

HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2013 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Ms. Lowe (Chairman)

Cllr. Mrs. Clark (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Eyre, Firth, Mrs. George, Raikes and Towell

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Ayres, Mrs. Ayres and Mrs. Bracken

Cllrs. Fittock, Mrs Parkin and Mrs. Sargeant were also present.

1. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Ms. Lowe be appointed as Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

(Cllr. Ms. Lowe in the Chair)

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Mrs. Clark be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

3. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

4. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety commented that a lot of important information was posted on the members' Portal but that it was not always possible to keep abreast of it.

Action 1: A list of new items added to the Members' Portal between meeting dates, to be listed at the bottom of each agenda

She advised that Members could choose to specialise in certain areas within the Committee's remit and reported that Cllr Ayres had already expressed an interest in Community Safety; Cllr Firth in Welfare Reform; and Cllr Mrs Clark in Housing. Cllr Mrs George also expressed an interest in Housing. She advised that Cllrs Ayres and Mrs Bracken, who had sent apologies, had expressed a wish to look at CCTV and it's overall benefits and value for money. Cllr Eyre also said he would like to review this area.

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Resolved: That a Working Group be set up to review CCTV, membership to be Cllrs Ayres, Mrs. Bracken and Eyre

The Portfolio Holder had been invited to attend the Scrutiny Committee on 18 July 2013 to make a presentation on her portfolio area and respond to questions from the Committee. She hoped all the Deputies and any lead members could be present as well.

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

There were none.

6. Scope of Officer Responsibilities

The Head of Environmental and Operational Services; Head of Community Development; and Head of Housing and Communications gave brief [presentations](#) to the meeting regarding their areas of responsibility and which of these areas came within the remit of the Advisory Committee. The Head of Housing and Communications gave a presentation on behalf of the Head of Finance. They also explained which matters they considered would be key upcoming issues and future challenges faced.

Within the remit of Animal Welfare, in response to questions the Head of Environmental and Operational Services advised that if people refused to pay kennel fees or did not claim the dogs the Council would bear the costs for kennelling for 7 days only and the Animal Warden or kennels would try and rehome the dog. The Council had joint enforcement warranting with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). Members should note there was a Licensing Committee that carried out the statutory functions for the Council. CCTV statistics were affected by the move on behalf of the Police of issuing of cautions and fixed penalty notices rather than arrests for certain offences. Members were keen that they should have access to these. The Council did not receive any funding from the Police and did not receive any money from the fixed penalty notices issued.

Action 2: The Head of Environmental and Operational Services to endeavour to obtain statistics on the number of cautions and fixed penalty notices issued by the Police.

(Cllr Ms Lowe left the room, Cllr Mrs Clark in the Chair from 7.36 p.m. to 7.40 p.m.)

The Head of Community Development set out the legislation under which the Community Safety Partnership operated and described the work of the Partnership and the Community Safety Unit. Officers produced an annual strategic assessment analysed local issues and an action plan was put in place each year to address crime and anti-social behaviour. Issues for the current year included reducing burglary and vehicle crime, reducing repeat incidents of domestic abuse, tackling alcohol abuse, working with young people, increasing the number of businesses involved in the Safer Shopping initiative and working with communities to tackle speeding. The Anti-Social Behaviour Officer dealt with approximately 150 cases of anti-social behaviour per year.

In response to a question from a Member the Head of Community Development advised that an EVA was an Environmental Visual Audit. An area that was in disrepair and

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associated with criminal or anti-social activity would be looked at and an assessment made of what could be done to improve the area.

Action 3: Head of Community Development to place a copy of the current Strategic Assessment on the Members' Portal, and quarterly quality monitoring reports.

A Member asked what could be done by Parish and Town Councils to promote 20 mph zones. The Head of Community Development advised that the Partnership had lobbied for 20 mph zones outside schools but that Kent Highways had a county-wide approach to lower speed limits and were not implementing them. Concern was raised about the increasing intakes in local primaries and the potential for more safety issues around schools. The Head of Community Development described two schemes to help improve road safety. These included Speed watch where volunteers were trained to monitor and record the speed of traffic, leading to enforcement where needed, and Operation Zig Zag, a Partnership scheme to deal with parking around schools.

Resolved: That a Working Group be set up to consider Road Safety, in particular around schools, and consist of Cllrs. Eyre, Mrs. George, Raikes and Towell.

In response to a question as to whether there had been many complaints since the new allocation policy had been introduced, the Head of Housing and Communications advised that there had been very few. She did not have the figures as West Kent Housing would have these. She accredited the low rate of complaints to an open and honest approach.

7. Welfare Reform Verbal Update

Cllr. Firth tabled a short [briefing note](#) to support her verbal update to Members on the work carried out so far in response to welfare reform. The Council Tax support scheme had been in place on time and on budget despite 10% less funding from the government and collection rates so far remained at the same level as last year. The housing and benefits cap would be phased in from the following Monday over a period of weeks. The District were fortunate to only have 20 affected households. Universal Credits were due to be rolled out nationally from this October, however the timetable appeared to have relapsed as it was now being said that an updated framework would be available from October 2013.

8. Work Plan

A draft work plan was tabled. It was agreed that the following be added to the work plan:

- CCTV Review
- Benefit Fraud and Investigations
- An update from Deborah White West Kent Housing on 'Small is Beautiful'
- Air Quality Monitoring and Management and Value for Money
- Road Safety Review
- HERO Scheme Update

It was agreed that all Members think about possible items for the work plan.

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THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.04 PM

CHAIRMAN