

Monday 6 July 2009  
at 6.00pm



# Scrutiny Committee

## MEMBERSHIP:-

Councillor MARSDEN (Chairman) Councillor STANLEY (Deputy Chairman), Councillors BELSEY, THOPMSON and Miss WOODALL.

(Apologies for absence were reported from Councillor Heaps and Councillor Purchase).

### 1 Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 April 2009 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

### 2 Declarations of Interest.

None were received.

### 3 Scrutiny Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09.

The committee considered the report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator regarding the activities of the Scrutiny Committee during 2008-2009. The Chairman gave a brief overview of the report which detailed the Scrutiny seminars, monthly meeting topics and the reviews conducted during 2008/09. The report also outlined changes to the Scrutiny process including the introduction of Councillor Call for Action.

#### NOTED.

### \*4 Annual Scrutiny Programme 2009/10.

The Committee considered the Annual Scrutiny programme for 2009/10. members noted that the three Scrutiny reviews for this year had not been included in the programme. A copy of the suggested review into Drainage and Flash Flooding was circulated to members, and it was agreed that this would be the first review of the year; membership would comprise Councillor Miss Woodall and one Conservative member, to be nominated by the Chairman, by Friday 10 July 2009.

Members approved the attached draft Annual Scrutiny Programme. The final programme was due to be approved by Council on 22 July 2009

**RESOLVED:** That the draft Annual Programme of routine work, with the inclusion of the Drainage – Flash Flooding review, be agreed.

## 5 Alcohol and Young People Review.

The Committee considered the report of the Licensing Manager regarding the Alcohol and Young People review. Members were reminded that following the Scrutiny committee in September 2008, Councillors Heaps and Goodyear, in conjunction with Kareen Plympton, Licensing Manager, commenced work examining the issues involving alcohol misuse in the Borough. The focus of the Scrutiny Review was discussed at length at an initial scoping meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2008. An overview of which was attached at appendix 1 to the report.

The review group agreed that the issue of those defined as "problem drinkers" and "street drinkers" was being covered by the Licensing Manager, Assistant Director, Contracts and Amenities in conjunction with the Councils Legal Services Team and Sussex Police carrying out work in this area and would therefore not form part of the review. However, any outcomes arising from this work would be reflected as part of a wider Scrutiny Action Plan, since the issues were intrinsically linked. The focus of the review would therefore be around young people and alcohol misuse. All parties recognised that a significant amount of work had already been undertaken in this area, and that existing Action Plans and Partners played a key role in influencing the review.

Members noted that a series of focus groups and associated Action Plans already existed which had significant influence and impact on the review. These included:

- The Violent Crime Action Plan
- Anti Social Behaviour Plan
- Prevent & Deter Action Plan
- Safer Communities Alcohol Action Plan & Scrutiny Review into alcohol misuse, children and young people 2008.
- East Sussex Alcohol Strategy
- Crime Reduction Partnership Action Plan
- Devonshire Project
- Youth Development Service – various Intelligence gathering Forums – Licensing Action Group, Joint Action Group, Business Crime and Nightwatch.
- Youth Alcohol Action Plan

The Review looked at:

- Why young people drink
- Where they drink
- Where and how they obtain alcohol
- What would stop them drinking alcohol
- What, if any activities would divert them from engaging in alcohol consumption, related anti social behaviour and nuisance.

The report detailed the National perspective and the number of ways in which information was gathered including attendance at seminars, the use of the Citizen's Panel which canvassed 1000+ residents, consultation with Neighbourhood panels, Partnership working, the work of the Primary Health

care Trust and the enforcement action taken to tackle underage drinking. The Review group also decided to hold a Youth Forum and a summary of results was detailed within the report.

The committee acknowledged that alcohol played an important role in British culture and is widely associated with socialising and relaxing. However, it takes its toll on the country and was costing more than 20 billion pounds per year in terms of health, crime and anti social behaviour, as well as causing a loss of productivity in the workplace and social problems such as family breakdown.

The nature of the evidence gathering had revealed to Members' the wide ranging issues that lie behind the issues of underage drinking and its impact on both communities, young people their families and support services. A great deal of work was being done at a local level to tackle alcohol related anti social behaviour by young people.

Enforcement was balanced against strategies to promote healthy living, harm reduction information, and diversionary activities for young people. This was often viewed in conflict with the national messages regarding the availability of alcohol 24 hours a day, the relative cost of such, advertising and marketing campaigns, the binge drinking culture and perceived social acceptance.

The recommendations included in the Action Plan included at Appendix 6 were broadly transferable and involve Member, Partner and public engagement. The Plan focused on the key areas of enforcement, education and diversion as a means to tackle the issues raised.

The Chairman referred to one of the key issues raised in the action plan regarding the Council voicing its concerns to central government and the Advertising Standards Agency regarding the mixed messages being given regarding young people and alcohol consumption. The Chairman requested that the Licensing Manager draft a letter on behalf of the committee, setting out the context of the Council's concerns. The Chairman also requested that the Licensing Manager produce a press release regarding the outcome of this review.

**RESOLVED:** (1) That the recommendations included within the action plan be agreed.

(2) That a letter be sent to central Government and the Advertising Standards Agency setting the context of the Council's concerns on behalf of the committee, in light of this review.

(3) That the Licensing Manager produce a press release regarding the topics covered and outcomes of this review.

(4) That a monitoring report regarding the recommendations be brought to the December 2009 meeting of the Scrutiny committee.

The meeting finished at 6.45pm.

**Councillor Marsden  
Chairman**