

COMMUNITY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

8th September 2003

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Harrington (Chair), Councillor Bambrick (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Lane and Mrs. Mead.

Conservative Group

Councillors Hood, Lemmon and Martin.

CYS/15. **MINUTES**

The Open Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th July 2003 were taken as read, approved as a true record and signed by the Chair.

CYS/16. **COMMUNITY SAFETY BEST VALUE REVIEW**

The Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that following the completion of the base-line assessments for youth related anti-social behaviour and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, improvement plans were now being progressed. In August, a multi-agency workshop was held and ideas for the Improvement Plan were discussed. A report from this workshop would form the basis of the Improvement Plan which was anticipated to be completed in draft form by the end of September 2003.

The Committee was advised that in terms of the Derbyshire County Council Best Value Review of Community Safety (which had been undertaken jointly with this Council) a draft Improvement Plan was complete. Issues arising from this Best Value Review would be incorporated into this Council's Review where appropriate.

CYS/17. **CRIME AND DISORDER STRATEGY**

The Committee received a copy of the presentation which had been made at all of the Council's Area Meetings during the previous cycle. Crime figures for burglary, violent crime and auto crime had all been reduced since the previous year. The Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that there was a higher profile of anti-social behaviour and this was recognised by the Government. It was understood that further funding would be released in October but the amount was yet to be ascertained. In terms of developing action and policy to reduce anti-social behaviour this was being investigated in the Community Safety Best Value Review and the CPA Public Open Space Review. Although the final improvement plans for these Reviews were not yet complete there were three areas of intervention identified. These areas were Visibility and Evidence Gathering, Co-ordination and Enforcement and Youth Engagement. These areas required significant partnership working both between Council departments, Housing, Legal, Technical Services and with other agencies such as the Youth Service, Police, Youth Offending Team and Housing Associations. The revenue costs of the interventions was also significant but could be manageable if existing

resources were reviewed and refocused in line with the proposals. The use of home office funding would also be utilised when available.

The Committee was advised that it was feasible that an Anti-Social Behaviour Officer and Youth Engagement Through Sport would be ready to proceed from April 2004 given funding of 33% from the Council. The Mobile Youth Bus and Outreach work was already being funded by the County Council and Youth Needs Survey and some facility provision was currently being undertaken. The Police had established a Beat Action Team which was working on localised issues.

Councillor Mrs. Mead referred to the need to target troublesome young females with Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in addition to troublesome young males. Councillor Martin queried whether the Council was participating in any initiatives which targeted parents of troublesome young people. The Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that parents were involved at the interview stage prior to Anti-Social Behaviour Order court proceedings.

Councillor Hood referred to nuisance motorbikes in the village of Findern and the difficulty in obtaining a prosecution for such offences. The Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that Neighbourhood Wardens would prove useful in such circumstances and referred to new powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act of 2003 which allowed Police to confiscate motorbikes etc. Councillor Bambrick suggested the idea of an Anti-Social Behaviour telephone line (similar to that of the Clean Team) which had previously been requested at a Working Group Meeting. The Council's Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Team was trying to identify more organisations willing to take young people on board to undertake Community Service.

CYS/18. **CULTURAL STRATEGY**

The Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that Strategy Group Meetings had not taken place either at County or District level as partners were waiting to see if Cultural Strategies were to be included in the Derbyshire or South Derbyshire Community Plan.

CYS/19. **MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR SKATEBOARDING FACILITY**

The Chair welcome several young people to the Meeting who had been involved in the arrangements for the establishment of this Skateboard facility. One of the young people was to be a member of the Management Group which would oversee management arrangements for the facility. It was felt that there was a greater chance of the project being successful if young people took ownership of the site. The Council's Facilities and Development Manager advised that he was pleased that the project had been delivered on time and that young people had been able to use the facility during the Summer. A risk assessment for the site needed carrying out and lighting for the site and entrances to the site needed addressing.

Councillor Mrs. Mead queried the safety of the younger users of the site as she had observed children as young as five years old using the site. The young people present advised that the older children were tending to "look after" the younger users but in most cases parents were also present. Young people had already travelled from Derby, Ashby and Burton to use the site

and a general discussion took place regarding the need to park cars on the site and a suggestion was made that the barrier needed opening during the weekend.

Councillor Bambrick asked the young people whether there would be any problems siting a BMX track adjacent to the skateboarding facility and was advised that problems would arise if dirt from the track got onto the skateboarding facility and accordingly a facility to wash BMX wheels would be required. A discussion took place regarding siting a possible graffiti wall on the site and the need for some shelter at the site and it was suggested that the two facilities could be combined. It was noted that the first management meeting was taking place in November. The Council's Community and Leisure Development Manager advised that there was a need to pursue CCTV camera facilities for the site.

The Chair thanked the young people for attending.

CYS/20. **SOUTH DERBYSHIRE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Committee was advised that the first Shadow Board meetings took place in July and August 2003. Consultations were now being undertaken on the draft Constitution of the Southern Derbyshire Local Strategic Partnership (SDLSP) with a view to formally establishing the Partnership at the proposed Forum's Annual General Meeting to be held at the Bretby Conference Centre on 24th October 2003. The Shadow Board had agreed to set up a small Working Group of Board Members and officers of the Partner organisations to prepare a project brief for the preparation of the Community Strategy and to identify its main themes. The project brief would outline the timetable and milestones for the production of the Community Strategy. The Committee was advised that a meeting of the Partnership was being held on 25th September 2003 at East Midlands Airport.

CYS/21. **ABANDONED VEHICLES**

The Committee received a detailed report on the work of the Environmental Health Section, legislative provisions, costs and future Government proposals for dealing with abandoned vehicles. The Environment Health Manager advised that the installation of direct access to DVLA had now been completed which allowed the Council to interrogate the DVLA licensing system via the internet to provide almost immediate notification of keeper details. The Council had recently been able to trace the keeper of an abandoned vehicle and charge them with the cost of its removal. This was the first occasion that this had ever been possible but it was hoped that in the near future with a change in the law this may become a more regular occurrence. Previously, the particular owner had always claimed that the vehicle had been sold on.

It was reported that the Government believed that stringent measures were required to ensure that all vehicles could be associated with an associated keeper who had clear responsibility for ensuring that the vehicle was operated legally and disposed of correctly. The key element in such an approach would be the continued fiscal responsibility of the former keeper. The keeper would maintain that responsibility unless they could demonstrate that they had notified DVLA of the transfer or the destruction of the vehicle. Under the current system it had been relatively easy for the keeper to disown responsibility for the vehicle claiming that he/she had no longer had the

vehicle in his/her possession. The Committee was advised that the legislation was likely to change on 1st January 2004 and would result in the keeper maintaining ownership of the vehicle unless they had informed the DVLA of a change of ownership or destruction. The Government intended to operate a positive enforcement policy by issuing fixed penalties by post where tax had not been paid on a vehicle or no SORN declaration had been forwarded to the DVLA.

Councillor Lane expressed concern that people would report vehicles stolen and then burn them out themselves and wished it to be clarified that the owner would still have to pay the Council in this event.

The Committee received the details of vehicles dealt with per month in the period 2001/02, 2002/03 and 2003 to date which showed that during this year there had been a reduction in the amount of abandoned vehicles reported.

CYS/22. **CLEANSING THE ENVIRONMENT BEST VALUE REVIEW ACTION PLAN**

The Committee was reminded that this Best Value Review was completed during Autumn 2001 and inspected in October 2001. The resulting Action Plan contained over 70 actions. A summary of the progress made was circulated for Members information.

In detail, the Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that progress had been made on the following actions:-

Home Composting

An initiative had been launched this year in partnership with Derby City Council and a private sector partner. A total of 459 units had been sold to South Derbyshire residents to date.

Fly Tipping Initiative

A pilot project aimed at reducing fly tipping had commenced in June 2003 in the parishes of Findern, Twyford and Stenson. Councillor Hood advised that fly tipping continued to be a problem in the Findern area and fly tippers had deposited waste under the signs installed asking people not to do so. He did however report that the Clean Team had removed the waste very quickly. Councillor Lane suggested that the Council issued a questionnaire to residents asking why people fly tipped and whether the proximity of a Civic Amenity Site was relevant. The Waste and Cleansing Manager agreed to pursue this matter, possibly through the Citizens Panel.

Compost Scheme

It was reported that this scheme was introduced to a further 2,400 households in Midway during the summer 2003. A partnership arrangement with neighbouring councils had been formed in order to procure suitable composting outlets in the future.

Kerbside Paper Collections

An agreement had been reached to implement fortnightly collections across the District with effect from October 2003.

Funding Success

The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that Government funding had been obtained for a pilot scheme for a kerbside collection of cans, bottles and textiles (in addition to paper) from 12,000 households in the District. The Government was to fund the start-up costs (boxes, marketing, etc) but subsequent revenue costs would be borne by the Council. The scheme was scheduled to commence in January 2004. The Committee was advised that this scheme was expensive as the crews would need to sort out the boxes at the kerbside and residents would need to be educated as to how to fill the box.

Councillor Lane expressed concern that residents must use the bag to deposit paper and not the box but was advised that these boxes would have lids and therefore a problem with paper blowing onto the streets should not occur. Councillor Lane queried whether any further funding bids would be made. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that another £250 million was to be released over the course of the next two years and he envisaged that the Council would bid for some of this funding.

The Committee was advised that the following issues would impact on the programme for the delivery of the actions scheduled for later this year:-

- ❑ The setting up of the new kerbside collection scheme described above.
- ❑ The imminent closure of Bretby Landfill site and the rescheduling of the refuse collection rounds.
- ❑ The introduction of a new Best Value Performance Indicator this year that required 900 inspections of different categories of land every year.
- ❑ CPA.

Accordingly, a revised programme was to be drafted for Members' Consideration.

A general discussion took place regarding the closure of the Bretby tipping facility and Councillor Martin advised that he felt that people were confused regarding which particular facilities were to close. The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that when the Council wrote to residents of the District regarding a change in the waste collection rounds which would arise from the closure of the Bretby tipping facility, residents would be advised that the Civic Amenity Site facility would still remain open to the public.

Councillor Lane referred to item No. 18 of the Cleansing the Environment Best Value Review Action Plan where the key task was "To improve the operation of the parish lengthsman scheme" and suggested that this would be an ideal area to pursue for young people to undertake Community Service (referred to earlier in the Meeting). The Waste and Cleansing Manager agreed to pursue this matter.

CYS/23. **LITTER PLAN**

The Waste and Cleansing Manager advised that the Council was currently "fire fighting" litter problems and was trying to implement Local Agreements

in order to resolve particular litter problems. He suggested that the Council would probably need to have “litter control zones” in the future.

Councillor Mrs. Mead expressed concern that the Road Sweeper could not always sweep due to parked cars and was advised that the driver did occasionally get out of the Sweeper with a brush and shovel and sometimes the Sweeper would go back to see if the car had been moved but this was not always successful.

Councillor Lane queried whether the Council was to produce a Litter Plan. He suggested that there was a need to alter the culture of the general public with regard to the dropping of litter and wished to involve the public and schools (particularly secondary schools) in such an education initiative. He suggested advising residents of the District how much it cost the Council to remedy litter problems. The Chair referred to a “No Tolerance” on litter implemented at Darlington and suggested that this type of initiative be pursued for the District. Councillor Lane re-emphasised the need to educate members of the public and the Chair asked the Waste and Cleansing Manager to look at policies the Council could implement to reduce litter. Councillor Lane advised that he felt that the problem of litter should be one of the Council’s priorities and suggested the Council could look at employing young people undertaking Community Service to clear litter.

CYS/24. **CAR PARKING STUDY**

The Chair suggested that the Council look at off-street parking and the issue of whether to charge for car parking in Swadlincote. The Legal and Democratic Services Manager outlined legal provisions with regard to off-street parking places and advised that much work would need to be undertaken if the Committee were to look at charging for parking in the Town Centre. The Legal and Democratic Services Manager outlined that this was a “bigger issue” than just charging for the car parks owned by the Council and much public consultation would be required. The Chair felt that there was a need to look at what was happening in this regard at other authorities and it was agreed that a date for a special meeting specifically to look at car parking issues should be arranged. Councillor Lane queried whether responsibility for car parks was part of Asset Management. The Legal and Democratic Services Manager advised that a lead officer for the car parking study was required and it was agreed to pursue this particular matter.

CYS/25. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair reported that no changes to the Work Programme were planned.

K. HARRINGTON

CHAIR

The Meeting terminated at 6.10 p.m.