

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12 January 2009

Present:

Councillor Richard Chattaway (Chair)
" David Booth
" Gordon Collett
" Barry Longden (Vice Chair)
" Philip Morris-Jones
" Mike Perry
" John Ross

Also Present: Councillor Richard Hobbs

Officers:

William Brown, County Fire Officer

Emma Curtis, Assistant to the Labour Group, Performance and Development Directorate

Louise Denton, Scrutiny Officer, Performance and Development Directorate

Hugh Disley, Head of Division for Young People, Children, Young People & Families Directorate

Diane Johnson, Head of Youth Offending Team, Children, Young People & Families Directorate

Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate

Kate Nash, Head of Community Safety, Community Protection Directorate

Nicky Nicholls, Operations Manager, Children, Young People & Families Directorate

Peter Nicholls, Service Manager, Trading Standards, Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate

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

Glen Ranger, Deputy County Fire Officer, Community Protection Directorate

Balbir Singh, Policy and Planning Officer, Community Protection Directorate

Also present: Nick Stephens, Warwickshire Police

1. General

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the year, particularly those attending to give presentations to the Committee.

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Katherine King, Bob Hicks, Dave Shilton and June Tandy (replacement for Katherine King for this meeting).

It was noted that Councillor Shilton had been in hospital and the Chair requested that a letter be sent to Councillor Shilton from members of the Committee wishing him a full recovery.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None

(3) (a) Minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2008

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2008 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

(b) Matters Arising

Page 2 – 1(3)(b)(iii) Matters Arising – Minute 6 Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council Flooding Review in Warwick District

The Chair noted that at their meeting on 8 January, the Cabinet had accepted the flooding review recommendations of the joint panel. The Chair congratulated the two scrutiny teams on the scrutiny exercise, adding that it should be used as a model for scrutinising the flooding incident in Bedworth.

Councillor Hobbs added that the agreed recommendations included a number for Emergency Planning, which were already being enacted.

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. The Corporate Business Plan 2009-12

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development presenting the first draft of the 2009-12 Corporate Business Plan prior to its consideration at full Council on 3 February 2009.

Councillor Richard Hobbs noted that LAA targets omitted from the report were still to be negotiated at a meeting with the Government Office of the West Midlands.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. The target "to increase the number of drug users in effective treatment" (NI40) was a proportional target.
2. Councillor Richard Hobbs agreed to clarify the 2008/09 year end forecast for "the number of first time entrants into the Youth Justice System (NI 111).

3. The target “to reduce incidents of serious acquisitive crime” was general, but a breakdown of these numbers was maintained to monitor trends.
4. It was agreed that even where national targets were exceeded, it was important to set local targets to continue to improve.
5. The Council’s message to the Police was that the two authorities needed to be working together with the LAA.
6. Members agreed that the Corporate Business Plan should only be agreed by Council with full engagement of partners.

The Community Protection Overview & Scrutiny Committee agreed:

- That comments on contextual information as presented in the first section of the Plan and scrutiny of the specific targets set out under the second section of the Plan, making specific reference to the ‘Protecting the community and making Warwickshire a safer place to live’ priority would have to be made in full Council once the plan was complete.
- The Corporate Business Plan needed to include the LAA Safer Block Priorities for 2008/09 as follows:
 - Violent Crime
 - Criminal Damage
 - Anti Social Behaviour
 - Road Safety
 - Counter Terrorism
 - Acquisitive Crime

All of the above underpinned by:

 - Drug and Alcohol
 - Offender’s Management

4. Presentation on the Youth Offending Service, including LPSA2 Performance by Hugh Disley

Hugh Disley, Head of Youth Service introduced the item, noting that the Youth Offending Service demonstrated corporate working with partners working together.

The Committee received a presentation on developments within the Youth Offending Service, including LPSA2 Performance from Diane Johnson, Head of the Youth Offending Team. She made the following points:

- i. The Team was a reactive service working with young offenders between the ages of 10 and 17 years and providing services from the point of arrest through to court ordered interventions.
- ii. The team worked in partnership to meet the prescribed timescales and standards required within the criminal justice world and under Children and Young People legislation.
- iii. In June 2008 the Service had undergone a multi-inspectorate inspection involving 13 inspectors over the period of one week. Of the seven areas

inspected, four were judged to be good and the remaining three as adequate.

- iv. A new format of the Youth Justice Plan had been piloted in October 2008 and would be used to base the 2009/10 Plan which would be submitted to Cabinet and Council for approval.
- v. Targets had been achieved in all six areas within the National Performance Framework. It was acknowledged however that in terms of access to accommodation, while most young people in Warwickshire had access to suitable accommodation, this was an ongoing area of concern and work was being done with partners to identify and review the needs of children and young people in this area.
- vi. The reduction in numbers of referrals was due to the decrease in the number of young people arrested for offences.

Hugh Disley added that there had been phenomenal success in terms of achievements working with under 13s, resulting in only one case going to court in the past six months. There were difficulties with 15-17 year-olds and work was ongoing with this age group.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

1. In response to a query regarding police reprimands and warnings it was noted that guidance to police from the Youth Justice Board and the Home Office was clear that only in exceptional circumstances should there be more than one final warning. It was noted that where records showed there had been more than final warning, contact was made with the original police officer to clarify the reasons for this.
2. The Service was reactive and had to enforce court orders robustly, while managing the risks young people posed to communities and working with victims and their plight. A balance had to be maintained between the needs of young people within the justice system and public protection.
3. Where an offence was of a particularly low nature, young people could be referred to other services such as Positive about Young People (PaYP) and the Early Intervention Service on a voluntary basis.
4. Where communities had young people causing problems on a consistent basis, they could be "tagged" (i.e. known to services) and receive support from various services where appropriate.
5. In response to a query about the Service not achieving the target for young people in education, employment or training, it was noted that the target for school age young people had been reached but not for 17 and 18 year olds. The Directorate were working closely with Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council to persuade providers in colleges to provide appropriate courses for young people were finding it difficult to engage in traditional learning. Hugh Disley added that colleges were beginning to work collaboratively on this and in Nuneaton and Bedworth, which had been targeted for improvement, last September had been the first year where there was a training place guaranteed for all young people in the area.
6. Colleagues were now targeting young people who were in danger of committing offences in a more logical and strategic way. More work

had to be done with young people coming out of the youth offending system, at a time when they were at their most vulnerable.

7. It was agreed that more detail was needed in terms of the types of offences committed and the wide range of behaviour of young people within the system.

The Chair thanked officers for their presentation.

5. Presentation from Peter Nicholls, Service Manager, Trading Standards Service, on the allocation of £10k from the virement of the remainder of the PCSO funding (Cabinet decision 12 December 2008)

The Committee received a presentation from Peter Nicholls and Nick Stephens of the Warwickshire Police on the allocation of £10k from the virement of the remainder of the PCSO funding (Cabinet decision 12 December 2008).

Peter Nicholls made the following points:

- a. The allocation would be used to set up a countywide project, which would initially target one hotspot in each district and was expected to be launched in March 2009.
- b. The vision for the project was to deter rogue traders and distraction burglars by setting clear ground rules for a zero tolerance county and to raise the awareness of the public, particularly vulnerable people.
- c. Hotspots would be targeted and covering letters with stickers and home security packs would be sent out. There would also be signage and media coverage.
- d. The additional allocation provided a good opportunity for partnership working, between Trading Standards and the Police and local communities.
- e. The project would not put any further burdens on legitimate businesses, and was targeting people wanting to trade with malice and not "roundsmen and legitimate business callers".
- f. 158 reports of distraction burglary had been received in Warwickshire in 2007, with 86 being reported in 2008, showing a reduction of approximately 40% against a target of 5%. It was important that the impetus achieved was maintained. This had been identified as being due to the production and distribution of over 10,000 home safety packs, which had been produced through a multi agency effort led by Police and Trading Standards.

During discussion the following comments were noted:

1. Hot spots were identified through an analysis of hotspots for rogue traders and distraction burglars.
2. There was a local and a national phone number for people to contact and it was agreed that all Parish Councils needed to have these numbers.
3. Members agreed that Trading Standards should liaise with the Economy and Environment Directorate regarding signage.
4. Research had shown that hotspots for rogue traders and distraction burglars were generally where there were vulnerable people. They

worked from “sucker” lists, exchanging information and covering 500 – 700 miles a day.

The Committee agreed that Area Committees and Locality Forums, which all Parish Councils linked into, should be given a copy of the information pack to increase awareness across the county.

6. 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.

It was agreed that due to the number of items scheduled for the March meeting, that an extra meeting be set provisionally for 12 May 2009.

(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.

7. Any Other Items

None.

Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 4:05 p.m.