

# **SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 27 JANUARY 2014**

PRESENT:- Councillors Brian Ford (Chair), Robert Wright, Abdul Amin, Mary Friend, John Haines, Ann Richards, Joe Tray, Julie Wright, Peter Heaton-Jones, Neil Heavens, Vera Tomlinson and Oliver Donachie

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Andrew Bennett.

## **115. Minutes**

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2013 be confirmed and signed.

## **116. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **117. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

## **118. Parking on and obstructing of footpaths**

The Parking Services Manager and the Chief Inspector, Swindon Operations submitted a report reviewing the approach taken to parking and obstructing of footpaths and how enforcement can improve issues of this nature.

Phil Thomas took the Committee through the legislation (and who was responsible for) covering parking partly off the highway and parking on footpaths.

Officers of Wiltshire Police explained that parking on footpaths was, for them, a low priority. Approximately 1% of total calls received were complaints concerning parking on footpaths.

Councillors referred to parking problems in their own areas and disputed the figures given by the Police.

Officers from Wiltshire Police answered questions put to them by members of the Committee concerning parking on footpaths. They advised they would only get involved if there was a direct risk to public safety.

Phil Thomas referred to the problems associated with parking on vehicles for sale on the public highway.

The Committee discussed the formation of a partnership body between the Police, Highways and Streetsmart to look into the problem of parking on footpaths and questioned whether by-laws could be used to overcome this problem.

The Committee referred to parking problems in the Northern Sector and that future

planning of Housing estates should allow reasonable parking in the area.

Resolved – That a further report be submitted to this Committee in the next Municipal Year detailing what methods can be used to prevent parking on footpaths, and taking into account the comments made at the meeting

**119.**

### **Enviro Crime**

The Cabinet Member for a Safer and Stronger Borough submitted a report reviewing the approach taken towards Envirocrime in Swindon, including where enforcement action is taken, prevention measures, and relevant policy.

Councillor Tomlinson referred to posters of lost animals being illegally posted on lighting structures.

Paul Simmons and Phil Thomas responded to questions on all aspects of Envirocrime put to them by Members of the Committee.

The Committee felt that the lack of meaningful fines issued by the Magistrates Court should be brought up at the next Magistrates Liaison meeting.

Resolved – That the Lead Member for a Safer and Stronger Borough be requested to investigate whether the use of by-laws can alleviate the situation

**120.**

### **Changes to the Probation Service (oral)**

A representative from the Probation Service gave a brief presentation concerning the transformation and restructuring of the service. She commented that the service was being dissolved after being in existence for over 100 years. She advised that 30% of serious offenders would now be seen by a newly created National Probation Service whilst the remaining 70% would be put out to tender, for private contractors. She reported that 35 Probation Trusts nationally would be merged into 21 contract packaged areas. Wiltshire would be merged with Gloucestershire and Avon and Somerset.

Phil Thomas undertook to ascertain if this Committee has scrutiny powers over the Probation Service and its successors and report back in the next Municipal Year.

**121.**

### **Q & A of Police**

Councillor Tray referred to the lack of security cameras in Penhill and questioned whether the cameras at the Park and Ride sites could be re-used.