

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 October 2005.

Present:

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

Also Present: Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.

Officers:

William Brown, County Fire Officer.

Elaine Bettgner, Group Assistant, Chief Executive's Dept.

Victoria Cook, Group Assistant, Chief Executive's Dept.

Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Chief Executive's Dept.

Andrew Lawrence, Head of Community Support, Chief Executive's Dept.

Adrian Levett, Head of Trading Standards, LH&TS.

Andrew Lovegrove, Financial Services, County Treasurers Dept.

Mike Maguire, PaYP Programme Manager, Chief Executive's Dept.

Greta Needham, Assistant County Solicitor and Chief Executive.

David Preece, Financial Services Manager, Chief Executive's Dept.

Kathy Robinson, Community Safety Manager, (North Warwickshire).

Gereint Stoneman, Corporate Review Team, Chief Executive's Dept.

Julie Sullivan, Corporate Community Safety Manager.

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bernard Kirton and Anita Macaulay.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor John Appleton declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 4 (c) Fire and Rescue Revenue and Capital Budget, because a relative had applied for a position with the Fire and Rescue Service.

(3) (a) Minutes of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 13 September 2005 and Matters Arising.

Resolved –

That the minutes of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting held on 13th September 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair.

(b) Matters Arising

(i) Request for Police Representation at meeting.

The Chair expressed concern that, despite Members' requests for Police attendance at Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny meetings, at the last meeting, half of the Committee had left before ACC Andy Parker had made his presentation on Community Policing.

Greta Needham confirmed that it was the Police's intention to attend future meetings of the Committee but had been unable to be present that day because of unforeseen circumstances.

(ii) Minute 3 - Action on Drugs and Alcohol and the contribution to the Achievement of the Strategic Plan for Warwickshire

A Member enquired whether the Chairman of the Magistrates had been invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee as requested at the last meeting. The Chair advised that it would most likely be a representative of the Magistrates who would be attend and asked that the necessary arrangements be made for this attendance.

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. County Council Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy – Progress Report

Andrew Lawrence presented the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, which set out progress on three of the seven priorities in the County Council Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (Fear of crime, High crime areas, and Prolific and Priority offenders). The remaining four priorities would be reported to the Committee's December meeting. He highlighted that total crime was falling but that violent crime (anti-social behaviour and criminal

damage) was increasing. The County Council link to supporting the Police in reducing pressure in this area was in prevention and rehabilitation.

Mike Maguire addressed Members on the “fear of crime” and outlined the key tasks which included –

- Improving Community Confidence
- Changing perceptions by the work of Positive about Young People and Others
- Communication of good news stories to the community
- Training of staff
- Addressing perceived fears about young people
- Preventative work
- Building community cohesion
- Community wellbeing and support of policing
- An outline of Proposed Outcomes

Kathy Robinson outlined the Prolific and Priority Offenders Scheme that had been introduced by the Government in September 2004 and explained how it operated, the proposed outcomes and key tasks.

Julie Sullivan addressed Members on the focus on “high crime areas” objectives, proposed outcomes, key tasks and progress in reducing crime in high crime area.

A Member expressed concern about paragraph 2.2 of the report “Improving Community Confidence”, which he considered did not reflect the reality of what was happening on the streets in his area. In his area community confidence was diminishing and fear of crime a reality for everyone, not just the elderly. The behaviour of some young people had a detrimental impact on the ability of people to live and move about without fear of intimidation and abuse. He considered that the young people who congregated on the street, in large numbers, often led by one person, were out of control, had little respect for other members of the community and were bringing society down to their level. He suggested that Government support should be sought to address the problems. Other Members, whilst concurring with these comments, said that the situation was not reflected in all areas where it was considered that the fear of crime was reducing. The focus of the report on addressing crime “hot spots” was to be welcomed as was the PPO Scheme.

Members further commented –

- That the Police and Magistrates were too lenient with offenders;
- On need for greater partnership working between the County Council and other agencies, including the Police and Magistrates.
- On the need for Member involvement in the work of DAT and CDRPs and welcomed the report to Cabinet on this issue;
- The need for a long-term solution to address the problems;
- On the need for greater parental control;

- That they welcomed the pilot Rugby Community Policing Scheme and would be interested knowing the results of this scheme;
- The need for greater Police presence on the streets;
- That Members should contact their M.P's to enlist their support to address the areas of concern.

Councillor Richard Hobbs accepted Members' comments, in particular the need for long-term solutions and acknowledged that, although crime rates were reducing, "low level" crime was increasing. He highlighted that the figures quoted were for the year 2003/04 and everything was being done to address this problem. The long term solutions included action to make sure people did not re-offend (PPOs) and concentrating on the crime "hotspots". In this respect he said that it was unfortunate that some Members had not heard ACC Andy Parker's presentation on Neighbourhood Policing at the last meeting. There would, however, be another opportunity to hear this presentation at a Seminar on 2nd December 2005 where all agencies would be brought in to discuss the community policing agenda. It was important that all agencies were involved in addressing the areas of concern and Neighbourhood Policing would help.

Andrew Lawrence apologised if the wording in paragraph 2.2. offended Members and said he understood their frustrations. He was well aware of the problems that had been discussed but there was a need to keep in mind what could be done within the County Council's powers. Most of the work was preventative and many good things were happening in this area of work and had reduced the number of young people re-offending. There were things that Members could do and the Seminar on the 2nd December 2005 would provide an opportunity to engage in discussion with the Policy Authority. Additionally, the two recent Member Seminars on anti-social behaviour and the Alcohol Strategy had provided information on what was happening in these two areas. With regard to Members' comments about Policing he undertook to pass these concerns onto the Police.

Resolved that the Committee –

- (1) notes the work undertaken on the three priorities reported in this report but wishes to record its general dissatisfaction with the lack of effectiveness provided by the powers available to all agencies involved in tackling the underlying causes of crime and disorder in the community;
- (2) notes the proposed joint community safety event with all partners on 2nd December as a more effective means of sharing and acting on this national problem;
- (3) Request a further report on progress within the remaining priorities of the Crime and Reduction Strategy at its next meeting in December;
- (4) Also requests a full scrutiny exercise in the early new year involving all community safety and criminal justice agencies as a means of providing an opportunity for Members to understand how they can improve

Community Safety Partnership working and thinking of the future to provide an opportunity to comment on how Local Area Agreements can be used;

- (5) Notes that a report will be taken to Cabinet on 17 November 2005 regarding Member involvement in Community Safety Partnership Working.

4. Revenue and Capital Budget Proposals 2006/7 to 2008/09

(a) Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards.

Adrian Levett presented the report of the Director of Libraries, Heritage and Trading Standards, which detailed the revenue and capital budget proposals for the Department of Libraries Heritage and Trading Standards, with particular relevance to the work of this Committee.

Adrian Levett then answered Members' questions on various aspects of Trading Standards work, and commented that –

- Internet trading was increasing and was a potential future problem;
- The District Councils consulted Trading Standards on all licence application for the sale of alcohol. Response to this consultation was usually by letter, however, if there were problems with particular applications Trading Standards would meet with the district council concerned.
- There had been no change to the control regime for poultry, the threat from avian flu being distant at the moment. Councillor Richard Hobbs informed Members that there would be a question to Council on 1 November 2005 on this issue;
- Trading Standards benefited from information sharing with the Central Environment Training Partnership
- An increase in staff would be welcomed in every area of Trading Standards work; however, the main priorities for the Department currently were doorstep crime, rogue traders and sale of alcohol to underage young people.

Resolved that the Committee supports the 2006/07 to 2008/09 revenue budget proposals and capital programme bids identified by the Directorate of Libraries, Heritage & Trading Standards in its entirety.

(b) Chief Executive's Department

David Preece presented the report of the County Solicitor and Assistant Chief Executive, which detailed the revenue and capital budget proposals for the Chief Executive's Department.

In reply to questions Andrew Lawrence confirmed that bid for £40,000 was required to continue the co-ordination of work to combat anti-social behaviour, £20,000 to strengthen work to reduce the harm caused by alcohol and £20,000 to continue effective publicity to reduce the fear of crime.

Resolved that the Committee supports the 2006/07 to 2008/09 revenue budget proposals and capital programme bids identified by the Chief Executive's Department.

(c) Fire and Rescue Service

William Brown presented his report, which detailed the 2006/07 to 2008/09 revenue budget proposals and capital programme bids identified by the Fire and Rescue Service. He then answered questions on the revenue budget proposals and, with regard to the inflation bid, he undertook to clarify the figures and provide Members with a breakdown between pay and other costs.

Resolved that the Committee supports the 2006/07 to 2008/09 revenue budget proposals and capital programme bids identified by the Fire and Rescue.

(e) Youth Offending Team Revenue and Capital Budget proposals for Youth Offending Team.

Andrew Lovegrove presented the report of the Director of the Youth Offending Team, which detailed the 2006/07 to 2008/09 revenue budget proposals and capital programme bids identified by the Youth Offending Team.

Resolved that the Committee notes the 2006/07 to 2008/09 revenue budget proposals and capital programme bids identified by the Youth Offending Team.

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

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

Members agreed the table setting out provisional items for future meetings subject to the inclusion and deletion of additional items as follows –

- (1) 15 December 2005 meeting – include a short presentation on progress on the Police Reform Bill;
- (2) 10 January 2005 meeting – include an item on the Impact of the Civil Contingencies Act.

(3) With regard to the proposed scrutiny items it was noted that –

- The Integrated Risk Management (IRMP) Plan Policy Panel had reconvened and would oversee consultation on the IRMP Year 3 Action Plan;
- The Police Reform Bill – to include a short presentation to the Committees December meeting followed by a position statement when the Government's decision had been made known;
- Impact of the Civil Contingencies Act – to be scheduled for the January 2006 meeting;
- Citizens Safety – delete reference to GP surgeries;
- Criminal Justice Agencies – to be dealt with by way of Scrutiny early in the new year (see minute 3 resolution (4) above);
- Licensing Regulation – delete from the list and note that copies of the relevant reports to Cabinet have been circulated to Members;
- Implementation of Community Safety Strategy – to note that this has been covered in report to this and the next Committee meeting.

(b) Forward Plan – Items Relevant to this Committee

To note items relevant to the work of this Committee as follows -

Cabinet – 17 November 2005

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Control – Sustainability and Resilience (EXEMPT)

County Council – 13 December 2005

Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service Fire Control – Sustainability and Resilience EXEMPT)

9. Any Other Items

There were no items of urgent business.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 12:25 p.m.