

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 February 2007.

Present:

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

Also present: Councillor Richard Hobbs (Portfolio Holder for Community Protection).

Officers:

William Brown, Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer, Community Protection Directorate.

Vicky Cooke, Group Assistant, Performance and Development Directorate.

Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.

Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate.

Kate Nash, Head of Community Safety, Community Protection Directorate.

Glen Ranger, Assistant County Fire Officer, Community Protection Directorate.

Mark Ryder, Head of Trading Standards and Healthier Communities, Adult, Health and Community Services.

Balbir Singh, Head of Policy and Performance, Community Protection Directorate.

Public Present: Elizabeth Uggerlose, Clerk to Bidford on Avon Parish Council and Councillor Mike Gerard, Member of Bidford on Avon Parish Council

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor John Appleton.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared interests as follows –

- (a) 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 Mike Perry

Warwick District Council – Councillors Michael Doody and Dave Shilton

Rugby Borough Council – Councillors Gordon Collett and Heather Timms

2. Public Questions

Question from Elizabeth Uggerlose, Clerk to Bidford on Avon Parish Council.

Can the Council give its assurances that, bearing in mind the number of station closures that have already been made in the South of the County, the Fire Service has carried out a full and detailed feasibility study of the consequences of closing down a further six stations, to ensure there are no knock on effects that will endanger the lives of the people of Warwickshire, and that a copy of this study will be made available for full and proper consultation and comment before any final decision is made.

Councillor Gerard spoke on behalf Bidford on Avon Parish Council and in support of retaining the Fire Station at Bidford on Avon. He highlighted the importance of the Fire Station in terms of its strategic position in the county and in relation to the adjacent counties and its importance as an integral part of Bidford on Avon village.

The Chair responded and referred to the two press articles in the Stratford Herald and Observer and confirmed that a discussion document was in the hands of the Chief Fire Officer but had not been circulated to Council Members. He gave assurance that in the event of any changes in the current Fire Service Members would evaluate the impact of any potential closures to ensure that there was no risk to the people of Warwickshire but there was no formal proposal to the County Council at the present time.

William Brown gave assurance that, if any changes were made to the Fire Service, they would not be to the detriment of the Service. Public consultation would be carried in accordance with Government Guidance and risk assessments carried out before any changes were made.

Councillor Richard Hobbs confirmed that any changes to the Fire Service would not be undertaken without the full consultation procedures being carried out.

3. Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2007/10 for the Community Protection Directorate - Consultation

Balbir Singh presented the report of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer.

This report set out the Draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2007/10 for the Community Protection Directorate, for consultation in accordance with guidelines issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (Fire and Rescue Service National Framework 2006-08).

With the aid of a power point presentation Balbir Singh highlighted –

- The Key Achievements 2004/06
- The approach taken to carry out the Draft IRMP Consultation
- The background to the Plan
- Lessons learned
- The recommendations

William Brown added that delivery of the IRMP would be by way of an annual action Plan, which would be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.

During consideration the following comments were noted –

- (1) That the consultation document should be supported and taken forward as a method of enhancing the lives of the people of Warwickshire.
- (2) That any aspect of the Plan could be scrutinised by the Committee if it considered it appropriate.
- (3) That the language in the consultation documented needed to be revised to make it easier to read and understand. Two examples were given, under Medium Term Objectives, Paragraphs 1 and 6 on page 12.
- (4) In relation to paragraph 6, page 12, Medium Term Objectives, concern was expressed about the lack of clarity about what was proposed in connection with the transition of control room staff to the West Midlands Regional Control Room. Concern was expressed about the future of the ambulance service when the regional control centre commenced operation.
- (5) That the map on page 27 should be checked to ensure that it reflected the new boundaries.
- (6) That the increase in the proportion of residents over 50 and how their needs could be provided for, as they grew older, was of concern.

In reply to questions William Brown explained that –

- (1) The arson strategy was a combined Fire Service and Police initiative where combined Police resources were used to identify hotspots. The Arson Task force in Rugby had achieved some successes.
- (2) Concerns about relocation of control room staff to the West Midlands Regional Control Room would be open to scrutiny by the Committee. Michelle McHugh advised that the Local Government White Paper extended the powers of councils to call into account public services.
- (3) The Fire and Rescue Service worked closely with other council departments in developing and implementing risk education strategies.

The Committee asked that its comments and concerns, as recorded above, are taken into account and considered alongside other comments received in response to the consultation on the draft Integrated Risk Management Plan 2007/10 and forwarded to Cabinet.

4. Annual Report

The Committee considered the report of the Chair of Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which contained the annual report of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee during 2006.

Members noted that the report would be presented to the Council meeting in March, rather than the February 2007, meeting.

The Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee agrees the Annual Report of this Committee and for it to be referred to Council on 20 March 2007.

5. Performance Reporting

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health and Community Services, which provided commentary on a number of key performance indicators within the arrangements for reporting performance for the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate.

Mark Ryder reported that these reports would be brought to committee quarterly and he wished to include information on topics such as rogue trading, explosives, animal welfare, pet safety and disease control.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That the valuable work being undertaken by Trading Standards should be publicised to increase public awareness of issues such as doorstep crime and distraction burglary.
- (2) That the success of making more people aware of rogue traders/doorstep crime could raise “the fear of crime”, particularly for the elderly.
- (3) That information on public safety could be disseminated to the community through PACT meetings and by local council members.
- (4) That Members would welcome statistics from Consumer Direct being included in future performance reports.
- (5) That future reports should concentrate on exception reporting (highlighting where targets were not met).

In reply questions Mark Ryder explained that –

- Trading Standards was 3 short of its full complement of staff. Some staff were achieving qualifications by means of a modular system linked to the pay structure.
- He would report further to the Committee's meeting on 21 February 2007 on the education work currently being undertaken by Trading Standards and the Police on "no cold calling zones".
- Statistics on the number cases dealt with by Consumer Direct were now available and could be included in future performance reports.

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee –

- (1) thank Mark Ryder for presenting the report.
- (2) asks that future reports concentrate on "exception" reporting rather than reporting on targets that have been achieved and to include performance information on Consumer Direct.

6. Any Other Items

None

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 3:37 p.m.