



# Minutes

## PAPER A

Name of meeting	<b>FIRE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL</b>
Date and time	<b>WEDNESDAY, 5 MAY 2010 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM</b>
Venue	<b>COMMITTEE ROOM TWO, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT</b>
Present	Cllrs David Williams (Chairman), Heather Humby, Julie Jones-Evans, Jerry White
Officers Present	Simon Dennis, Mark Howell, Marian Jones, Stuart May, Zoryna O'Donnell,

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### 27. **Minutes**

#### RESOLVED :

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [3 March 2010](#) be confirmed subject to the amendment of "Hampshire Police Authority" to "Hampshire Constabulary" where this appears in minutes 22, 23 and 25.

### 28. **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr David Williams declared a personal interest in Minute 31 as he was a member of the Fire & Rescue Service Modernisation Panel.

Cllr David Williams declared a personal interest in Minutes 32 and 33 as he was a member of the Community Safety Partnership.

### 29. **Forward Plan**

The Fire & Rescue Service Model for Change Phase 2 was the only item on the Forward Plan which was within the Panel's remit. The modernisation programme appeared elsewhere on the agenda and the Panel therefore agreed to defer discussion of this until the substantive item.

### 30. **Performance Management**

Members reviewed the performance management report which had been submitted to Cabinet on 30 March 2010. This provided information relating to the quarter ending 31 December 2009. The Panel queried whether it would be possible to receive some of the performance management information in colour in future to aid clarity of the report. The Panel deferred discussion of the information relating to the Fire & Rescue Service to the following item.

The Panel noted that two targets relating to the environmental health service had not been met. The Head of Community Safety Services, Zoryna O'Donnell, explained that this was due to reduced staff numbers caused by long-term sickness and secondments, and the heavy workload in respect of enforcement cases. The number of planned inspections had reduced as a consequence. It was nationally difficult to recruit qualified staff and almost half of the Council's environmental health staff were trainees, who were unable to undertake all types of work at this stage of their career development.

The Panel raised the issue of anti-social behaviour caused by some occupants of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), particularly within the Bay area. The Acting Director of Community Services, Mark Howell, advised that the Housing Team did not place homeless people in HMOs but used different routes to find accommodation for homeless people, usually via the private rental sector. Nevertheless, HMOs provided a valuable source of accommodation and if they did not exist more people would seek accommodation via the Council. The Housing Team worked closely with the Police and the Community Safety Team where any problems occurred. Mrs O'Donnell explained that Councils now had enforcement powers to close any premises where persistent anti-social behaviour occurred. Mr Howell stated that any concerns about HMOs should be drawn to his Department's attention.

The Panel was pleased to note the large number of empty homes that had been brought back into use. The point was made that efforts should be made to retain living accommodation above shops as this added to the vibrancy of the community. Mr Howell stated that the Council's website had an on-line facility for people to report empty homes.

In response to a question Mr Howell reported that a needs survey regarding gypsy and travellers' needs had been completed, which concluded that around 26 plots were required on the Island. His Department was now working with the Planning Department and a report would be submitted to Cabinet about the process for identifying suitable permanent and transit sites.

In response a further question concerning the incidence of brown tailed moth caterpillar infestation Mrs O'Donnell explained that the responsibility for treatment lay with landowners. The Council had no powers in this regard and could only advise people to be vigilant.

#### RESOLVED

- (i) THAT the report be noted.
- (ii) THAT officers look at the possibility of supplying colour copies of the performance report.

#### **31. Fire & Rescue Service Modernisation Programme**

The Assistant Chief Officer, Isle of Wight Fire & Rescue, Stuart May, updated the Panel on the modernisation programme.

With regard to Phase 1 the Ryde station had been designed in-house and procurement for its construction was underway with a view to an August 2010 start.

The Newport station was integral to the Pan regeneration programme. A site had been identified and the design procurement was progressing. A Council-owned site for a new station at Ventnor had been identified and negotiations with neighbours regarding border issues were in progress. The Sandown station would be refurbished. Risks in relation to the new Newport and Ventnor stations had been down-graded to amber.

A paper was due to be submitted to the Cabinet on 1 June 2010 providing options for Phase 2. The proposals included the construction of a new station in the Lake area and closure of the Sandown and Shanklin stations. Mr May stated that, although money was being spent on refurbishing the Sandown station, this would not be wasted as the new station would not be built for some time and the existing station needed the improvements in the meantime.

As an example of the way in which the service now liaised well with partners Mr May cited the recent case of a small fire incident in a flat in Ryde which led to fire safety issues in other flats in the building and the involvement of other agencies in the provision of support to a vulnerable resident.

Mr Howell stated that any tenant who was unable to resolve a safety issue with their landlord was welcome to contact the housing department who would try and resolve the issue, ideally on a co-operative basis. Where the department believed that action was urgently required it had powers to close properties.

In response to a question Mr May stated that he believed the proposal to proceed with the regional control centre would proceed, regardless of the election results, as it was very well advanced.

### RESOLVED

THAT the report be noted.

## 32. **CCTV Audit and Modernisation**

The Community Safety Operations Manager, Simon Dennis, reported on the recent bi-annual audit of the Council's CCTV system and updated the Panel on the modernisation programme. All members of the Panel had visited the CCTV control room and had been impressed by its facilities and technology. Mr Dennis invited members to visit the control room at a weekend to experience operations during a busy period.

The audit had concluded that the CCTV service was Very Good, giving 100 marks out of 110. The audit had included a perception survey, which had indicated a high level of support. The next audit would take place in 2011 and would cover the expanded CCTV scheme (including Cowes and Shanklin cameras).

The new control room provided state of the art facilities, with capacity to expand and take on new technology. The system had a life expectancy of around 10 years and it provided very clear images. There were currently 82 cameras on the system which were continually manned. 10 more cameras in Cowes and 5 in Shanklin would be operational by the end of May 2010. The Panel queried whether this would be too many cameras for one operator to handle. Mrs O'Donnell stated that currently there

was one operator working at any given time. To ensure that there were two operators on duty at all times would cost an additional £180k per year. Although ideally there should be one operator for every 45 cameras, the new technologies being used allowed monitoring of all the existing cameras (including the new ones) with just one permanent operator. Black screen technology meant that every camera did not need to be watched at all times as the system automatically alerted when anything unusual was taking place. In addition, some of the Community Safety Services staff were multi-skilled and could be deployed in the control room at busy times.

The use of CCTV should be justifiable, reasonable and proportionate and therefore Community Safety Services did not support the idea of blanket coverage. However, the new equipment had a capacity for expansion of the scheme should this be required in the future. Should this be considered, revenue would need to be raised to support this. The focus so far had been on modernising and expanding the system to Cowes and Shanklin. It was planned to focus in future on providing chargeable services to businesses, schools and colleges. In addition to the stationary CCTV network, re-deployable cameras were available for town and parish councils to rent and details were on the website.

The Panel expressed surprise that the Police did not contribute to the running costs of the system, given the number of incidents passed to them. Mrs O'Donnell stated that this arrangement was very common nationally. From time to time, police officers who were on light duties were deployed in the CCTV control room to help at busy times.

Mrs O'Donnell stated that Cowes and Shanklin town councils had previously been given an assurance that, having contributed to the capital cost of new cameras, they would not be required to contribute to the costs of monitoring the cameras. However, both town councils paid annual licence fees for their cameras.

The Panel queried whether the existence of CCTV cameras pushed anti-social behaviour into areas where none previously existed. Mr Dennis stated that data was being compiled which would enable comparisons to be made after the new systems in Cowes and Shanklin had been operational for a suitable period of time.

## RESOLVED

THAT the reports be noted.

### 33. **Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Minimum Standards**

Following the Pilkington report the Government had introduced minimum standards which local authorities were expected to meet. The Head of Community Safety, Mrs O'Donnell, stated that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) already had these as targets and they were in the CSP plan. Performance against the standards would be monitored by the CSP and the Panel would be able to scrutinise how this was done. It was likely that central government would also inspect from time to time.

The key minimum standards, and the local situation relating to them, were as follows:

- (i) Reducing perceptions of ASB year on year: Locally an LAA (Local Area Agreement) performance indicator and target existed.

- (ii) Regular updates for every community on what is being done to tackle ASB: A partnership website was currently under development. It would include a section on ASB and action being taken to deliver on minimum standards. The Council's ENOs (Environment Neighbourhood Officers) were working together with the Police safer neighbourhood teams to identify and address local concerns.
- (iii) Provide residents with a right of complaint to Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) if effective action is not taken by local agencies through existing channels: People could complain to the Island's CSP and information about this process would be published on the partnership website in due course.
- (iv) Support and help for victims of ASB: The Council was working with Victim Support and a multi-agency protocol had been produced regarding the support of victims of ASB. An ASB case worker would be appointed using Home Office one-off funding, who would work with other agencies and train others to provide support when the funding ended in March 2011.
- (v) Taking reports of ASB seriously by recording and investigating all cases and committing to keeping victims informed of action taken: This would involve the new case worker and other agencies. A data base would be set up to record the information.
- (vi) Ensuring better links between neighbouring policing and other local partners to deal swiftly with problems: All required multi-agency information sharing protocols were in place. The council was sharing information and working closely with all relevant agencies in order to address ASB and support victims.

Mr Dennis confirmed that ASB tended to be committed by a regular few individuals, often involving substance misuse, particularly alcohol. However, due to improved working with partners to provide support there were now fewer repeat offenders.

Mrs O'Donnell explained how the CSP had decided to spend the £44k Home Office allocation. A significant element would fund the afore-mentioned case worker. The money had to be spent within the current financial year.

In answer to a question Mrs O'Donnell stated that she believed that an attempt was being made to find comparative figures which would help to demonstrate the worth of the street pastor scheme. It was not possible to expand this initiative to all towns due to a shortage of volunteers and a shortage of resources needed for training and supervising a higher number of volunteers.

#### RESOLVED

THAT the report be noted.

CHAIRMAN