

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 July 2006.

Present:

Councillor	John Appleton
"	David Booth
"	Richard Chattaway (Chair)
"	Michael Doody
"	John Haynes
"	Barry Longden
"	Mike Perry
"	Dave Shilton
"	Heather Timms
"	John Vereker
"	John Wells (Vice Chair)

Also Present: Councillor Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Councillor Alan Farnell, Portfolio Holder for Policy and Governance.

Officers:

Trevor Brice, Deputy County Fire Officer, Community Protection Directorate.
William Brown, Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer.
Victoria Cook, Group Assistant, Performance and Development Directorate.
Louise Denton, Group Assistant, Performance and Development Directorate.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Helen Murphy, Financial Services Manager, Community Protection Directorate.
Kate Nash, Community Safety Manager, Community Protection Directorate.
Greta Needham, Head of Law and Governance, Performance and Development Directorate.
Jane Pollard, Overview and Scrutiny Manager, Performance and Development Directorate.
Glen Ranger, Assistant County Fire Officer, Community Protection Directorate.
Balbir Singh, Policy and Planning Manager, Community Protection Directorate.
Oliver Winters, Head of Finance, Resources Directorate.

Also present: 2 representatives of the Fire Service Trade Union.

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Bernard Kirton

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as follows –

The following Members declared personal interests arising by virtue of them serving as district/borough councillors as listed below:

Stratford-on Avon District Council – Councillor John Appleton

Warwick District Council - Councillors Michael Doody and Dave Shilton

Rugby Borough Council – Councillor Heather Timms

(5) Minutes of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 20 April 2006 and Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 June 2006

The minutes of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 20 April 2006 and the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 June 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. Community Protection Directorate Efficiency Saving Option

William Brown presented his report outlining the efficiency saving option prepared by the Fire and Rescue Service.

The following points were made during discussion –

- (1) Concern was expressed that budget cuts would result in a poorer service to the public not only for the current year but for future years and would impact on the Fire and Rescue Service's 'good' CPA rating.
- (2) That the proposed savings were a short term option and that a Member Working Party should be set up to oversee future options to ensure that the service maintained a good efficient quality of cover. Alternatively, that this work could be undertaken by the IRMP Policy Panel.
- (3) That the Strategic Director should be commended on his report, which achieved the 2.5% budget savings that were required to be made corporately.

In reply to questions William Brown and Glen Ranger explained that –

- (1) The number of times the hydraulic platform was used would need to be quantified after the meeting but it was not a frequently used piece of equipment. The option to sell this equipment was limited as it was already 15 years old.
- (2) The proposed hybrid appliances would improve current capability and would be used more frequently as they combined a pumping appliance and a hydraulic platform, which could be used simultaneously in either capacity. Additionally, the hybrid appliance incorporated a remote controlled camera that could be used in situations where it was too dangerous to send officers.
- (3) The proposed efficiency savings would not impact on public safety and would continue to meet the response standards as set out in the Fire and Rescue Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan.
- (4) The cost of training in the use of this new equipment would be minimal because training would be carried out with experienced and capable officers whilst they were on duty.
- (5) The twelve posts that would be lost at Leamington as a result of the efficiency saving option would be lost through natural wastage. There would be no redundancies. The posts would, however, be retained on the establishment.

During discussion -

Councillor John Wells, seconded by Councillor Barry Longden, moved that –

“The Cabinet note that the report identifies the necessary level of savings for the Community Protection Directorate as agreed in the budget set by Warwickshire County Council”.

Councillor Dave Shilton, seconded by Councillor David Booth, moved an amendment as follows –

“The Cabinet notes that the report identifies the necessary level of savings for the Community Protection Directorate as agreed in the budget set by Warwickshire County Council and provides a satisfactory level of fire cover and, with 2 Members voting in favour and 8 Members voting against, the motion was not carried.

Members then voted on the substantive motion as follows -

”The Committee notes that the report identifies the necessary level of savings for the Community Protection Directorate as agreed in the budget set by Warwickshire County Council”, and with 4 Members voting in favour and 7 Members voting against the motion was not carried.

Councillor John Appleton then moved, seconded by Councillor Doody, and with 6 Members voting in favour and 4 Members voting against the motion it was -

Resolved that this Committee recommends to Cabinet that that the proposals of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer are endorsed for the year and that the Committee form a Working Party to identify savings for future years.

4. Community Protection Performance Report – 2006/07

William Brown presented his report outlining the full year's (2005/06) performance report prepared by the Community Protection Directorate.

In reply to a request for a further report on targets not achieved the William Brown explained that the half-yearly performance report would be presented to the Committee's November meeting and a process existed within the Directorate for Member involvement in monitoring performance.

Councillor Richard Hobbs agreed that there was value in scrutinising areas where targets had not been met and that Cabinet should be address how performance data was presented.

Resolved that the Committee -

(a) note the Performance Report submitted by Community Protection Directorate for the full-year 2005/06.

(b) endorse any proposed remedial actions.

5. Review of Scrutiny

Jane Pollard presented the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development. The report advised Members of the arrangements for the review of the overview and scrutiny function and sought their views on the future role of overview and scrutiny and how its effectiveness could be improved. She highlighted that the results of the review would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Group in September and to Cabinet on 31st October 2006 and urged Members to complete and return the questionnaire that she had circulated.

The following points were made during discussion –

- (1) That the review should allow for flexibility to accommodate the significant changes that were taking place in local government and Member involvement in management of the Health Service.

- (2) That scrutiny should be Member led and if the current method of scrutiny was effective that it should not be changed for change sake.

Resolved that Members' comment on the review of scrutiny be noted.

6. Report of the Monitoring Officer - Despatch of Agendas and reports

Greta Needham presented the report of the Strategic Director of Performance and Development (as Monitoring Officer) regarding the despatch of the agenda and reports for the Committee's meeting on 2nd May 2006 in light of the requirements of Standing Orders.

Councillor John Haynes expressed concern that the agenda sent out for the 20 April 2006 meeting was not the one that he had agreed. Additionally, at the time the revised agenda for the 2 May 2006 meeting had been despatched he had been in London on Council business and could have been contacted by phone. He also expressed concern that, despite all other Directorates' Efficiency Savings reports being public documents, the Community Protection Directorate's report was presented as an exempt report.

In response Greta Needham explained that the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer had amended his report to the 20 April 2006 meeting in accordance with the minutes of the Cabinet meeting of 6 April 2006. She repeated the Monitoring Officer's apology for the confusion over the revised agendas for the 2nd May 2006 meeting and gave assurances that, in the future, Officers would continue to work closely with Members to ensure that, in all but exceptional cases, agendas and papers were cleared with the Chair before despatch.

Resolved that the Committee note the report, Councillor John Haynes reservations and the apology from the Monitoring Officer.

7. Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items Relevant to this Committee

Members noted the Committee's future work programme and agreed –

- (1) That the 5 September 2006 meeting would be preceded at 1:15 p.m. (with lunch) by a Seminar on the impact of the Crime & Disorder Act, the Respect Agenda and LAA on the role and remit of the Committee. (The formal meeting to start at the usual time of 2:15 p.m.)
- (2) To include, as an item to be allocated in the work programme, the work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

(3) That the Trading Standards Seminar at Old Budbrooke Road would be arranged for a date in September and would commence at 12:30 p.m. (with lunch).

8. Any Other Items

The Chair raised the following item as urgent business.

9. Bidford Parish Council – Correspondence from the Chair.

The Chair handed to Councillor Richard Hobbs letters he had received from the Chair of Bidford Parish Council about the potential closure of Fire Stations and Councillor Hobbs undertook to prepare a reply.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 3:50 p.m.