

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

HEALTHY BOROUGH WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
24 June 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

- Present:** Councillor J.E. Higgin (Chairman) and
Councillors Mrs. S. Haigh, Ms. I. Jackson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, T. Ward and Mrs E. M. Wood
- In Attendance** Councillors V. Chapman, Mrs. L. Cuthbertson, A. Gray, G.C. Gray, B.Haigh, B. Lamb, Mrs. E.Maddison and A. Warburton
- Apologies:** Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. D. Bowman, J. Burton, Mrs. P. Crathorne, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson and K. Thompson and
Tenant Representative – Mrs. M. Thomson

H&S.1/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
No declarations of interest were received.

H&S.2/08 **MINUTES**
The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th April, 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

H&S.3/08 **CCTV ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN THE BOROUGH - PROGRESS UPDATE**
It was explained that Dennis Scarr, Head of Community Services and Andrew Aitken, Business Manager were present at the meeting to give an update on CCTV arrangements within the Borough. (For copy of presentation see file of Minutes).

The Committee was informed that the presentation would cover CCTVs contribution to the community safety agenda, a performance analysis of CCTV during 2007 and an update on the CCTV refurbishment programme. In addition two current issues would be considered namely CCTV within the new unitary local authority and also recent media coverage of CCTV surveillance.

In terms of CCTV's contribution to community safety, it was explained that CCTV contributed to Sedgefield Borough Council's Corporate Ambitions of promoting safer neighbourhoods and improving towns, villages and countryside. As such CCTV surveillance had the effect of reducing total crime, re-assuring the public, reducing the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour and reducing the harm caused by drugs and alcohol abuse. .

Performance figures showed that the existence of CCTV was seen to reduce criminal activity and was also a valuable tool in securing prosecutions. It was noted that annual statistics were available on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership website and reports were also circulated to Town and Parish Councils.

In terms of performance it was noted that :

- CCTV detection rates were up by 12% year on year
- 1,862 incidents had been captured on CCTV

CCTV detection rates for 2007/2008 were as follows :-

Criminal Damage	-	Up 126%
Violent Crime	-	Up 29%
Anti-social behaviour	-	Up 24%
Emergency Services	-	Up 47%
Substance Mis-use	-	Down by 75%
Theft	-	Down by 58%
Burglary	-	Down by 57%
Environmental Damage	-	Down by 6%

Details of Police responses to incidents during 2007/8 compared with 2006/7 were outlined as well as control centre responses during 2007/8. Police responses included arrests, the number of cautions issued, penalty notices/searches and reviews of CCTV footage. Control centre responses included a number of Police alerts, the number of emergency service alerts, number of Neighbourhood Warden alerts and CCTV reviews performed.

The Committee was updated on the CCTV refurbishment programme. It was explained that the control room displayboard had been completed and the CCTV camera refurbishment programme would be completed in August, 2008. The number of digital video recorders were to increase from 14 to 28 and 2 wireless links to Chilton were to be installed. In respect of CCTV signage replacement, the signs had been ordered.

Future developments in relation to CCTV were also outlined including a review of service charges, potential new business, new income from Northern Rail and CCTV accreditation.

Members were informed of discussions which were being held in relation to CCTV within the new unitary authority. It was explained that a number of workstreams had been established within the new authority to consider outstanding issues. Issues relating to CCTV were being discussed within the Community Safety Workstream. Discussions had been held regarding systems in use in each of the authorities and what was needed for the future. Options for the service would be explored after data/ evidence had been gathered to present to the Unitary Authority.

Reference was made to recent media coverage of CCTV surveillance, particularly the use of CCTV cameras for other than their original purpose .

It was explained that there were strict codes of practice in relation to surveillance. There was a requirement for authorisation to observe an individual and a process had to be followed. An application for such surveillance had to be signed by the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive of the Authority. There were concerns that CCTV in some local authority areas was being used for other than its original intention of identifying criminal activity. This, however, did not happen in this Council's area.

During discussion of this item Members raised queries regarding the quality of the coverage of CCTV monitoring in Shildon Town Centre. It was explained that this would be replaced as part of the refurbishment programme.

In response to a query raised regarding mobile CCTV it was explained that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had a mobile CCTV vehicle the direction for use and the deployment of which was agreed with the Police. The unit was active in areas throughout the Borough.

Members also made reference to the issue of feedback from the Police and the value of such feedback. It was recognised that there were difficulties in receiving feedback from the Police on the outcome of reported incidents. However, the situation was improving and the Council was working with the Police to help devise a way to provide such information.

Clarification was sought regarding areas which were allowed to be covered by camera from a persons house. It was explained that under the Data Protection Act cameras were permitted if focused onto a persons own garden and property. However, coverage of a street from a property was not permitted.

Concern was expressed regarding the increase in domestic violence. It was explained that the Domestic Abuse Team, which had been established, worked with victims to provide support and advice. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had targets with regard to domestic violence. The PCP and Police had dedicated staff to deal with protocols/arrangements to provide services and assist victims of domestic abuse. In addition the Council had use of a shared refuge facility within the County.

AGREED : That the Committee is satisfied with progress on CCTV arrangements within the Borough.

H&S.4/08

PERFORMANCE UPDATE REPORT - QUARTER 4 2007/2008 (START APRIL 2007 - END MARCH 2008)

Consideration was given to a report measuring performance against the Corporate Plan's Healthy Borough and Strong Communities Delivery Plans covering the period from 1st April, 2007 to 31st March, 2008. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The report provided data on 20 Healthy and 29 Strong Performance Indicators of which 11 performance indicators were key to the Council's aims and objectives.

Members made specific reference to the following :-

CPH22 – Percentage of Population that is within 20 Minutes travel time of a range of three different facility types of which one had achieved equality issues of standards. It was explained that this indicator was performing 7.3% under target. The Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre assessment had been delayed due to internal issues at QUEST. However, Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre was now scheduled to be assessed in June, 2008.

LPI 40 – Representative Facility Use by Young Women 11 – 19 It was noted that this was 3% above target which was a significant improvement.

BV064 – Number of Non Local Authority Owned Vacant Dwellings Returned to Occupation or Demolished during the financial year This was performing 26 properties below target. Demolition contract approval had now been received.

BV066(C) – Percentage of Local Authority Tenants in arrears who have had notices seeking possession served. This was performing 7.13% under target. There was a significant focus on tackling rent arrears which had resulted in an overall reduction of 10% and a collection rate of 99.09%.

BV212 – Average time taken to relet Local Authority Housing This Indicator was performing 11 days under target. The department had successfully let some long term voids in sheltered housing schemes which had impacted on this Indicator and had resulted in the target not being achieved.

CPS13 – Number of Homeless Applications It was noted the target for this indicator was to receive 350 applications. The actual performance was 26 applications which was a significant improvement as Members had previously expressed concerns on the number of homeless applications. A reduction in the number of statutory homeless applications was due to the commitment and increase of homeless preventative work.

CPS14 – Number of Homeless Applications from 16 – 17 year olds Performance of this indicator had reduced from 29 applications in 2006/07 to 2 applications in 2007/08. It was noted that significant improvements had been made to this indicator which was due to the commitment to Partnership working through the County Joint Protocol system which had enabled young people to secure alternative housing options.

CPS15 – Total CPS Crime within the Borough This was performing below target. However, the target had been set before the change in the way in which the police recorded incidents.

CPS09 – Number of Reported Domestic Abuse Repeat Victimization

This was performing below target. There had been a significant increase in the number of reported incidents and a strategy was being considered for dealing with the issue.

Members noted a number of PI's related to services delivered by Mears Ltd under recently introduced partnership arrangements and queried generally how those arrangements were progressing. It was suggested that appropriate officers be invited to the meeting to be held in September 2008 to give a progress report covering the first 6 months of the partnership.

- AGREED:-*
- 1. That the report be received*
 - 2. That progress on the housing partnering arrangements be incorporated into the Committee's Work Programme.*

H&S.5/08

WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for the Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes).

An update was given on progress on the Committee's two Review Groups: Healthy Borough Review Group and Strong Communities Review Group.

Members had identified that a progress update on the use of partnering arrangements within the Housing Department be included within the Work Programme.

It was also explained that at a meeting of Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10th June 2008 discussions had taken place in relation to progress made on the proposed Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT). As a result of the discussion it was suggested that the issue be referred to the Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Committee was informed that a Briefing Session for Members on LSVT had already been arranged to be held on Thursday 3rd July 2008 and that any queries could be addressed at that session.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the report be noted.*
 - 2. That the following item be placed on the Committee Work Programme :-*

Progress on Housing Partnering Arrangements..

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, Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4237, enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk