

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2013 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Ms. Lowe (Chairman) (Chairman)

Cllr. Mrs. Clark (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Ayres, Mrs. Ayres, Firth, Mrs. George and Raikes

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Bracken and Eyre

Cllrs. Brookbank, Fittock, Mrs. Morris and Mrs. Sargeant were also present.

9. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 July 2013, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

10. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

11. Ruling by the Chairman regarding Urgent Matters

In accordance with Section 100B (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman advised the Committee she had agreed to accept an urgent matter - 'New Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013'.

The matter was urgent because the report was originally published as a decision item for the Licensing Committee meeting to be held on 16 October 2013, however it had still not been designated a non executive function as anticipated. A decision needed to be taken by Cabinet before 1 December 2013 and this was the only scheduled meeting of the Advisory Committee before then.

The urgent matter was taken as Agenda Item 5 (a).

12. Actions from Previous Meeting

The actions from the previous meeting were noted.

13. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety reported she had been working on future policy changes and initiatives which would be on the work programme.

14. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)

There were none.

Housing and Community Safety Advisory Committee - 15 October 2013

15. New Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

Members considered a report which advised that the new Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 repealed the 1964 Act (and related legislation) and Part 1 of the Vehicles (Crime) Act 2001, creating a revised regulatory regime for the scrap metal recycling and vehicle dismantling industries. The Act maintained local authorities as the principal regulator, but gave the power to better regulate these industries by allowing the ability to refuse to grant a licence to 'unsuitable' applicants and a power to revoke licences if the dealer became 'unsuitable'.

It had been expected that the Home Office would make regulations about the new Scrap Metal Dealer Act which would allow the Council to manage the licensing process in the same way it managed its other licensing functions, namely to delegate them to the Licensing Committee, however these regulations had not been made. This was therefore an executive function and the responsibility of Cabinet rather than Council and the Licensing Committee. Delegations from the Leader to the relevant Officers would be made separately.

The Act provided that an application for a licence must be accompanied by a fee set locally on a cost recovery basis. The fee would provide the funding needed to administer the legislation and ensure compliance. The proposed fees had been calculated using the Scrap Metal Dealer Act 2013: Guidance on Licence Fee Charges.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to approve the appropriate fee levels as set out below:

Site Licence – Grant (3 years)	£415.00
Site Licence - Renewal (3 years)	£355.00
Collectors Licence – Grant/renewal (3 years)	£260.00
Minor administrative change to licence -	£30.00
Variation - change of site manager -	£160.00
Variation from collector to site licence -	£210.00
Variation from site to collector licence -	£120.00

16. 2014/15 Budget and Review of Service Plans

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the purpose of the report was for the Committee to advise Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within its terms of reference. Appendix C to the report contained a list of growth and savings ideas proposed by the Portfolio Holder and these together with any additional suggestions made by the Committee would be considered by Cabinet on 5 December 2013.

Housing and Community Safety Advisory Committee - 15 October 2013

The Chairman advised that the Chief Housing Officer had managed to find external funding which had made a saving, but this had been from one off funding. Further savings had been made from staff restructuring within the Licensing Partnership.

A Member wished it recorded that it was an impressive report, and the finance department had responded with alacrity to concerns only raised a few months ago.

Resolved: That the views on the growth and savings proposals identified by the Portfolio Holder, attached as Appendix C to the report, be agreed.

17. CCTV feedback from Working Group

Councillor Ayres, gave a [powerpoint presentation](#) on behalf of the Working Group. CCTV footage was shown as part of the presentation, at this point it was moved by the Chairman and

Resolved: That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting whilst viewing the CCTV footage, on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 (Information relating to any individual), 2 (Information which is likely to reveal the identity of any individual) and 7 (Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended).

CCTV footage was shown to the Committee.

It was moved by the Chairman and

Resolved: That the public no longer be excluded from the meeting.

The Chairman on behalf of the Committee thanked Councillor Ayres for the presentation, and the working group, officers and Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services for their work.

A Member stated that he would be sorry to see it go and if it was possible to have 24 hour coverage within budgetary constraints and capping he would like to see that, but if there were the funding it was also a question of priorities. It was pointed out that if there was no CCTV the Council would have to meet its statutory obligations another way.

Members were keen to explore all available options and be able to come to a balanced decision from which to advise a way forward to Cabinet.

In response to questions, the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services advised that the accommodation of the Tunbridge Wells system at the Sevenoaks control room had previously been investigated but at that time operating systems had not been compatible. Since then the CCTV Control room equipment had been upgraded, however even though there would be long term savings, the initial outlay would be costly. It was agreed that potential capital investment to get more economies of scale, needed to be more fully investigated.

Housing and Community Safety Advisory Committee - 15 October 2013

The Chairman invited the Chairman of Licensing to address the Committee. She felt there were two options missing from the presentation; keeping the CCTV but at reduced hours, or discontinuing its provision and looking at other methods such as conditioning licensed premises for CCTV at their expense. It needed to be self financing at the point of the problem.

The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services replied that the question of reducing hours to save further money was impossible because of the out of hours arrangements that had to be covered and, if staffing were reduced further it would be unviable. Many licensed establishments already had CCTV but this did not provide the ability to follow into the public realm.

The Committee acknowledged the excellent work of the officers and service provided by the CCTV Control room and agreed that the service should continue in the short to medium term. There was a need to look at the Council's strategy regarding CCTV from the medium to long term, particularly relating to the level of capital required for equipment replacement, whilst doing everything possible in the meantime to make the service even more cost effective. The Committee asked Officers to undertake further work to examine options to attract additional income and reduce costs. The Committee accepted that it would not be in the best interest of staff recruitment and retention if this area was reviewed every year.

Resolved: That the Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services submit a more detailed report to the meeting in July 2014, on options available and their cost effectiveness, including:

- operating at current level but looking for cost effectiveness where possible
- phasing out of the service with alternative methods to meet statutory obligations, for example through the addition of licensing conditions for CCTV;
- operating at reduced scale;
- self funding by local businesses;
- contributions from interested parties; and
- a cost benefit analysis of increasing the CCTV control room capability.

18. Community Safety Workshop

Members considered a range of Community Safety issues and were given the opportunity to look at these issues and score them in order to help prioritise them for the Community Safety Action Plan. Members worked together flagging up issues their wards faced and scoring the following areas for levels of concern and harm:

- Anti Social Behaviour
- Burglary
- Criminal Damage
- Domestic Abuse
- Drug Offences
- Environmental Crime
- Road Safety including speeding
- Robbery
- Substance Misuse
- Theft not including Shoplifting
- Vehicle Crime

Housing and Community Safety Advisory Committee - 15 October 2013

- Youth Issues
- Theft Offence focusing on Shoplifting

Members' views would be taken into consideration in the forthcoming Strategic Assessment which, in turn, would inform the 2014/15 Community Safety Action Plan.

19. Work Plan

The Work Plan was noted with a report on CCTV Operating options added to the meeting in July 2013. A Member said that he would like to see affordable housing on the work plan.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.28 PM

CHAIRMAN