure rejects had significantly increased. 105 checks had been carried out so far with 33 failing so they had been refused accredited private landlord properties, 6 were pending. It was explained that some tenants had outstanding debts that had been written off by the Council. The tenants had been made to pay back the arrears before they would be allocated an accredited private landlord property. She added that she felt that the written off debts should be pursued by the Council.

It was explained that details of the proposed selective licensing were still to be produced in detail. Selective licensing could be used by local authorities to tackle low demand and anti-social behaviour. Designation of an area for selective licensing would usually need approval from national government unless general approval had been given to Councils filling certain criteria.

H Clark explained that there was no progress on the empty property strategy as this was still being devised.

The Chair thanked H Clark for her report.

AGREED that the information given, be noted.

JC/MA/com.gen./050708
19 July 2005