

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held 8th March 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Chris Weldon (Chair), Jenny Armstrong, Joan Barton, Alison Brelsford, Jillian Creasy, Tony Damms, John Knight, Martin Lawton, Diane Leek , Chris Rosling-Josephs, and Steve Wilson.

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1. WELCOME AND HOUSEKEEPING ARRANGEMENTS

1.1 The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and outlined basic housekeeping and fire safety arrangements.

2. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 There were no items identified where the public and press should be excluded.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

3.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anders Hanson and Frank Taylor.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIPPING

4.1 There were no declarations of interest or party whipping.

5.. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 12th January 2012, were approved as a correct record, with the exception of Item 3 – Apologies for Absence and Substitute Members, which was amended by the addition of Councillor Diane Leek to the list of Members submitting their apologies and, arising therefrom, the Chair referred to Item 8 – Sheffield Homes – An Update on Customer Scrutiny and the Implications of the Localism Act, specifically to the apparent confusion regarding the mistaken belief of the residents’ representatives who had attended the meeting, that the Committee would provide them with responses to a number of questions and concerns they had raised in connection with the former Tenant Scrutiny Steering Group. He stated that Peter Morton, Chief Executive, Sheffield Homes, had sent written responses to all the residents’ representatives, but they had indicated that they were not happy with such responses, and had subsequently requested a further meeting with himself. Arising from the concerns raised by the residents’ representatives, the Scrutiny Committee:-

RESOLVED: That:-

- (a) the concerns of the residents' representatives now reported be noted; and
- (b) in terms of the operation and governance of similar such groups, agreed that:-
 - (i) no other such groups should be established or disbanded without the full consent of the residents' representatives;
 - (ii) a Councillor be present at all future meetings of any such groups;
 - (iii) the addition of any further tenants to groups should be agreed by the consent of all existing group members; and
 - (iv) the final arbiter in terms of governance arrangements for such groups should be the City-wide Forum.

6. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 6.1 Mr Martin Brighton raised a number of questions regarding Indices of Multiple Deprivation in connection with Low Edges/Batemoor, allegations regarding the bypassing of Tenants' and Residents' Associations by Sheffield Homes, Community Policing and the forthcoming City-wide Tenant Consultation.
- 6.2 The Chair stated that the questions would be forwarded to the relevant officers, with a request that they respond in writing to Mr Brighton.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE 2012

- 7.1 The Committee received a presentation from Inspector Paul McCurry, South Yorkshire Police/Head of Community Safety, Sheffield City Council, reporting on what the Police and the City Council aimed to do in order to make Sheffield residents be safe and feel safe. The main aims would be to reduce anti-social behaviour (ASB) and low level offending, work to create sustainable and cohesive communities, tackle substance and alcohol misuse and protect the most vulnerable. He stated that the work to be undertaken in achieving these aims involved using the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment, which comprised an overview of crime, disorder and substance misuse issues in Sheffield, and which the Police submitted to the Home Office on an annual basis.
- 7.2 Inspector McCurry reported on the new Community Safety Model, which was based on the Whole Household approach, which reduced duplication, created opportunities for information sharing across partner organisations and 'designs out' crime through physical planning, licensing, regulation and

community planning. The approach would help to provide ASB/Community Safety Structures that were fit for purpose and strengthened the role of the Safer Neighbourhood Teams in order to ensure effective delivery of services. The approach would also provide the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership with the best opportunity possible to fulfil its core objectives and to build capability and capacity within communities to tackle community safety issues. He referred to the three key strands of investment, which included prevention, crisis resolution and recovery, and reported on budget issues. He concluded by referring to the proposed collaboration with other partners, including the Health and Wellbeing Board, those delivering the Strong, Competitive Economy and Great Place to Live outcome areas and those responsible for the Successful Young People outcome area about addressing crime and ASB by young people.

7.3 Members of the Scrutiny Committee raised a number of questions and the following responses were provided:-

- Whilst the Council's Car Parking Services had the necessary powers to issue parking tickets, the Police were committed to looking at granting Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) similar powers. Whilst the PCSOs had certain enforcement powers, this did not include the power to arrest people, and they were generally tasked to respond to low-level crime.
- The Police did not wish to see any of the good practices adopted by officers in certain areas, such as the South East Community Assembly area, disappear when the Safer Neighbourhood Areas were altered to align with the Community Assembly area boundaries. It was unlikely that this would happen as investment by the Police would remain the same.
- A report on the ASB Review had not yet been submitted to the Cabinet. The key recommendations contained in the Review included having one, uniform service whereby frontline staff would deal with issues in the community and looking at how the Police would deal with ASB and community safety priorities, how partners responded and how to deal with ASB Orders. Following approval of the Review by this Scrutiny Committee, work had commenced on its contents and as part of this work, a place-based tasking pilot had been established in Southey. Further work under this initiative would involve looking at the Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs), and it was planned that any proposals would be reported back to a future meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.
- One of the three key strands of investment included the implementation of the Key Worker Model to replace NAGs. This model involved identifying a key individual who would work with a family, and who could be the link between all the different partners involved, and be responsible for pulling all the different services

together. In terms of making the operation of the NAG more efficient, particularly in the light of the likely reduction in the numbers of Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNOs), attempts would be made to refocus the NAGs to look at issues regarding ASB. There was a need for the NAGs to be accountable to the Community Assemblies. Whilst the SNOs would be responsible for Community Assembly areas, there would still be flexibility in that, if required, they would help out in surrounding areas. The proposed changes would also include the addition of a new team of officers responsible for working on migration, cohesion and community safety. With effect from 1st April 2012, there would only be seven Safer Neighbourhood Inspectors (SNIs) to align with the Community Assemblies, which would help to deal with efficiency savings.

- The changes would involve the transfer of the SNOs from the Community Assembly areas to a central team, although they would still be responsible for the same areas. The changes aimed for a more consistent approach and it had been identified that there was a need for a structure to pull all the SNOs together in order to look at key issues in the Community Assembly areas.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Committee:-

- (a) received and noted the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses provided to the questions and comments; and
- (b) thanked Inspector Paul McCurry for the presentation now made.

8. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

- 8.1 The Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from Inspector Paul McCurry, South Yorkshire Police/Head of Community Safety, Sheffield City Council, providing an update on the position regarding the appointment of Police and Crime Commissioners.
- 8.2 Inspector McCurry reported on the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the operation of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), the implications of the new arrangements for Sheffield and how the Safer and Sustainable Communities Partnership (SSCP) was preparing for the new arrangements. The main role of the PCC was to bring the voice of the people into policing and to be accountable for it and to hold police forces and Community Safety partners to account, making them more efficient and effective, and reducing crime. The new arrangements would result in the abolishment of police authorities. He referred to the functions and powers of PCCs, the elections process, details regarding PCPs, including arrangements for the establishment of such Panels, their policy intent, regulation and funding. He concluded by reporting on how the SSCP was preparing for the introduction of the role of PCCs.

8.3 Members of the Scrutiny Committee raised a number of questions and the following responses were provided:-

- In terms of the elections, the Home Office would not be providing the necessary funding and there did not appear to be any limits in terms of how much people could spend on their election campaigns. To become a prospective candidate, all people had to do was to declare their intention to their local authority within a specific deadline. They would be required to produce a manifesto as part of the process, and if elected, would be held to account on this. There were a number of restrictions in terms of who could become a candidate. It was not known at this stage whether people would require nominations from a given number of people.
- Whilst there were procedures in place to deal with any issues arising from the elections, it was accepted that there was a need for an effective scrutiny process regarding the role of the PCC. Further information on this was to be released shortly.

8.3 RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny Committee:-

- (a) noted the information reported as part of the presentation, together with the responses to the comments and questions raised;
- (b) expressed its concerns regarding the election process, particularly the apparent lack of clarity with regard to the candidates' spending limits and the position regarding the apparent lack of powers to depose a Police and Crime Commissioner during their term of office if it was found that they were not suitable for the job; and
- (c) In the light of the concerns now expressed, requested the Interim Director, Community Services, to seek further information on these issues.

9. **POLICY UPDATE**

9.1 The Scrutiny Policy Officer submitted a report providing an update on policy changes introduced by the Government during February and March 2012, relating to local housing demand and opportunities for community and voluntary organisations to apply for funding to help revitalise communities.

9.2 RESOLVED: That (a) the contents of the report now submitted be noted; and

- (b) Members be requested to forward any views on the contents of the report to the Scrutiny Policy Officer.

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