

# Housing & Community Safety Select Committee

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Thursday, 23rd June, 2011.

**Present:** Cllr Julia Cherrett(Chair), Cllr Derrick Brown(Vice Chair), Cllr Michael Clark, Cllr Evaline Cunningham, Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Ken Lupton(Vice Cllr Sherris), Cllr Miss Tina Large, Cllr Mick Stoker, Cllr David Wilburn

**Officers:** Beccy Brown(RES), Mike Batty, Mike Chicken, Simon Milner(DNS), Sarah Whaley, Graham Birtle, Anthony Duffy(LD)

**Also in attendance:** DCI Rob Donaghy, Cllr Mohammed Javed

**Apologies:** Cllr Andrew Sherris

## **HCS      Declarations of Interest**

**1/11**

None.

## **HCS      Draft Minutes form the meeting which was held on the 7th April 2011**

**2/11**

Consideration was given to the minutes from the meeting which was held on the 7th April 2011 for approval.

AGREED the the minutes be approved.

## **HCS      EIT Gateway Review of Administration, PA Support, Business Support and** **3/11      Performance Management - Action Plan for Agreed Recommendations**

Members were asked to consider the Action Plan setting out how the agreed recommendations from the officer led Efficiency, Improvement & Transformation(EIT) Gateway Review of Administration, Business Support, and Performance Management would be implemented and target dates for completion.

The Programme Manager informed the Committee that all recommendations had been implemented, all redundancies had been achieved by voluntary means or redeployment except for one employee who had 2 weeks left to complete of their notice period unless redeployment was found prior to this date.

The Committee heard that the recommended new structures were now in place and the predicted £1.5m savings would be met.

AGREED that the Action plan for agreed recommendations be noted.

## **HCS      Community Protection Service Overview**

**4/11**

Members received information regarding the Overview of the Community

Protection Service for the period, April 2010 to March 2011.

The Head of Community Protection introduced the Overview to the Committee by giving a brief background account of the service explaining that performance details of each portfolio within the service were presented to the Committee on an annual basis.

The topics discussed were as follows:

- 1) Crime and Disorder
- 2) Other Performance issues
- 3) Reviews and Other Management Processes

The main areas discussed within the topics were highlighted as follows:

1) Crime and Disorder

a) Members noted that 10 out of the 13 main categories of crime figures had improved during 2010/11 with only 3 areas worsening.

b) In comparison to neighbouring authorities Stockton was considered to be the safest area to live in the Tees Valley.

c) That the public believe that crime figures were not representative of all crime in the area, however the Head of Community Protection confirmed this to be less true in Stockton.

d) Most crimes are committed by the people living in the wards where the crimes occur.

e) A representative from the police informed the Committee that the police record information regarding drug offences as intelligence unless it results in an arrest.

f) Crime was unevenly distributed within the borough and out of 26 wards nearly half of the crime taking place was within 5 wards.

g) The remaining 21 Wards had crime rates below the national average.

h) The Crime Manager from the police informed the Committee that extra resources were provided where there were crime hotspots, and this was reviewed on a fortnightly basis.

i) Members asked if there were any differences between us and neighbouring authorities which resulted in Stockton having more favourable crime figures. The Head of Community Protection explained that the working relationships with Stockton's partners and the quality of staff Stockton employed could be contributory factors.

j) It was highlighted by the Committee that residents felt it made a difference to have a local police station and the presence of Police or Community Support Officers locally.

k) The Head of Community Protection informed the Committee that a public consultation was carried out every 3 years for the new Community Safety Plan. The most recent was carried out in April 2011 and received over 5000 responses ensuring that the plan was based on local residents' priorities.

## 2) Other Performance issues

a) Neighbourhood Enforcement Service issued fewer fixed penalty notices throughout 2010/11, which corresponded with a reduction in requests for street cleansing received from Care for your area.

b) Seizure of skips subsided in the latter half of the year and a Service Level Agreement was being put in place with Middlesbrough Borough Council to remove their unlicensed / in breach of licence, skips.

c) Stockton's Trading Standards formalised protocols in March 2011 with the new national Illegal Money Lending Team. This resulted in a successful operation in Thornaby in April 2011.

d) Progress made on the establishment of No Cold Calling Zones and Doorstep Crime Watch Zones. If Members were to establish additional zones then this would be done more quickly if carried out prior to December 2011.

e) DVLA to extend grace period to 56 days for out of date road tax.

f) The Committee reviewed the number of stray dogs handled and rehomed by Stockton Borough Council, also the number which were put to sleep. It was heard that some residents used the service to avoid dealing with dogs themselves so left them for Stockton Borough Council to deal with.

## 3) Reviews and Other Management Processes

a) The continued implementation of the EIT Review of Regulatory Services.

b) It was briefly discussed that the Taxi trade were still concerned about the Town Centre regeneration. There was a scheduled meeting for the 28th June 2011 to discuss further with the trade.

The Committee requested the following further information:

a) That the level of crime in the 5 worst hit wards be provided and also an average for the remaining 21.

AGREED that:

1) the information be noted.

2) further information be provided as requested.

**HCS  
5/11**

### **Quarterly Progress Updates on Previously Agreed Recommendations**

Consideration was given to progress of the implementation of previously agreed recommendations. There were outstanding recommendations from the reviews of Regulatory Services and Taxi Licensing.

The Committee requested the following further information:

That the Head of Community Protection explain why the operational timescales following a feasibility study, to reduce any delays in the production of plates and licenses had slipped, as this had an original completion date of December 2011.

Members heard that a detailed time and motion study was required and it was not sensible to carry this out prior to the new contact centre opening as there was to be a new structure within the service and therefore the slippage was deliberate.

AGREED that the Progress Updates be noted and the assessments for progress be confirmed.

**HCS  
6/11**

### **Taxis in Bus Lanes Report**

Members were asked to consider and discuss the recommendations from the Taxi's in Bus Lanes consultation report.

The Built & Natural Environment Manager, gave Members background information as to why this consultation had come about and informed the Committee that the Stockton Hackney Drivers Association (SHDA) had requested permission for taxi's to use Bus Lanes in the Borough highlighting that they are a valid form of public transport:

The following areas of the report were highlighted as follows:

- 1) Legality Surrounding bus lanes.
- 2) The variety of bus lane schemes operating within Stockton.
- 3) Accident rates.
- 4) Tees Valley Bus Network 5 year Improvement Scheme.
- 5) Issues surrounding licensed vehicles from outside the area possibly using bus lanes.
- 6) Requests from disability groups to introduce permit schemes.
- 7) Lack of take up from drivers for disability scheme possibly due to £10 charge for permit.

8) All taxi's were meant to be wheelchair compliant by 2011 however a change in government policy meant that this was now not the case.

9) Pro's and cons of why or why not Taxi's should use bus lanes including those for and against the scheme.

10) Tees Valley Unlimited had concerns with regards to Taxi's using bus lanes

11) The affect that the regeneration of Stockton Town Centre will have on the Taxi Trade.

The Committee requested the following further information:

1) That consideration is given to waive the £10 fee which drivers must pay for the disability permit.

2) The number of complaints from disabled people be provided by taxi firms.

AGEED that:

1)The recommendations be agreed and go forward to Cabinet.

2)further information be provided as requested.

**HCS  
7/11**

### **EIT Review of Community Safety and Security Services**

Consideration was given to the Scope and Project Plan of the EIT Review of Community Safety and Security Services.

The main issues/services that would be covered by the review included:

- 1) Community Safety
- 2) ASB Team
- 3) Community Safety
- 4) Community Safety Grants
- 5) Security Services
- 6) Security and Surveillance (CCTV, alarm monitoring, etc)
- 7) Care Call (community alarm service, telecare, telehealth, domiciliary care)
- 8) Neighbourhood Enforcement Services
- 9) Caretaking services(Admin Buildings)
- 10) Town Hall Housekeeping service
- 11) Concierge Security Service (fully funded by Tristar Homes Ltd)

The Head of Community Protection highlighted there were vacant posts within the service which resulted in a saving of £120k.

Members were given the opportunity to visit the surveillance centre to enable them to see how the service operates.

AGREED that

1)The draft Scope and Project Plan of the review be approved.

2)The Head of Community Protection and the Scrutiny Officer arrange dates for visits to the Surveillance centre

**HCS  
8/11**

**Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that the next meeting of this Committee was the 30th June 2011 at 2.00pm in the New Lecture Theatre at Municipal Buildings and would receive the Housing Review.

**HCS  
9/11**

**Chair's Update**

N/A