

Item 7

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday, 13 December
2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor V. Crosby (Chairman) and

Councillors D.R. Brown, Mrs. B.A. Clare, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
M.T.B. Jones, J.P. Moran, B.M. Ord, Mrs. C. Potts and Mrs. C. Sproat

Invited to attend: Councillor M. Iveson

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, A. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin,
J.G. Huntington, B. Meek, G. Morgan and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors B.F. Avery J.P and Mrs. L. Smith

OSC(3)18/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were received.

OSC(3)19/05 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meetings held on 8th November, 2005 and 28th November, 2005 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

OSC(3)20/05 STREETS SAFE
The Chairman of the Streetsafe Initiative Review Group presented the report of the Review Group which had been established to look at the Streetsafe Initiative and the Council's role in supporting the scheme. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety was also present at the meeting to answer any queries.

It was explained that the Streetsafe Initiative had been launched by Durham Constabulary as a means of challenging the perception of fear of anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder.

The Streetsafe Strategy highlighted the need for the Constabulary to work effectively with the extended policing family, including Special Police Constables, Police Community Support Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Volunteers, as a means of delivering re-assurance. It also emphasised the need for signal crimes to

be tackled in partnership with members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 recognised the important role of the Council in the Initiative and the review was established to evaluate partnership arrangements.

The review particularly examined :-

- Streetsafe Strategy
- Sedgefield Borough Council's role in Streetsafe
- Costs and benefits
- Opportunities for joint working

It was explained that the Review Group had gathered evidence and information in several ways including meetings, contributions from Durham Constabulary and officers from Neighbourhood Services, Community Services and Environmental Services and consideration of the Streetsafe Strategy document.

When considering the Borough Council's support, commitment and contribution, it was noted that the authority contributed significantly to the success of the scheme and recognised its commitment to the aims of Streetsafe by increasing associated revenue budgets for 2005/6.

The importance of a partnership approach was recognised as essential in ensuring the success of Streetsafe. In addition, the partnership needed to ensure that everyone involved had the opportunity to make an active contribution including Town and Parish Councils, County Council and local communities.

The Review Group concluded that in order to measure the success and effectiveness of the scheme the development of national and local targets was required.

It was explained that the success of the Streetsafe Initiative required the Council's assistance in raising public awareness of the Streetsafe scheme and in seeking to engage with local communities. The Borough Council also needed to increase understanding of its Section 17 responsibilities for crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations had been formulated by the review group for consideration by Cabinet. Those recommendations were identified in the report.

During discussion reference was made to funding and the need to provide sustainable funding to support the initiative.

The Committee was informed that the review process had been very rigorous and well informed. It involved genuine partnership working and the issues were being responded to in a strategic manner. Streetsafe could not function in isolation. It involved an element of environmental

improvement as well as Neighbourhood Wardens and the use of CCTV etc. It was noted that additional Wardens had been recruited and this was resulting in improved services.

During discussion reference was also made to the issue of binge drinking and the creation of designated “no drinking” areas. It was noted that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership was addressing the issue and would be looking at the possibility of creating designated “no drinking” areas.

The Committee also discussed funding and the need to ensure that there was adequate provision in the budgets to tackle issues associated with anti-social behaviour.

A query was also raised regarding the number of fixed penalties which had been issued. It was explained that enforcement was not the only means of dealing with the issues of anti social behaviour. Education and dealing with signal crimes was also important. It was considered that the increase in the number of Neighbourhood Wardens was having an impact.

Discussion took place regarding crime figures and, in particular, their accuracy. It was considered that a number of crimes were going unreported as a result of difficulties in contacting the Police. The Committee was informed that the crime figures were those produced by the Police and were the only statistical indicators of the level of anti social behaviour available.

Reference was also made to the value of the Authority’s Play Scheme and other initiatives as a means of dealing with the issues of community safety, community engagement and environmental issues.

AGREED : 1. *The report and recommendations contained therein be submitted to Cabinet for consideration*

2. *That the following recommendation be included :-*

The Authority considers ways to ensure sustainable funding is allocated to achieve the objectives of the scheme.

OSC(3)21/05 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

It was explained that Mr. Howard Keeble from Jeremy Benn Associates, consultants who had undertaken a strategic flood risk assessment on behalf of the Council, was present at the meeting to inform the Committee on the findings of the assessment.

Chris Myers, Forward Planning Manager, was also present at the meeting to answer queries.

It was explained that as part of the National Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 local authorities were required to manage flood risk. Jeremy Benn Associates had been commissioned to undertake an assessment to

comply with that guidance. The assessment had identified three issues: the extent and severity of flood risk in the area, providing a clear risk based approach to development control and contributing to the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

The presentation outlined the strategic Flood Risk Assessment process, the purpose of the assessment, the data included in the document and its use as a consultation document to develop the Local Development Framework. It was noted that there was information which the assessment did not include such as site specific data.

It was explained that at the heart of the assessment was a sequential test which was a process for local planning authorities to draw up or revise policies in development plans or in considering planning applications and permitting sites for development in order of acceptability in terms of flood risk.

The presentation also detailed the flood zone definition, a framework for the management of flood risk, how the risks were quantified and the concept of residual risk.

It was explained that the Flood Risk Assessment was a working document and a tool for planners and developers to use. The assessment included plans showing allocated development sites, categorisations etc as follows:-

- Zone 1 Having no flood risk (local issues to be checked)
- Zone 2 Generally suitable
- Zone 3 More difficult and better understanding was needed of flood risk. Development should be steered away from these high risk areas

Of the 90 sites allocated for development in Sedgefield Borough only 2 were (partially) located in flood zone 3 (the high risk zone). The rest were within flood zone 1.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to comment on and raise queries in relation to the assessment.

Reference was made to the flooding of sites and the need to determine responsibility, particularly in relation to the payment of compensation to those affected.

During discussion reference was made to the flooding of redundant mine shafts, the implications for new development and whether the assessment covered those issues. It was explained that the Flood Risk Assessment was a strategic document and any development site would need to have a specific assessment undertaken.

Discussion took place regarding flooding in localised areas and the Council's response. It was explained that the Council did monitor outflows and provided a service of sandbagging, which was the responsibility of "street scene". There was, however, a limited budget associated with this operation and the budget merely reflected a monitoring process.

Members also considered the issue of Woodham Burn, Newton Aycliffe, which was subject to flooding. It was pointed out that the Burn used to be cleaned out on a regular basis. It was however, a number of years since this had been done. It was queried whether this was a funding issue. It was recognised that there were areas which had historical flooding problems. It was not purely a funding issue but resources reflected the fact that historically the budget had been largely focused on maintenance. A different approach would be required to meet the needs of specific projects/issues. It was suggested that match-funding was needed from Town/Parish Councils to deal with specific issues.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the recommendations detailed in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment be implemented.*
 - 2. That consideration be given to whether adequate funding has been allocated to tackle flooding issues identified for which the authority has responsibility.*

OSC(3)22/05 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the current work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Members were informed that the ongoing reviews had now been completed. It was anticipated that the scoping documents would be presented to the next meeting in order that Members may determine which of the topics identified for future reviews should be undertaken.

Discussion took place on items to be discussed at the January meeting of the Committee and in particular cars parked on verges. It was urged that a representative of the County Council be invited to attend.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the position on Overview and Scrutiny Reviews be noted.*
 - 2. That Members support the inclusion of the item "car parked on verges" and that a representative from Durham County Council be invited to attend.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237 email:enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk

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