

Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Tuesday, 8th December, 2009.

Present: Cllr Julia Cherrett (In the Chair), Cllr Jackie Earl, Cllr Mohammed Javed, Cllr Jean Kirby, Cllr Bill Noble, Cllr Bill Woodhead

Officers: M Batty, P Dobson (DNS); Mrs T Harrison, Mrs J Trainer, Peter Mennear (LD)

Also in attendance: Cllr Steve Nelson, Cllr John Fletcher, Cllr Mrs Suzanne Fletcher, Cllr Aidan Cockerill, D Brunskill, J Hodgkinson (Cleveland Police Authority) and J Bramley (member of the public)

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Liz Nesbitt, Cllr Mrs Allison Trainer

HCS 31/09 **Declarations of Interest**

Councillors Woodhead and Mrs Cherrett both declared a personal non prejudicial interest in relation to Monitoring of previously agreed recommendations - Initial Progress Report - Review of Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and CCTV due to being Members of Tristar Board.

HCS 32/09 **Monitoring of previously agreed recommendations - Initial Progress Report - Review of Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and CCTV**

Members considered the assessments of progress in relation to the implementation of the recommendations from the review of Neighbourhood Policing, Neighbourhood Watch and CCTV.

Members discussed the recommendations that had not been fully implemented within the specified timescale.

Recommendation 1 - Members were advised that discussions had taken place with the police regarding whether non emergency calls coming into the Control Room could then be forwarded on to appropriate agencies if necessary, however the Control Room did not feel that they could do that due to the volume of calls. However talks are still ongoing as the Police Authority continue to review the future of the call centres management and operational arrangements.

Discussion took place concerning the proposal of having one national phone number for non emergency police calls; however it was observed that this had been trialled and was found to be unsuccessful as it confused people.

The Police officer advised that if individuals knew the local police stations non-emergency phone number they should use it but if individuals were in doubt as to whether the situation was an emergency they should call 999.

Recommendations 4a and c - The Chair observed that the Committee had been advised that this recommendation had been achieved; however it had been her experience that this was not the case, as Ringmaster e mails continue to be sent out without crime prevention advice, positive new stories, and in an unsuitable format.

It was observed that crime was low in the Borough yet the fear of crime was quite high so it was important to try and convey this to residents where possible.

Members were advised that the police were planning to develop a new series of ward based monthly newsletters and would be consulting with ward members on their content. These newsletters would be in addition to the Ringmaster alerts. Members agreed to amend the assessments of progress of 4a. from 'achieved' to 'on track', and for 4c. from 'achieved' to 'slipped'.

Members requested training from the Police on how to keep themselves safe during ward surgeries. The Scrutiny Officer advised that she would speak with the Head of Democratic Services to request a training session for Members.

It was observed that Police were happy to attend ward surgeries on occasion to address residents concerns, and that members should ensure that officers are invited if they would like attendance at a surgery.

Recommendation 6 - Members were advised that a significant amount of the funds had been obtained for the CCTV Centre but officers were trying to obtain funding for the remaining amount.

Recommendation 8 - MA/A verbal update was provided at the meeting. Members were advised that a bid for funds submitted to help the Council explore further inter-generational working between young people and older residents in the Borough had been unsuccessful. Officers were continuing to look into other available bids in the new year. Members agreed that the assessment of progress should be agreed as 'on track'.

CONCLUDED that:

1. The assessments of progress be amended and agreed as outlined above and further updates be provided as appropriate.
2. The police will liaise with Members to provide clearer and more informative information related to crime statistics, including the new newsletter.
3. The Scrutiny Officer would investigate training Members from the Head of Democratic Services in relation to keeping safe at ward surgeries.

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Overview Meeting for Community Safety services

Members were provided with an overview of Community Safety Services and police performance.

A number of achievements were highlighted, including:

Care Call had been re-accredited by Telecare Services Association and had been rated 'good' by the Care Quality Commission.

The Trading Standards Service were in the top 5% of the national performance framework and were below the unitary authority average.

Environmental Health won an RSPCA Innovator and Gold Standard awards for the Animal Welfare Service.

Members praised the Animal Welfare Team for their work in particular the work that was carried out for the 'Petropolis' court case. The Committee wanted their thanks to be passed on to the Animal Welfare Team.

The District Commander provided members with performance figures showing comparisons to other authorities. Members were happy to note that Stockton's performance had improved and that crime figures were low. The Borough had the lowest crime per 1000 population in the Tees valley, and the projected figures for the end of 2009-10 show a fall in recorded crime of 15%. The survey of residents in the British Crime Survey also showed that there had been a reduction in the number of people affected by crime.

The Committee acknowledged all the partners involvement in achieving such favourable figures.

Members were informed that a number of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council employees had been instrumental in formulating, with partners, an alcohol strategy further to the scrutiny review of alcohol services, and this would also need to be taken forward.

Members were advised that Cleveland Police were examining the establishment of a feedback unit to respond to low level crime and the actions taken, and also to, phone people back informing them if there was a delay on Officers attending a call. It was felt that this would assist people and be a good tool for good relations between the public and Police.

The Committee thanked Mr Brunskill (District Commander for Stockton Police District) for all the work that he had done in his service in the Borough upon being notified that he would retire in March 2010.

Members discussed issues relating to cyclists on the pavements and in the pedestrian areas of the Town Centre. Members highlighted the concerns of their residents. members were informed that the issue needed to be sensitively managed, especially on estates where children wanted to ride cycles in safety away from road traffic. The District Commander informed members that he would encourage officers to use their discretion but to give warning and fine if necessary.

CONCLUDED that the report be noted and the Committee's appreciation and thanks be passed to Animal Welfare team.