

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 1 APRIL 2008

Present: Councillors Mrs W Metherell, Chairman; F Gleaves; P Watson; G Scurrah; G Garrity; J Jackson; Mrs J Williams; F Heathcote and J Park.;

Also present: Councillors R Pitt (Agenda Item 6) and G Clements.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors; Mrs E Eastwood; M Woodburn and W Southward.

Officers: N White, Scrutiny Support Officer and C Willoughby, Member Services Technical Support Officer.

J O'Reilly, Environmental Health Manager - Agenda Item 7.

SSC 29/07 Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2008 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SSC 30/07 **Arrangement of the Agenda**

RESOLVED: that Item 6 on the Agenda be taken first due to the author of the report, Councillor Pitt, being present.

SSC 31/07 **Haverigg Prison**

Councillor Pitt presented his report "Prisons and Safer Communities" to the Committee highlighting the benefits of housing prisoners closer to their home environments.

The presentation also stated that:

- HM Prison Haverigg, is the only prison in Cumbria and is currently housing up to 623 adult male prisoners classified at Category C.
- as at January 2008, there were 400 sentenced men and 200 sentenced women from Cumbria within the prison system.
- HM Prison Haverigg's current population contained only one sixth of its prisoners from within Cumbria.
- The vast majority of prisoners from Cumbria are imprisoned outside of fifty miles from home, thus making visiting for family members difficult.
- Prisoners who maintain contact with their families are six times less likely to re-offend.

Following the presentation, Members were invited to ask questions and discussed the recommendations to approach other bodies for their support and for the report to be forward to the Inspector General of Prisons.

Members thanked Councillor Pitt for his detailed report and presentation.

It was suggested that of the recommendations the County Council and other District/Borough Councils across Cumbria be asked for their support for the principle of making HM Prison Haverigg, a community prison before seeking support from the Inspector General of Prisons, the Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies and the Director of the Prison Reform Trust. Then the Home Secretary be petitioned.

RESOLVED: that

- (a) the presentation be received;
- (b) Councillor Pitt and the Scrutiny Officer meet to discuss any other bodies that could be approached for support of the proposal;
- (c) the County Council and other District/Borough Councils across Cumbria be asked for their support for the principle of making HM Prison Haverigg, a community prison and following this, that;
- (d) the Inspector General of Prisons be sent a copy of this report to seek support for a Community Prison in Cumbria and
- (e) support be sought from the Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies and the Director of the Prison Reform Trust prior to petitioning the Home Secretary.

SSC 32/07

Energy Review

The Committee considered the response of the Executive to the Committee's recommendations from the Energy Review Task and Finish Group.

During discussion of this item, the Portfolio Holder was asked why all of the recommendations had not been accepted. Members were advised that the Executive could not agree any recommendation where there was additional cost. The Committee was advised that where a recommendation had not been agreed, further information had been requested.

Members further raised the use of small scale hydropower as detailed in recommendation X ("the Council explore options for the use of small scale hydropower and other aspects of micro-generation") and it was requested that a presentation on this subject be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

It was also suggested that the proposed joint meetings between the Executive and the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee would look at a protocol which would seek to, amongst other things, help with the communicating of decisions in the future.

RESOLVED: that

- a) the response of the Executive to the Committee's recommendations from the Energy review Task and Finish Group be received, and
- b) a presentation on small scale hydropower be brought to a future meeting of this Committee.

SSC 33/07 **Environmental Health – Achievements of High Standards**

The Committee received a presentation from the Environmental Health Manager on the Environmental Health department's achievements measured against the National Best Value Indicator 166a – Environmental Health Checklist.

The checklist requires compliance for Food Safety, Health and Safety, Environmental Protection and Licensing.

The department's current level of compliance with 166a is 91%, and is one of the highest in the country.

RESOLVED: that the report be received.

SSC 34/07 **Work Plan**

The Committee considered its current work plan and was informed that the recent Site Visits to view the CCTV and the Crematorium had gone very well and been well attended.

The Committee were advised that consultation letters are being issued to consultees in order to identify areas for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees to look at in the next municipal year. The responses would form the basis of the Committee's Work Plan for the year.

The Chairman thanked all Members of the Committee for their hard work over the last year.

RESOLVED: that the Work Plan for the Committee be noted.

The Meeting Closed at 3:55pm

Signed:.....

Date:.....