

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



20 FEBRUARY 2012 - 2.00PM

PRESENT: Councillor Jolley (Chairman), Councillor Chambers (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Booth, Mrs Bucknor, Cornwell, Farmer, Miscandlon, Peachey and Scrimshaw.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Archer and Stebbing

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Murphy, Oliver, Owen, Seaton and Chief Inspector Mike Winters

OBSERVING: Councillors Bucknor, Butcher, Melton and Patrick

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Bailey (Member Services), Richard Cassidy (Corporate Director), Gary Garford (Corporate Director), Mick Gipp (Safer Fenland Manager), Dan Horn (Head of Housing and Community Support), Mark Mathews (Head of Environmental Services), Alan Pain (Corporate Director), Carol Pilson (Head of Policy and Communications) and Trevor Watson (Head of Assets and Projects)

OS32/11 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 16 January 2012 were agreed and signed subject to the following addition:

Minute number OS27/11

(Councillor Mrs Bucknor declared her personal interest in this item by virtue of being a member of the leisure centre)

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OS33/11 FENLAND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (FCSP)

Councillor Oliver presented the Fenland Community Safety Partnership (FCSP) Update and Future Priorities report to the Panel, supported by Mick Gipp - Safer Fenland Manager and Chief Inspector Mike Winters.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Farmer asked for confirmation that the police are going to licensed premises and asking them to agree to a voluntary code of conduct. Mike Winters stated that officers are instructed to do what ever is necessary to carry out their duties;
- Councillor Farmer stated that under the Designated Public Persons Order (DPPO) police can remove alcohol from people who they believe to be causing a nuisance. How effective has this been? Mike Winters stated that we are seeing a reduction in anti-social disorder complaints;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she is pleased to see that there is a unit dealing with incidents of domestic violence in Peterborough and asked how this unit will work with the one based in Godmanchester. Mike Winters stated that it will be one centralised unit;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she understands that there are plans to cut the budget

for funding for domestic violence work by 50%. Mick Gipp stated that the overall budget from the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund has been cut by 50%, but that there are no plans to cut the contribution towards domestic violence;

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to the National Anti-Social Behaviour Field Trials were Fenland one of the 8 areas selected to take part? Mick Gipp confirmed that Fenland was is one of the groups involved in the Trials;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she is disappointed that there is very little data available for this trial. Mick Gipp stated that the trial was part of a national project and that the reports have gone to the Home Office, but that no results have been published yet;
- Councillor Peachey asked that with reference to the 77% who feel safer following a CrimeBUSTer visit, how do we know that? Mick Gipp stated that at the end of a visit, questionnaires are circulated and this is where the data has been taken from;
- Councillor Peachey asked what the arrangements will be following the selection of the new Crime Commissioner. Mick Gipp stated that that there will be a member from each district on the Police and Crime Panel and that the panel will hold the Commissioner to account but more details are still to be announced;
- Councillor Peachey stated that there are a high level of cautions issued, and asked what number of these people re-offend. Mike Winters stated that there is a national policy of Restorative Justice being introduced, but because it is relatively new the success rates are under review, however so far it is showing a low level of re-offending rates. Staff are being trained so that they use this for the right offenders, and that it is benefiting the right people;
- Councillor Booth asked how the statistics for this area compare to the national statistics. Mike Winters stated that crime levels in January have been low, but generally Fenland's levels of crime are inline with the national statistics. Levels within the district are different from area to area, and this can mask the overall issues sometimes;
- Councillor Booth asked how effective the CrimeBUSTer is, and how many residents have made use of this facility. Mick Gipp stated that 2300 residents have engaged with the CrimeBUSTer, we have come to the end of a 3 year programme with the CrimeBUSTer and figures looking at effectiveness are not yet available;
- Councillor Booth asked that with reference to the Cardiff Model, how will we emulate that here in Fenland? Mick Gipp stated that we will be targeting the licensed properties that cause problems and put a lot of energy and resource into the ones that are identified;
- Councillor Cornwell stated that the report is too high level and that percentages are not helpful in this document, what members need are numbers and asked if members can get those figures. Mick Gipp agreed that the numbers could be made available to members;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how the high rate of treatment for substance misuse is going to be focused on. Mick Gipp stated that these issues sit under the drug and alcohol team, we are waiting to see who will have this contract, but they are managed by County Council;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if Fenland will have any input into this work. Mick Gipp stated that we will be involved in discussions with the new contractor and will work with them on delivery of the services;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to the Safety Zones, have they now been reviewed? Mick Gipp stated that they are negotiating with schools at the moment to ensure that we are focusing on the same issues;
- Councillor Farmer stated that crime statistics for the Medworth area are some of the highest in Cambridgeshire, and yet has heard that calls to police reporting arson and burglary are not being dealt with as he would expect them to be, especially as these are both big issues in that area. Mike Winters stated that clearly there were errors in the way that those calls were taken, or the call taker misjudged the situation. There is a national policy that we do not attend all burglar alarm call outs, but the call process is being restructured, and the process is changing, so hopefully there will not be room to misjudge these calls in future;
- Councillor Booth stated that with regards to CCTV requests, how do you decide where the mobile units are to be placed, as they seem to be in a very fixed position at the moment? Mick Gipp stated that the mobile units are fitted where they are most needed, they have remained in the same position for some time as those needs have not changed;

- Councillor Peachey stated that there have been a significant rise in the number of drug offences, does this figure cover all drug offences? Mike Winters confirmed that this figure is for all offences including supplying and possession;
- Councillor Farmer stated that looking at the allocation of resources, has the proximity of the crime hotspots and Police Station in Wisbech been looked at. Mike Winters stated that more staff are moving into Wisbech in recognition of the need in that area;
- Councillor Cornwell stated that metal theft is not mentioned in the statistics provided, and asked how rural crime gets reflected in these figures. Mike Winters stated that there is a dedicated rural crime action team and metal theft is being recognised nationally. Mick Gipp stated that these crimes could have been recorded as a burglary or a theft from a vehicle;
- Councillor Farmer asked are police staff trained to recognise a catalytic convertor. Mike Winters confirmed that staff are educated using photographs;
- Councillor Miscandlon asked if we work closely with the Transport Police with regards to metal theft. Mike Winters confirmed that there is a specialist team working on this issue, which is a huge benefit to the force. The government have recognised that the metal theft statistics are not being recorded so for the purpose of analysis a note will be attached to reports in future;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated with regards to anti-social behaviour issues, people know when the PCSO finishes her shift for the evening, therefore shift patterns for the PCSO's should change so that people do not know when they have finished. Mike Winters stated that the working hours for the PCSO's cannot be changed as they are only allowed to work up to a certain time. What we need to do in this instance is to educate the officers in that area who work at the time PCSO's do not;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that statistics for fires have reduced but Fire Service statistics are on the increase. How are these measured? Mick Gipp stated that he will ask Martin Ockenden for clarification on this matter.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Fenland Community Safety Partnership (FCSP) Update and Future Priorities Report.

OS34/11 PROGRESS OF CORPORATE PRIORITY - STREETS AHEAD

Councillor Murphy presented the Progress in Delivering the Streets Ahead Corporate Objectives 2011 - 2012.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Booth asked with regards to the trade recycling the report states that the recycling rate of commercial waste stands at 7%, are there any plans to improve on this figure? Councillor Murphy confirmed that there are plans to improve on this, we knew that it would start low, but it is increasing month by month. We are looking at a partnership opportunity with 7 other Councils to focus on trade recycling;
- Councillor Peachey stated that the memorial gardens in Whittlesey had missed the planting season and asked what plans have been formulated for that area. Councillor Murphy stated that he was unsure of the plans for that area, but would raise that issue with officers following this meeting;
- Councillor Cornwell stated that the report is full of positives, and asked if there were any negatives to report. Councillor Murphy confirmed that everything is going very well;
- Councillor Jolley asked that with regards to refuse collection how many missed bins have been reported, and how much money does it cost to go back out and collect those that have been missed. Councillor Murphy stated that approximately 200 bins are missed each month, but that increased to 400 in December due to changes in the service. In January there were 469 bins missed out of a possible 250,000 which is only 0.19% of bins in total;
- Councillor Jolley asked what is the cost to the Council for these missed bins. Richard Cassidy stated that the number of missed bins has gone up, and they need to be focused

on to bring those levels down. The changes that have been made to the collection rounds means that there are several vehicles in one area so if a bin is missed it is much more likely that there will be another vehicle in the area. As the rounds settle down we hope that the missed bin figures will also go down;

- Councillor Jolley stated that although he accepts that there must be reasons for missed bins, we must look at how much this is costing the Council in future;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she is concerned that there are certain groups in the community who drop litter in the streets. There are committed volunteers that pick up litter from our streets, but what is done to educate people about dropping litter and is this available in other languages. Councillor Murphy stated that we are always educating people with leaflets and adverts, we also go into schools and talk to children. We try hard to educate and print leaflets and information in 14 languages in this area;
- Councillor Booth asked what clean up work is carried out in rural areas. Councillor Murphy stated that a cleansing team will be going to Villages as well as Towns in the future;
- Councillor Scrimshaw asked where the 5 new play areas are. Councillor Murphy stated that they are in Coates, Eastrea, Whittlesey, March and a small one in Chatteris. There were also 5 new pieces of equipment in Wisbech Park, these were negotiated as part of other work carried out and cost the Council nothing;
- Councillor Scrimshaw asked if any consideration would be made to moving the Christmas Market in Wisbech to an earlier date in December. Councillor Murphy stated that this market has always been at the same time of the year. It was unfortunate that the weather was particularly bad this year and that because of this some of the stall holders did not attend;
- Councillor Chambers asked if there are any updates on the issues of dog fouling. Councillor Murphy stated that increased patrols have been arranged at key times;
- Councillor Chambers stated that these increased patrols are at the wrong times, they should be after dark as it seems that this is the time that most dog fouling takes place. Councillor Murphy stated that this is a difficult issue to resolve. It has always been a grey area as we need to actually catch the dog fouling and the owner leaving the area, but that we are working hard to try to improve the situation;
- Councillor Peachey asked that with regards to the penalty tickets issued for littering, what happens if those are not paid? Councillor Murphy stated that the Council will take further enforcement action for unpaid tickets;
- Councillor Cornwell asked with regards to the markets review that is currently taking place, when are we likely to know the outcome from that. Richard Cassidy stated that the detail has not yet been put in place, but that members will be updated when more information is available;
- Councillor Booth asked where we are intending to go next with the Communities Project. Richard Cassidy stated that this was a pilot project but we will now consider if this is to be continued.

Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Progress in Delivering the Streets Ahead Corporate Objectives 2011 - 2012 Report.

(Councillor Jolley declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of being the Chairman of the Parkfield Sports Club)

(Councillor Scrimshaw declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of being the Chairman of Parson Drove Street pride Group)

(Councillor Booth declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of being a volunteer for Street Pride and Green Communities at Parson Drove)

(Councillor Scrimshaw declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of being an LEA Governor at Payne School, Parson Drove)

OS35/11 CALL IN OF CABINET DECISION IN RESPECT OF AGENDA ITEM 7 ON 26 JANUARY 2012 - COMMUNITY GRANTS

Members discussed the call in of the Cabinet decision from 26 January 2012 - in respect of agenda item 7 - Community Grants.

The reason for the call-in was concerns that the new process will disenfranchise partner organisations in the process due to lack of representation namely the police, Parish/Town Councils and the Youth District Council (YDC).

- Councillor Booth stated that people were involved in the decision making who are not now, and asked if these people had been consulted. This seems to be going in the wrong direction and is contrary to the Localism agenda. Councillor Seaton stated that we had to consider the cost implications; many Councils do not have grants at the moment because they simply cannot afford it. This was a situation that was looked into very closely;
- Councillor Farmer asked what if there is not a representative from a certain area with, how will that area be represented. Councillor Owen stated that Cabinet is not supposed to be a full representation of all areas, but all working in the interest of the district;
- Councillor Jolley asked for clarification that any member can come to Cabinet and ask to speak, so there will be the opportunity to support an application. Councillor Seaton confirmed that there is the opportunity for members to make their representation with permission;
- Councillor Booth commended the fact that we are working to keep the grants but is concerned that there is not the key involvement as there was previously with people like those on the YDC. Councillor Seaton stated that Councillor Garratt works very closely with the YDC and so there is still a link;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the process seemed to be very open and transparent before, but is concerned that the system of the application going to the Town/Parish Council before coming to Cabinet not so clear. What will happen if the Town/Parish Council are not supportive of the application, can they reject it at that stage? Councillor Owen stated that the Town/Parish Council's role will be to ensure that all the information is available so that Cabinet are in the best place to make a decision. The applicant will have the opportunity to meet with officers and they will be given the best advice depending on the circumstances of the application;
- Councillor Farmer stated that the process has always been problematic; Will officers continue to offer recommendations? Councillor Owen confirmed that officers will still make recommendations but Cabinet will be looking at the application in full;
- Councillor Booth stated that part of the value of the boards being involved was that they had good local knowledge. Councillor Seaton stated that Cabinet members are ward members too, and attend ward meetings. They are very aware of what is going on locally;
- Councillor Farmer stated that there were a number of applications for grants from national charities as we had not made it clear that we were looking to support local applications. Councillor Owen agreed that if this has not been done, it will be;
- Councillor Jolley stated that he understands that this process has to be streamlined and proposed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel accepts the original decision.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed to accept the original decision made by Cabinet.
(Councillor Booth did not support this decision)

(Councillor Scrimshaw declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of the fact that his wife works for Roddons)

OS36/11 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2011/2012 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2011/2012.

OS37/11 HORSEFAIR TAXI RANK

Councillor Owen presented the Horsefair Taxi Rank - Wisbech Report to the Panel.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that many things have changed since this process started included changes to the roundabout. Views were made last year but the changes to the roundabout must mean that this needs to be looked at again. Councillor Owen stated that we have had a consultation process, and we are going ahead with the system proposed. Gary Garford stated that there are issues with the roundabout, but we were tasked to look at the safety within the bus station itself, not the surrounding areas. We need to operate a safe bus station as this is the area that we are responsible for;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that if we have a duty to ensure the safety of the pedestrians using this area a zebra crossing will create more issues;
- Councillor Farmer asked why the company 'Atkins' were chosen to write this report, and how many others were considered for the job. Gary Garford stated that we wanted to get an independent view and approached Atkins as the County Council contractor for highways advice;
- Councillor Farmer asked why officers thought that Atkins were suitable to carry out this work. Gary Garford stated that they design bus stations and are on the approved list of highways designers in Cambridgeshire. Atkins are the consultancy company that the County Council use for all highways in Cambridgeshire, this is a high recommendation;
- Councillor Farmer asked if it is possible that Atkins could also put in a tender to complete this work. Gary Garford confirmed that Atkins are not on the tender list for this job, so there is no conflict of interest;
- Councillor Peachey stated that he is not too familiar with the changes that have been discussed, but understands that the roundabout is causing concern. Gary Garford stated that the roundabout is on the list of areas for concern, but does not impact on the decisions being made on the Horsefair Taxi Rank;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she is concerned that pedestrians are being guided towards a busy zebra crossing. Gary Garford stated that currently we have uncontrolled pedestrians walking diagonally across the road and crossing in front of buses, this design channels those pedestrians with signage and barriers to cross in the safest place. We have designed something with advice and assistance from Atkins, a final design that is the most appropriate for that area;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked why she has had no response to a letter to officers regarding this matter. Gary Garford stated that responses to the consultation will be going out shortly;
- Councillor Farmer asked how much the report from Atkins has cost the Council. Gary Garford stated that the fee to Atkins for the work carried out was £7000;
- Councillor Farmer asked that considering the financial pressure on the Council at the moment, why did we only obtain one quote to carry this work out. Gary Garford stated we share procurement with other authorities to save money. Atkins have a good reputation, the County Council have gone out to tender and gone through the procurement process;
- Councillor Booth stated that the concern is around the crossing, as part of the process would Atkins have carried out a risk assessment. Gary Garford stated that the Atkins report was commissioned primarily as a safety report. The brief was to design the safest proposal for this area, and to come up with some options for us to consider. The whole report is a

safety report. The option that has been chosen avoids conflict between the buses and taxis as it separates the two;

- Councillor Booth asked if this was the safest option that Atkins offered. Gary Garford confirmed that this was the safest option;
- Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if the only vehicles that are permitted to use that area are buses and deliveries. Gary Garford stated that there are also a couple of businesses that have access too;
- Councillor Jolley stated that this issue is frustrating for some Councillors as they were not involved in the process from the start, we must accept that this is where we are as this decision has already been made.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Horsefair Taxi Rank Report.

(Councillor Cornwell declared a personal interest by virtue of the fact that he works for a user of the bus station)

(Councillor Scrimshaw declared his personal interest in this item by virtue of the fact that he was on the original Licensing Committee who considered the Horsefair Taxi Rank)

4.35pm

Chairman