

# SAFER SELECT COMMITTEE

## MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 6 APRIL 2010

**Councillors:** Jeff Beck, George Chandler, Adrian Edwards, Roger Hunneman (Vice-Chairman) and Quentin Webb (Chairman)

**Also Present:** Councillor Paul Bryant, Andy Day (Head of Policy and Communication), Superintendent Robin Rickard (Thames Valley Police), Andrew Garratt (Principal Engineer, Traffic Management and Road Safety), Elaine Vincent (Principal Policy Officer, Equality and Diversity)

### PART I

#### 17 Apologies

An apology for inability to attend the meeting was received on behalf of Councillor Keith Woodhams.

#### 18 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### 19 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Edwards declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

Councillor Bryant declared an interest in Agenda Item 6, but reported that as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he was permitted to present his item.

#### 20 Update on Actions

Further information was requested about the progress of the 'Have Your Say' meetings that were being developed in support of Improving Public Confidence. Superintendent Robin Rickard explained that the concept of 'Have Your Say' encompassed a wide range of interaction with the public, from face to face conversations, to large conferences. The aim of 'Have Your Say' was to strengthen consultation mechanisms appropriately for local areas. The concept required further consideration prior to implementation to avoid consultation fatigue and to ensure real value was gained.

The Public Involvement Board, a sub group of the Local Strategic Partnership with a specific remit to coordinate consultation activity across partner agencies, were involved in the development of 'Have Your Say' and would be looking at making the best use of existing consultation structures.

**Resolved that:** this action would remain on the Committee's action plan.

## 21 Improving Public Confidence

The Committee agreed that Recommendation 2 should be reworded to reflect that 'Have Your Say' was still in development, and that it encompassed a broader aim of strengthening consultation mechanisms to benefit a number of local agencies.

It was requested that the recommendation included reference to the Public Involvement Board and incorporated a definition of this Board.

### **Resolved that:**

- Recommendation 2 of the Improving Public Confidence report would be amended to read 'The Public Involvement Board is a subgroup of the Local Strategic Partnership formed specifically to coordinate consultation activity. The Public Involvement Board of the West Berkshire Partnership be asked to develop a more integrated approach to consultation across the District'.
- The report was agreed by the Committee for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission in May 2010 subject to the above amendment.

## 22 Installation of Fire Sprinklers Review

*Councillor Edwards declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 by virtue of the fact that he is a member of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, but reported that, as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he was permitted to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.*

*Councillor Bryant declared an interest in Agenda Item 6 by virtue of the fact that he is the Chair of the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority, but reported that as his interest was personal and not prejudicial, he was permitted to present the report.*

Councillor Bryant presented an introduction to Agenda Item 6 to the Committee, and explained why this item had been brought for review.

The aims of the Fire Service were to reduce deaths and loss of property as a result of fire. It was noted that in England there was currently no mandatory requirement to install fire sprinklers in new buildings although this requirement was in place in Scotland and Wales. Councillor Bryant was therefore asking for the Council to take the lead in the local area by implementing a policy that would ensure fire sprinklers would be installed in all new and substantially refurbished Council buildings, including schools.

Councillor Bryant went on to present arguments for the installation of fire sprinklers:

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- Fire costed approximately 500 lives per year with an accompanying £7bn financial cost.
- In the UK, no lives had been lost due to fire, in a building fitted with fire sprinklers.
- There was estimated to be an 80% reduction in injuries in buildings fitted with fire sprinklers.
- There was estimated to be an 80% reduction in property damage due to sprinkler systems targeting only the localised area of fire. It was also noted that there was an estimate of just one in 16 million sprinklers operating accidentally.
- There would be potential to reduce insurance premiums by up to 65% for buildings fitted with fire sprinklers.
- The estimated cost of installing fire sprinklers was 1% - 2% of the total build cost which, it was argued, could be recouped in approximately 5 years.
- There would be more flexibility in building design.
- There would be additional environmental benefits from the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> being released into the atmosphere from a fire and a subsequent rebuild, and a reduction in the water required to control a fire when compared to fire officers using hose pipes.

Councillor Bryant concluded by showing a short video produced by the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service which demonstrated the effects of fire in a house with fire sprinklers, compared to one without.

The Committee discussed the issues presented and the following points were clarified:

- Business Continuity plans were required to be prepared by the Council to address how services would continue in the event of disaster including a fire.
- A survey showed that 43% of schools had experienced a fire in the last three years, and it was estimated that schools could expect to be subject to a fire every 10 years.
- It was not proposed that fire sprinklers be fitted retrospectively in buildings due to the cost and disruption.

The Committee requested that relevant officers should be invited to the next session of this review topic in order to explain the Council's insurance provision in respect of fire damage, and any implications that might result from changing the insurance provider.

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A concise report was requested to be circulated to the Committee to present relevant information and figures.

The Committee discussed whether the scope of this review should be amended to specify that the proposal was to include new and substantially refurbished buildings only. This was rejected so as not to restrict full consideration of the proposal.

The Committee agreed the scope of this review subject to the inclusion of a request for the Head of Finance to be invited to the next session.

### **Resolved that:**

- The scope of the review would be amended to invite the Head of Finance to the next session.
- Councillor Bryant would be invited to attend the next session.
- A representative of the Fire Service would be invited to attend the next session.
- A report would be prepared ahead of the next session which would present relevant information.

## **23 Killed and Seriously Injured Road Traffic Casualties**

Andrew Garratt presented information to the Committee regarding progress against recommendations made following a scrutiny review into killed and seriously injured road traffic casualties. The following points were clarified:

- The content for a Member development session was being investigated to ensure that Members would gain useful information that could then be communicated within their communities to raise awareness.
- National Indicators were expected to be amended after 2010 and it was anticipated that the current measures would be separated into the number of people killed, the number of serious injuries, and the number of pedestrian injuries.
- Due to the very small numbers involved, an apparently high percentage change might represent a very small change in numbers.
- A number of campaigns had been undertaken including a speed limit review, road safety education, and road safety campaigns. A programme of activity around schools included walking bus information, a considerate car use leaflet aimed at parents parking at schools, and schools booklets which included an overview of the initiatives that schools could request information about.

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- Comparative figures were available for other local authority areas in a local area profile report. West Berkshire compared favourably to other areas in this report. Andrew Garratt agreed to circulate the local area profile report to the Committee.
- Speed cameras were still active and a review was underway to identify whether the camera locations were still appropriate. The review was in preparation for digital technology when speed cameras would need to be replaced. There would be a budget implication with this.
- The fire service were currently involved in road safety education alongside the Council, attending events such as the Newbury Show and being involved in campaigns such as 'Safe Drive, Stay Alive'.
- Monitoring of accidents did continue in areas identified as accident black spots. The reason for the accident would be investigated to ensure that the original issue had been resolved.
- The figures presented in the report had not been adjusted to reflect changing traffic volume.
- Civil Enforcement Officers did currently carry out spot checks on parking around schools.
- A review was being carried out into traffic light cameras to assist in enforcing compliance with traffic signals.

The Committee thanked Andrew Garratt for the work undertaken in this area.

**Resolved that** Andrew Garratt would circulate the local area profile report to the Committee.

### 24 Work Programme

The Committee agreed the work programme, but requested that completed items be identified clearly.

**Resolved that** completed review items would be identified in future work programmes.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.15 pm)

**CHAIRMAN** .....

**Date of Signature.** .....