

SAFER SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY, 6 DECEMBER 2010

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

Also Present: Andy Day (Head of Policy and Communication), Bryan Lyttle (Planning & Transport Policy Manager) Alex O'Connor (Assistant Community Safety Officer), and Elaine Walker (Principal Policy Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Jeff Beck, Councillor Keith Woodhams, Susan Powell (Safer Communities Partnership Team Manager), and Supt Robin Rickard (Thames Valley Police)

PART I

15. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th September 2010 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received.

17. Matters Arising

The Committee reviewed the status of activities identified at previous meetings. The Committee was content that all items were complete.

18. Review of Gating Orders Protocol

The Committee received a presentation from Alex O'Connor (Assistant Community Safety Officer) concerning the current status of gating orders.

The first gating order was installed at Speen Lodge Court in June 2008. This was reviewed in 2009 according to best practice, when residents' views, crime statistics and other feedback were considered by a panel. The review indicated that residents were happy with the installation of the gate.

The gating order initially stated that only residents of Speen Lodge Court could be provided with a key, however after requests were received from some non-residents, a variation to the order was proposed that would enable these to be considered. Residents were concerned that this would allow too many keys to be issued and that they might not be treated securely. The variation was approved with strict criteria being used to assess any requests for keys and subsequently one person had been allowed a key from three requests received. All requests were reviewed by a panel to be considered against set criteria for legitimacy.

Following questioning, the following points were clarified:

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- It was confirmed that Speen Lodge Court was a residential cul-de-sac experiencing low level crime and anti-social behaviour, in particular around the cut through to Bath Road.
- No further gating orders had been issued since June 2008. Some suggested sites had been put forward, however these had not met the criteria for the installation of a gate, which included consideration of the geography of the location, and whether the applicant was able to contribute appropriate funding.
- The protocol would be updated to ensure that orders were created to allow non-residents to apply for keys in legitimate circumstances.
- The ability to apply for a gating order was not promoted widely, although information was available on the Council's website. The expected route for application would be initiated by identifying crime patterns in a particular area which might have indicated that a gating order would be the most suitable solution.
- The protocol would be updated to record the current review undertaken by the Safer Select Committee.

The Committee were content that the current gating order protocol was working appropriately and no recommendations were made.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the update.

19. Community Empowerment

The Committee received an update from Andy Day (Head of Policy and Communication) concerning the current position of the Safer Communities Partnership Team with regard to community empowerment. He informed the Committee that the current priorities for the team did not include addressing community empowerment as their priorities were drawn from a strategic assessment process which had identified other areas of importance.

He went on to inform the Committee that the coalition government's stated intentions relating to the 'Big Society' would enable communities to deal with local issues. He advised the Committee to await national legislation and guidance prior to considering local activity as it was currently unclear what the detail of this would be.

The Committee agreed that should any activities be recommended in the future, these would promote responsible local schemes.

RESOLVED that the Committee would await national legislation and consider the requirements for review at a later date.

20. Integrated Offender Management Scheme

The Chairman informed the Committee that this item would be discussed on the 13th December at the Safer Communities Partnership meeting at which he would be present along with the Vice-Chairman of the Committee. The Chairman proposed that this item be postponed until after the Safer Communities Partnership meeting.

RESOLVED that this item be postponed.

21. Designing Out Crime from New Developments

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The Committee considered a report concerning how crime could be ‘designed out’ of new developments. This was presented by Bryan Lyttle (Planning and Transport Policy Manager).

A question was raised to understand the current approach to the location of social housing in new developments, whether social housing was placed in a single location, or whether it was spaced across the development. Bryan Lyttle informed the Committee that registered social landlords would prefer social housing locations to be limited to aid maintenance; however this could be accommodated by block fitting social housing in a few areas. He went on to inform the Committee that individual cases would be considered by Housing Officers.

Following questioning, the following point was clarified:

- The new policy CS 15 Design Principles required developments to fit a number of criteria including that it should respect and enhance quality of life, be of high quality and be sustainable. This ensured that issues such as gating orders and lighting were considered appropriately rather than adequately.

Concern was raised that it was not clear from the application form whether the Thames Valley Police Crime Prevention Liaison Officer has responded to consultation about new developments. It was confirmed that the Officer was consulted on all relevant applications and that where no response was shown this was taken to mean no comments received. The Committee understood that whilst it was a requirement to consult, there was no similar requirement for consultees to respond, however they were concerned that a blank space could not distinguish between applications that had been assessed and required no response, and those that had not been assessed. The Committee requested that the relevant protocol be updated to ensure that a response was shown on all applications.

RESOLVED that Bryan Lyttle would amend the relevant protocol to ensure that all consultation responses recorded on the application form were clear.

22. Work Programme

The Committee reviewed the work programme and were content with its content. No amendments or additions were requested.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.10 pm)

CHAIRMAN

Date of Signature

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