

THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY 26 JUNE 2007

Present: Councillor C Patching (Chair)
Councillors B Burn, R Burnip,
P J Campbell, Mrs A E Laing, T Longstaff,
Mrs S Mason, D Milsom and
T Unsworth

Also Present: Councillor G Patterson – Executive Member
for Liveability
Councillor Mrs J Freak – Executive Member
for Social Inclusion and Culture

Apologies: Councillor Mrs J Maslin

- 1 **THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING** held on 5 June 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were confirmed.

MATTERS ARISING

- (a) **Forward Plan
(Minute no 5 refers)**

The Chair explained that the Director of Community Services had been invited to the meeting to provide a brief on some of the related issues in the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

- (b) **District of Easington Scrutiny Annual Report 2006/7
(Minute no 7 refers)**

The Chair explained that the training on scrutiny would be held the following day at 9.30 am in the Council Chamber.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

- 2 **THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE** held on 12 June 2007, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, were submitted.

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

Item 5 – Future of the Kerb It Service

The Chair explained that the Director of Community Services was in attendance to provide a presentation on the Waste Strategy for England and suggested that all questions on the Kerb It Scheme be deferred until the presentation.

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

3 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

The Chair welcomed Mr Sinclair to the meeting.

4 FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Chair reported that the following matters were raised at the meeting on 18 June 2007:-

- (i) staffing review of the Planning and Building Control Services
- (ii) scrutiny training by INGOLOV University of Birmingham

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

5 SERVICE UNIT PERFORMANCE REPORTING – NEIGHBOURHOOD INITIATIVES

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives which updated Members on progress of the Neighbourhood Initiatives Unit, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The report provided an update on progress of the Neighbourhood Initiatives Unit which comprised Community Safety, Youth Strategy, Social Inclusion, Arts Development and Sports Development.

The Community Safety Partnership was co-ordinating three overarching areas of service improvement approved through the LSP. These related to targeted interventions aimed at reducing repeat offending, tackling anti-social behaviour and addressing low level environmental crime and the links between poor environmental conditions and a high level of fear of crime. The total value of the programmes was £4.8m with a NRF contribution of £616,000.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives advised that a third Operation Milkshake ran from 18 May – 1 June in Horden, Blackhall and Hesleden. The operation which involved multi-agency enforcement action supported by prevention advice had achieved some excellent results and strong public approval in previous initiatives covering the west of the district and Peterlee. The report detailed the action from the latest Milkshake.

The district's first re-deployable CCTV system was now fully operational following the installation of cameras into Easington Colliery and Blackhall. The cameras which recorded 24 hours per day, 7 days per week could be monitored from the police and Council Offices using new Wi-fi technology. Ten cameras had been deployed and a further 4 cameras would soon be monitoring additional locations around the district. The full 14 camera system required no hard wire connections and had been installed for £100,000 making it one of the most cost efficient systems in the region.

There had been a long delay in bringing the Easington Colliery system up to full operational standard since the erection of the columns and cameras in December 2006. The delay which had been caused by technical problems in the system transmission and recording, together with co-ordinating operator training had led to some frustration amongst the local community with the perception that the system was ineffective. To reassure the local community of the systems operational capacity, Members and community representatives had been invited to view the

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system at the control room while a detailed press release had also been issued outlining the capability and benefits of the system.

In the 5 months since the cameras had been operational, anti-social behaviour in Easington Colliery had fallen by 23% and crime by 25% compared to the previous 5 months.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives referred to the quarterly performance figures and explained that as previously advised, changes in recording practices by Durham Constabulary had had an effect on performance indicators however there had been an increase in domestic burglary and vehicle crime during the quarter although the overall trend against the base year of 2003/4 remained good. Burglary had fallen by 23% and vehicle crime by 20%.

The Youth Strategy Team co-ordinated the delivery of the district's Youth Strategy and supported the development and administration of the Youth Forum. There had been an awareness raising campaign on Galaxy Radio. The campaign focussed on sexual health and alcohol issues while promoting involvement in the forum. The forum had been commissioned to produce an anti-binge drinking CD for primary schools and was working towards the establishment of peer alcohol mentors and to support the district's Alcohol Strategy.

On 7 June, the first Pride in Easington community awards were held. Over 100 people attended a presentation evening held at Shotton Hall. There were 8 categories of award with 3 nominations in each category. The awards were developed to recognise the contribution of local people in groups in supporting their local community and to encourage further community involvement in the pride initiative.

The Social Inclusion Team worked in partnership with statutory and voluntary service providers to address the causes of social exclusion in the district. The Polish residents support group had now agreed their draft terms of reference and regular monthly meetings had been established.

The Arts Team were continuing to develop a creative range of cultural activities for local people to enjoy and experience which contributed towards the delivery of some of the Council's corporate objectives. Activities in the last quarter were detailed in the report.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that during the Easter half term holiday, a varied programme of activities was organised throughout the district at various venues. Activities included gymnastics, archery, badminton, cricket, trampolining, netball, football and basketball. A total of 350 young people attended the activities.

The report also provided details of achievements and non-achievements within the unit.

A Member referred to the CCTV in Easington Colliery and explained that this had been a public relations disaster. Members and representatives of the community had received conflicting advice from PCSOs and Officers of the Council. There were 10 additional portable cameras and he queried how they would be monitored.

The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the deployable CCTV cameras were linked into the same system. They would take a couple of weeks to move as planning permission was required if they were to be placed on telegraph poles. The

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cameras were intended to target hotspot areas. Easington Colliery, Blackhall and Deneside had been identified as hotspot areas and the cameras would be installed for approximately 6 months. Columns could be installed into certain locations then the cameras could be moved more easily. There were also bespoke CCTV columns and community premises where the cameras were located.

A Member queried if the CCTV system was built upon would funding be available for monitoring. The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that if the CCTV system was expanded, the District Council could partner with other District Councils. If the system started to provide value then the District Council could have a purpose built monitoring suite but this would be very expensive. The cost of the District Council's system was a lot cheaper. He accepted that there had been some misinformation although some had come from members of the community.

The Director of Community Services explained that he had been disappointed by some of the headlines in the press. Some had been justified but a lot was not and the District Council had responded through a press release.

A Member referred to the cameras that were to be installed in Deneside and he explained that there were a number of hotspot areas in the rest of Seaham. The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the locations for the CCTV cameras were discussed at the Street Safe Boards. Deneside was a high priority as well as the park areas.

A Member explained that the cameras were doing a good job and queried if the District Council was receiving much co-operation from the police. The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the CCTV was a partnership system and a lot of the monitoring would be via the Street Wardens. The Street Wardens were based at Peterlee Police Station but there was a possibility that some equipment may need to be installed into Seaham Police Station. He had received nothing but support for the system from the police. Some of the misinformation coming from Beat Officers may be because that it was not a police system and they were not fully appraised of the situation. He had spoken to the two Area Inspectors so information could be cascaded down to the Beat Teams.

Mr Sinclair explained that the cost of the CCTV was £100,000 and queried where the other £4.8m was expended. The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that the £4.8m was expended on a whole raft of projects that dealt with, for example tackling anti-social behaviour.

Mr Sinclair queried what the total cost for 12 months would be. The Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives explained that there were a whole portfolio of activities including a lot of mainstreamed activity to run the service. The cost to tackle anti-social behaviour through the projects was over a 2 year programme. A lot of work was around the causes and prevention of anti-social behaviour.

The Chair congratulated Officers, local Councillors and participants who had been involved in the Pride in Easington campaign.

The Executive Member for Liveability explained that the community awards evening was very well attended and was a celebration of the work that had been carried out in the community.

The Executive Member for Social Inclusion explained that the Access Group had received an award from Durham County Council for the facilities for disabled at Peterlee Leisure Centre.

The Chair referred to the anti-binge drinking CD for primary schools and commented that he was very surprised that it was aimed at primary schools.

Councillor Burn explained that he had chaired the Youth Forum but could not confirm whether the initiatives was aimed at primary school children. He felt that this could be early education and prevention.

The Chair thanked the Head of Neighbourhood Initiatives for his report.

RESOLVED that the information given, be noted.

7 **POLICY DEVELOPMENT – WASTE STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND**

The Director of Community Services had been invited to the meeting to give a presentation regarding the Waste Strategy for England and the implications of this upon the Council's own Waste Management Strategies.

The Director of Community Services explained that the District Council needed to reduce waste and recycle more. He referred to the waste hierarchy and explained that the most favoured option was prevention rather than disposal.

The District Council had a statutory responsibility to:-

- arrange for collection of household waste in the area
- collect commercial waste if requested
- investigate and make plans for commercial and household recycling
- collect at least two types of recyclable waste from households by 31 December 2010

The District Council could decide on how, when and what was collected from the kerbside. There was no statutory duty on the Council to collect side waste or provide second bins. There could also be a charge for special collections of bulky waste.

At present there was a fortnightly box 'kerb-it' collection in operation to March 2008 of glass, tins and paper, although this scheme was currently being reviewed. There was a fortnightly green waste collection to approximately 16,000 homes. A pilot scheme in the south of the district for plastics and cardboard called Parc-It had just commenced and would run till June 2008. There was a weekly residual waste collection including side waste some of which was then treated. There was also a special collection service, the majority of which was free although some elements were chargeable.

The overall performance for 2006/7 was as follows:-

- white goods 0.77%
- aerobic digester 19.69%
- green waste 3.93%
- bring sites 1.02%

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- kerb it 8.56%
- landfill waste 66.03%

The recycling and compost rate was 33.97%

The Director of Community Services explained that Baesweiler in Germany used an 80 litre receptacle for household waste and was collected once per month. There was also a two weekly collection for plastics and paper. Side waste was only collected using special bags which residents were required to purchase.

The Waste Strategy for England 2007 was published on 24 May and had a 2010 recycle target of 40%. There was to be a new performance indicator on residual waste and targets were likely on climate change. More emphasis had also been placed on commercial waste reduction and recycling.

The District Council would need to consider more and wider recycling services to meet the 2010 target. There needed to be more done on household waste reduction and this was a big challenge. More recycling services for trade waste was required although this was a resource issue. Collaborating with District Council and Durham County Council colleagues, the Council needed to work on a wider than district level on waste management.

The Director of Community Services explained that fortnightly collections, kitchen waste collection, compulsory recycle and twin bin systems were non-starters. Only 50% of the district's population used their recycle box.

Side waste recycle restrictions, limits on second bins, charges for special collections, green waste collection and plastic cardboard collection would all need to be used to meet the new targets.

There needed to be a development of a basic Waste Charter stating what the Council would do and what residents should do.

One area to be considered could be restrictions on side waste. Currently 2 – 27% of households had side waste. There needed to be good publicity and incentives to recycle and enforcement would only be used as a last resort.

The Director of Community Services gave details of how the policy would be developed when considering adopting new waste strategies. He indicated that it was intended to consult with focus groups of residents drawn from the Council's "citizen's panel". Thereafter, the results from the consultations would be brought to this Committee for consideration and comment. The intention would be that the views of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee be included in a report to be considered by Executive prior to recess.

A Member explained that Councils should be looking towards supermarkets. A box was often bigger than the contents and more consideration should be given by the building sector to disposing of their waste properly. The Director of Community Services explained that the new emphasis was not just on local Councils but to encourage the business sector to reduce the amount of packaging.

A Member explained that in certain locations there was hardly any residents recycling and some kind of enforcement should be introduced. The Director of Community Services explained that canvassers targeted the areas where recycling

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was not high. The common feedback from canvassers was that the residents could not be bothered. Incentives had been given out in the past to encourage recycling.

A Member commented that side waste had been identified in certain streets in the district and queried if it had been identified if this was from large families. The Director of Community Services explained that there was not that level of sophistication in the statistics. Families of a certain size should be entitled to a second bin but those who had no reason for a second bin could be asked to pay for its removal.

A Member queried how a resident not using the kerb it box was dealt with. The Director of Community Services explained that if names were given, an Officer would make contact and try to establish the reasons why they were not using their box.

A Member queried how the Parc-It pilot scheme was currently going in the west of the district. The Director of Community Services explained that no figures had been received as yet but early indications showed it was a success. The orange bag was put on the top of the bin so a separate collection was not required. The orange bags were then separated from the household waste. This could be extended to the rest of the district but as this was a pilot, the full costs and implications were not known. The Parc-It Scheme was subsidised by Premier Waste.

The Chair thanked the Director of Community Services for his presentation.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the information given, be noted.
- (ii) the results of the consultation with residents focus groups be brought back to a future meeting of this Committee and any views of the Committee used to inform a report back to the Council's Executive prior to recess.