

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 2012

PRESENT:- Councillors Brian Ford (Chair), Robert Wright (Vice-Chair), Abdul Amin, John Ballman, Alan Bishop, Toby Elliott, Mary Friend, John Haines, Nick Martin, Ann Richards, Joe Tray, Julie Wright, Claire Ellis, Brian Mattock and Vera Tomlinson

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Colin Lovell.

78. Minutes

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2012 be confirmed and signed.

79. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

80. Public Question Time

Paul Sunners, asked the following questions:

1. Is this Committee now able to provide information pertaining to a cost analysis on terms of Wiltshire Police supporting policing and security measures at the recent Olympic Games?
2. In light of the merger involving community safety functions between Wiltshire Police and Swindon Borough Council, can this Committee shed light on the current confusion as it relates to the responsibility for setting up and the co-ordination of local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes?

The Chair responded at the meeting.

81. The Watches

Neighbourhood Watch

Gavin Williams from Wiltshire Police gave a presentation on the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, which at present is run by the Police but, as part of the merger agreement, will come under the overall direction of the Community Safety Partnership. There are currently 503 such schemes in Swindon and the scheme is cost neutral. Mr. Williams took the Committee through and answered questions by members of the Committee concerning Neighbourhood Watch.

Members of the Committee felt that the relative success of the Neighbourhood Watch Schemes varied depending on the area.

Resolved – That Officers report back to the Committee in six months' time to include: (1) measures to gauge success and failures (2) measures of "where we are now" compared to six months' time, and (3) an audit and action plan.

Speed Watch

Representatives from Wiltshire Police and the Chair of Blunsdon Parish Council gave a brief presentation of how the Community Speed Watch scheme was

operating within Blunsdon. Community Speed Watch is a scheme that allows suitably trained and police cleared local residents to monitor the speed of vehicles in their neighbourhood and to report those vehicles that are found to be exceeding the tolerance level of speed. Speed Watch can only be established in a 30 or 40 MPH speed limit where a road survey has evidenced that vehicles regularly speed. Speed Watch locations are risk assessed and scheme members are only allowed to operate from those agreed areas. The equipment used by Speed Watch to measure individual vehicle speed is the same as is used by the police. This scheme was established by the Community Safety Team and was launched in February 2012 in Blunsdon. It has been passed to Localities to develop and roll out in their communities, based on residents demand. The scheme is administered by the Community Safety Partnership.

Street Watch

Richard Palusinski gave a brief presentation on the Street Watch scheme. There are three Street Watch schemes currently active in Swindon, two of which are in the Parks area and the third in Kingshill.

Street Watch members have to be police cleared for their activities as they will be in a position to exert influence within their community and there is a need to ensure that people do not engage in Street Watch for improper ends.

Members of the Committee asked questions about the operation of the Street Watch scheme.

Resolved – (1) That a further report be submitted in six months' time when more Street Watches are operating.

(2) That the Scrutiny Officer request that the Lead Member, Localities promote the Street Watch scheme through Locality meetings.

Pub Watch

Gavin Williams from Wiltshire Police briefly introduced the Pub Watch scheme. He advised that the Police have taken a "hands-off" approach and that the scheme is run by the Trade.

The Chairs of the Old Town and Town Centre Pub Watches outlined how the scheme works in their respective areas. They advised there was a scheme to replace/renew the CCTV cameras in the Town Centre.

The Chair thanked everyone for their useful and informative presentations and asked that members of the Committee forward any possible items they may have for the work programme, to the Scrutiny Officer.