

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 June 2008.

Present:

Councillor	Richard Chattaway (in the Chair following election)
"	David Booth
"	Gordon Collett
"	Chris Davis
"	Bob Hicks
"	Barry Longden (Vice Chair)
"	Philip Morris-Jones
"	Mike Perry
"	Mick Stanley
"	Dave Shilton
"	John Ross

Also Present: Councillor Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Protection, Councillor Alan Cockburn, Portfolio Holder for Resources, Andy Parker, Deputy Chief Constable, Inspector Nick Tomlinson (Local Policing) and David Whitehouse, Warwickshire Police

Officers:

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.

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

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

1. General

(1) Appointment of Chair

Councillor Bob Hicks moved, Councillor Barry Longden seconded and it was Resolved:

That Councillor Richard Chattaway be Elected as Chair of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(2) Appointment of Vice Chair

Councillor Richard Chattaway moved, Councillor Bob Hicks seconded and it was Resolved:

That Councillor Barry Longden be Elected as Vice Chair of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(3) Apologies for absence

None

(4) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(5) (a) Minutes of the meetings held on 17 March and 2 April 2008

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 March and 2 April 2008 were agreed as a correct record.

(b) Matters Arising

(i) Minutes of 17 March 2008 meeting. Older People's Champion - Minute 2 Progress on Outcomes of Cabinet Recommendations on "Ensuring the Safety of Older People Who Live Independently".

The Chair expressed support for the suggestion made by Councillor Gordon Collett during the discussion of this item, about the need for a County Council "champion" for older people. The Chair added that he had been impressed on his visits to other authorities' who had appointed older people's champions and said this suggestion was worthy of further consideration. Councillor Richard Hobbs undertook to take this issue forward informally.

(ii) Minutes of 2 April 2008 meeting – follow-up action.

The Chair reported on the outcome of the meeting with the party spokespersons and Portfolio Holder about the inclusion of a domestic violence indicator in the LAA delivery plan. He said that the outcome of the meeting was that it was decided that included an indicator on this issue would be inappropriate; instead the Committee should review progress of the Domestic Abuse Strategy on a 6 monthly basis.

The Chair further reported that, with regard to "Sales of Alcohol to Minors" it had also been agreed with the Portfolio Holder that the following targets would be included in the LAA local delivery plan –

- To reduce alcohol related violence
- To increase the number of adults commencing treatment with local services (it being noted that this was already in the 2007-08 LAA Safer Communities Block and could be monitored within the delivery plan).
- To increase the number of adults commencing treatment and care where alcohol was the primary substance.

(iii) (a) Future Work Programme -Venue for future meetings/date of September 2008 meeting

The Chair said that, following the meeting with spokespersons on the future work programme it was proposed that, where appropriate, meetings would be held at other locations across the county. Members expressed differing views about this proposal but the consensus was that, if appropriate, or related to a particular area, that meetings would be arranged at venues other than Shire Hall.

(b) Change of date of the September 2008 meeting.

The Chair referred to the email sent to all Members of the Committee proposing an alternative date to the 2 September scheduled meeting because this meeting clashed with the end of the Annual Planning Conference, which the Chair and Vice-Chair were attending.

It was agreed that the date of the September 2008 meeting be changed, from the 2 September to 3 September 2008 at 2:15 p.m.

3. Presentation by Inspector Nick Tomkinson (Local Policing) on Safer Neighbourhoods – *Building Safer Neighbourhoods Together*

Inspector Nick Tomlinson, with the aid a power-point presentation (attached), updated Members on the progress of neighbourhood policing in Warwickshire. He explained that –

- (1) That the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative was launched in 2006 and introduced by 2007.
- (2) PACT meeting priorities were Anti-Social Behaviour, Litter, Dog Fouling and Speeding.
- (3) The Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT) were made up of 33 Safer Neighbourhood teams; primarily based on Wards; 139 PCSO's, 143 Police Officers (inc. Supervisors) working with partners, volunteers and specials.
- (4) The HMIC Inspection 2007 received a 'Good' Grading.
- (5) Safer Neighbourhoods (SN) Policing was being delivered by –
 - improving access and contact with the SN Teams, PACT meetings – established in all districts and local communities setting priorities. Website improvements, dedicated SN Communications Officer and SNT accommodation in schools (Camp Hill) and One Stop Scheme (Whitnash).
 - Influence - moving towards locality working and ensuring that PACT was not the only form of engagement and interventions (positive action with partners and public to solve problems) and allowing and supporting SN Teams to share details of effective and unsuccessful problem solving.
 - Interventions – Positive action with Partners and Public to solve problems and allowing and supporting SN Team to share details of effective and unsuccessful problem solving.
- (6) Community Engagement included –
 - Community and School PACTs (Hartshill) (pilot Scheme).

- Surgeries, environmental visual aids, face-to-face surveys/interviews, consultation postcards/leaflets, close working between teams, Community Cohesion officers and intelligent use of Neighbourhood Profiles.

Inspector Tomlinson highlighted key points as follows –

- Neighbourhood ‘Engagement’ Profiles (using information to direct activities).
- SN Website
- Increased community contact points
- Mobile Police Stations
- Police Community Support Officers
- Training delivery plan.
- Tenure (2 years and pay priority payments).
- Abstraction Policy and Annual Leave restrictions
- Performance measures

In conclusion Inspector Tomkinson highlighted future proposals and challenges and invited Members’ questions.

During discussion Members’ commented as follows –

- (1) Councillor Ross said that in his area he had worked hard to form a good relationship with the local police in his Ward but since Christmas he had had no contact with the beat policeman and five weeks without contact with the PCSO. Additionally in Bedworth there was no policing (beat policeman or PCSO) and, despite being told that they would be back during the current week, nothing was happening. Elderly people in Bedworth were frightened without a Police presence.
- (2) The Chair said from his knowledge (reports from other Members) Safer Neighbourhoods’ performance around the county was patchy.
- (3) The Vice Chair expressed doubt about the success of the two-year tenure initiative and about the cancellation of the last PACT meeting in his area because of Police sickness. With regard to this latter concern he highlighted that, if a second PACT meeting was cancelled, the credibility and sustainability of PACTs would be in doubt. He added that in the Nuneaton and Bedworth area the Area Committee had agreed to 7 locality areas which might require 8 or 9 PACTs and that would be an added call on Police resources. In addition, he commented on the need to bring in the Health Service and raised concern about putting additional pressure on Police resources if PCSOs were required to organise School PACTs.
- (4) That many people did not have access to a computer and that the “Little Blue Book” (containing contact details of SNTs) circulated to residents previously was very useful and should be reprinted with County HQ, local police stations and Neighbourhood Watch contact details.
- (5) That there was concern about the adequacy of Police resources to sustain the Safer Neighbourhood initiative.

(6) Councillor Dave Shilton reported no response to telephone calls to the Safer Neighbourhood Team in Kenilworth and confusion about locality working and safer neighbourhoods work.

(7) Councillor David Booth expressed concern about overloading the work of the Sergeant in charge of his area (Kineton) and the ability of the two teams, located in Southam and Shipstone, to cover an area of around 150-200 square miles.

In response to Members' comments and concerns –

(1) Kate Nash explained that the School PACTs were being delivered through Safer Schools Partnership and Area Teams and should not impact greatly on PCSOs time.

(2) Inspector Nick Tomlinson said that -

- he was well aware of the problems in Nuneaton and Bedworth and understood Members' frustration with the issue, which related to demand management and this had impacted on the neighbourhood teams. He would take these issues up with the Inspector in charge of Nuneaton and Bedworth. He emphasised the strength of the Police commitment to continuing PACTs in Nuneaton and Bedworth.
- he welcomed the comments about the usefulness of the "Blue Book" and said that every team had a dedicated telephone number. He added that there had recently been a publicity campaign to publicise these numbers and the results of a "mystery shopping" exercise had recorded a 100% successful response;
- with regard to the Kineton area the Sergeant in charge was trying to recruit special constables and volunteers but he accepted the comments made about the difficulty of managing large rural areas.

(3) David Whitehouse said that PACTS would continue until the Police could see that there were other formal locality arrangements in place but in some areas.

(4) DCC Andy Parker cautioned against negativity detracting from the positive aspects of the Safer Neighbourhoods' initiative and highlighted the significant increase in Police resources deployed across the county. He said that Warwickshire Police was trying to give the best possible protection to the people of Warwickshire with the money available whilst being reactive to changing priorities.

The Chair referred to the report later on the agenda from which Members would see that crime had reduced but acknowledged the problems and frustrations about the different levels of service and where community safety was working better in some areas than others. He referred to the Members of the Committee who were also Members of the Police Authority and said he hoped that Members' comments and concerns would be taken back to that body. He noted Members' comments about the usefulness of the "Blue Book" and concern about policing of large rural areas. He welcomed the Safer Neighbourhoods' initiatives in relation to access

and thanked Inspector Tomlinson for his presentation. In conclusion he said that there was a need for the Committee to consider further how it should interact with the Police in the future.

4. Full Year Performance Report 2007/08.

(a) Community Protection – Full Year Directorate Report Card

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Community Protection, which provided an analysis of the Community Protection Directorate's performance for 2007/08 and performance against the key performance indicators as set out the Directorate's Report Card.

Glen Ranger said it had been anticipated that the major Atherstone on Stour incident would have an impact on resources and performance results. The current performance report confirmed this in a number of areas, in particular, with regard to sickness absence. Nevertheless, the Community Protection Directorate had managed to maintain a good level of performance with the exception of, in particular, the areas of accidental dwelling fires, calls to malicious false alarms, and overall number of deliberate fires. The figures relating to 'Primary Fires' had been distorted because there had been a change in the recording system at half year which meant that a proportion of the incidents that would have been classified as secondary fires were now classified as primary fires. In connection with –

- the % of accidental fires confined to room of origin this had only just missed its target in that the actual was 89% against a target of 93%;
- regard to the one death and accidental fire injuries, although any incident was regretted, Warwickshire was 3rd and 5th respectively, out of 13 comparative County Councils;
- Automatic Fire Alarms – the Directorate was doing well but fell short of national targets.
- The Arson Reduction Team – a small fire reduction team had been set up and located in the northern Criminal Justice Centre and worked in partnership with the police.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That although the report showed poor results, in some cases the targets had only just been missed, or had shown improvement, as compared with other Fire Authorities;
- (2) That it was difficult to set a target for the number of deaths in domestic fires and it was questioned whether the target should be '0' deaths or was this unrealistic?
- (3) That the FS might have more difficulty than other organisations in achieving its targets with regard to the % of employees who were disabled;
- (4) that despite the poor results it was considered that public satisfaction with the Fire Service (FS) was likely to be 99%;

Glen Ranger accepted that the report showed a high number of targets not reached but said that these targets had been evolved overtime and taking into account national targets and he was confident that these 'hard' targets were appropriate.

Councillor Richard Hobbs said that, with regard to the % of disabled and ethnic minorities employed by the FS, he had recently attended the launch of an Equality and Diversity Strategy in London which highlighted the importance of improving performance in these areas and engaging the 'hard to reach' sections of the community. With regard to the target for deaths from accidental fires he said that this was difficult and had been debated at length many times and what was consider appropriate had varied between 0 to 2/3 deaths.

The Chair questioned whether the Committee should be concerned about the report and whether the targets set were too tough to achieve within current resources. He was of the view, however, that the outcomes did not reflect the FRS's good work and dedication. The Chair said that the Atherstone on Stour incident clearly had had impact on some targets but it was unclear why other targets had not been met.

Glen Ranger said that Members should be re-assured that, whilst accepting the poor results in respect of some targets he was of the view that, whilst performance was mixed, there was room for improvement and targets were achievable.

Councillor Hobbs said, having looked at the actual and year-end performance it would be useful to know whether performance had improved or declined over the last quarter to enable a better assessment of performance.

The Committee:

- (1) noted both the summary and detail of the performance indicators within the Directorate Report Card for the full year of 2007/08 (Appendix 1)
- (2) acknowledged that there were areas where performance had fallen short because of the Atherton on Stour incident and other areas that were falling short of target, and where remedial action was being taken.

(b) Trading Standards Full Year Performance Report

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Adult, Health and Community Services that summarised the performance of the Trading Standards Service (TSS) for the period 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2008.

Mark Ryder highlighted –

- (1) the performance targets on pages 6 and 7 of the report contributed to the CPA assessment;

- (2) that the statistics relating to the submission of the Dept. of Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) formerly DTI (pages 8 & 9 of the report) 2007/08 was the final year for collection of the National Framework and 2008/09 would see the introduction of a new set;
- (3) that the table on page 11 of the report showed the “Top 20” Trading Standards Projects and initiatives for 07-08 and said that good progress was being made on these high priority activities.

During discussion Members –

- (1) Commended the good work carried out by TSS.
- (2) Questioned whether, in some areas the targets were set too low.
- (3) Enquired whether there would be any merit in TSS being more vigilant in its visits to licensed premises now that the Government had introduced the “21 years of age” restriction on the purchase and sale of alcohol?

In reply to questions and comments Mark Ryder said that -

- (1) in relation to E30 and 31, consumer and business satisfaction, he noted Member’s comments and agreed to investigate the possibility of the targets being set too low;
- (2) TS would continue to promote “giving assurances about getting a good deal on car servicing” as a high priority until the problem was resolved;
- (3) With regard to addressing underage sales of alcohol, 19 licensed premises had been reviewed the previous year in conjunction with the Police. ACC Andy Parker added that the Police worked closely with TSS to secure convictions.

The Committee -

- (1) Commended the performance of the Trading Standards Service for 2007/08.
- (2) asked for a review of targets E30 and 31.

5. LAA - Consideration of Performance and Progress

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Performance and Development, which outlined LAA End year (Quarter 4) and LPSA2 Performance Information and specific block information relevant to the Committee.

ACC Andy Parker highlighted –

- (1) good performance in relation to reducing the number of crimes in 2007/08 as compared to the previous year, particular fewer vehicle crimes, burglaries and less violent incidents;
- (2) that this improved performance was continuing through the current year across the county and was an impressive reduction in crime. This reduction was not related to changing targets but very focussed partnership working.

During discussion the following comments were noted -

- (1) That consideration should be given to lobbying the Government about the lost reward grants due to police actively encouraging reporting of violent crime e.g. domestic violence. The Committee expressed concern that targets set by central government did not take account of local priorities.
- (2) That the perception of the reasons for the reduction in crime was not shared by all and was considered to be the results of focussed police activity and would then increase when the perpetrators were released from prison.
- (3) Concern was expressed about the lack of focus on business crime.
- (4) That the fear of crime had increased.
- (5) That publishing details of convictions in the press was useful in alerting the public to the penalties imposed on criminals. There was, however, concern over the level of penalties imposed by Magistrates.

In reply to questions ACC Parker said that –

- (1) with regard to the loss of reward grant, the Police view was that it was not a case of changing targets but about reducing crime. Kate Nash added that the Government had acknowledged overall that it was satisfied that the Safer Block targets would not be achieved and that the new targets would allow local discretion;
- (2) the Police did recognise business crime and within the new LAA block the 4th priority was acquisitive crime. Warwickshire had a dedicated business crime team that had helped reduced this type of crime significantly over the past 12 months.
- (3) With regard to the fear of crime, this was a difficult issue to address in that this was greatly influenced by the press and media reports.

The Chair thanked ACC Parker for reporting on the progress made in relation to the Safer block of the current LAA and referred to Members' concerns about the lost reward grant. He highlighted the three areas of concern that had been expressed during the discussion:

- Business crime - in this respect he had spoken to the Chair of Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee who had said he would be happy to ask his Committee to look into this.
- Publishing of convictions in the local press – he had asked whether the Police could help encourage a wider press coverage of convictions by persuading the Magistrates' Courts to publish lists of convictions.
- Fear of Crime – the perception of crime continued to be an issue and this reinforced the need for the fear of crime to remain a priority of WCC and partners.

6. Recommendations and decisions made by Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2007/08

The Committee resolved to defer this report until the September 2008 meeting, the Committee having been in session for 3 hours.

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

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

Members considered the provisional items for future meetings. The Chair referred to the additional items included in the work programme following his meeting with the spokespersons, in particular, the proposal for a scrutiny exercise on Financial Wellbeing. The Chair and party spokespersons would be undertaking a scoping exercise shortly.

The Vice Chair asked for Members to be circulated with information and figures, of assaults on fire-fighters, police and ambulance staff including lone working paramedics. ACC Andy Paynes undertook to provide this information.

The Committee agreed –

- (1) to the revisions to the work programme as set out in the report including a scrutiny exercise on Financial Wellbeing;
- (2) depending on the results received relating to assaults on fire-fighters, police, ambulance staff and lone working paramedics a report be brought to this Committee, and the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee if necessary, to discuss the issues and what can be done to mitigate the problems in the worse areas

(b) Forward Plan Items relevant to the work of this Committee

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

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 5:05 p.m.