

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 September 2007.

Present:

Councillor	John Appleton
"	David Booth
"	Richard Chattaway (Chair)
"	Gordon Collett
"	Chris Davis
"	Bob Hicks
"	Heather Timms
"	John Vereker
"	Barry Longden
"	Mike Perry
"	John Wells (Vice Chair)

Also Present: Councillor Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Protection.

Officers:

Emma Curtis, Political Group Assistant, Performance and Development Directorate.
Kate Nash, Head of Community Safety, Community Protection Directorate.
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate.
Penny Kay, Domestic Violence Manager, Community Protection Directorate.
Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate.
Glen Ranger, Deputy County Fire Officer, Community Protection Directorate

1. General

Fire at Ufton Landfill Site

The Chair referred Members to a publication produced by the Emergency Planning Unit giving details of the Ufton Landfill site fire incident. Members asked to be kept updated on this incident.

(1) Apologies for absence

None

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(3) (a) Minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2007

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 July 2007 were agreed as a correct record.

(b) Matters Arising

Minute 5 Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships Performance Report – Resolution 3

The Chair reported that he had been notified that the Rugby Police were unable to attend the meeting to discuss the issues raised by Members at their previous meeting.

Members commented on the desirability of the Police attendance at all meetings and it was agreed that they would be invited to attend.

2. Public Questions

None

3. Domestic Abuse Progress Report

Kate Nash presented the report of the Strategic Director of Community Protection and County Fire Officer, which provided a summary of the last 6 months of Domestic Abuse work across the County. She highlighted –

- The proposal to develop and implement domestic violence courts (due to begin in October 2007).
- The development of a multi-agency risk assessment process (MARAS).
- New initiatives – the Sanctuary Scheme.
- The significant increase in the number of incidents of domestic abuse, which were of concern and disappointing but related to the different Police approach to recording incidents following recent fatalities and a criticism of their processes. The new process meant that victims and perpetrators would get early referrals through to service interviews to stem repeat incidents.

In reply to questions Kate Nash explained that –

- (1) the data on the number of incidents was provided by the Police, the definition of domestic abuse was set out in paragraph 1.1 of the report and, it was considered that 50% of the incidents were alcohol and drugs related although there was no evidence to support this locally.
- (2) The Domestic Violence Courts would only deal with criminal incidents.
- (3) Raising children's awareness of domestic violence through the schools programme related to educating children and addressing attitudes to this

problem at an early age, to prevent future abuse and for them to learn respect in relationships. The Community Safety Division were working with colleagues within the Children, Young People and Families Directorate align their work with anti-bullying initiatives.

- (4) The sanctuary scheme related to incidents where the perpetrators had left the domestic home and a safe room created where the victim could retreat if the perpetrator returned to the home.
- (5) Special provision was made for the hard to reach groups, in particular, a womens refuge in Nuneaton, was specifically for Black, Asian and women from migrant communities. This facility was available for use by victims countywide.
- (6) A further increase in incidents had been reported in the first six months of 2007 (paragraph 2.1 of the report).

During discussion comments were noted as follows –

- (1) That even though the number of incidents had increased significantly it was considered that there were perhaps many more unrecorded incidents and that domestic violence was a way of life for some families and witnessed by many children.
- (2) It was hoped that the work being done through the Strategy would help improve the situation particularly for the hard to reach families.
- (3) A breakdown in the categories of offenders, race and gender might help target resources.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and expressed his concern about the increase in the number of incidents.

The Committee agreed to receive a further report in January 2008 on the new Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy with a view to reporting the current position onto Cabinet.

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

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Char invited comments on the future work programme. A Member asked for information about the number of fire engines in the county that were operational. The Chair advised that Cabinet on 6 September 2007 had considered a report on the future of the Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service and, amongst other recommendations, had asked the Committee to monitor progress of the work requested to be undertaken which included the potential of joint authority working with

Hereford and Worcester and would also include the information requested by the Member above.

Glen Ranger said that work was progressing, and a report in the form of a project initiation document would be completed for the 6 December as requested by Cabinet.

The Committee agreed the future work programme and asked that –

- (1) A briefing note be circulated to Members of the Committee on the Ufton Landfill site fire.
- (2) a report on: The Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Strategy be added to the agenda for the January 2008 meeting.

(b) Forward Plan – Items Relevant to this Committee

The Committee noted the Forward Plan items relevant to the work of this Committee.

5. Any Other Items

There were no items of urgent business.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 3:30 p.m.