

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 May 2009

Present:

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

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

Officers:

Louise Denton, Scrutiny Officer, Customers, Workforce and Governance Directorate
Phil Edwards, Group Manager, Fire and Rescue Service
Jean Hardwick, Interim Member Services Manager, Customers, Workforce and Governance Directorate
Kate Nash, Head of Community Safety and Localities, Customers, Workforce and Governance Directorate
Peter Nicholls, Trading Standards, Environment and Economy Directorate
Glen Ranger, Deputy County Fire Officer, Fire and Rescue Service
Katie Western, Acting Corporate Safety Manager, Customers, Workforce and Governance Directorate

1. General

The Chair welcomed Katie Western, Peter Nicholls and Phil Edwards to their first meeting of the Committee.

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Katherine King
Bernard Kirton and Dave Shilton.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Barry Longden declared a personal interest in respect of minute 3 Violence and Aggression towards Fire-fighters in Warwickshire because a member of his family was employed as a paramedic.

(3) (a) Minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to, in relation to comments recorded from ICFO Fuller on page 3, that (1) be amended to read –

“increase smoke detector ownership year on year” it being noted that the aim was to increase ownership each year by targeting the most vulnerable households.

(b) Matters Arising

Minute 6 Recommendations and Decisions by the Committee –
CDRP - scrutiny

Louise Denton reported that details of the Government Guidance had not yet been issued.

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. Presentation on Violence and Aggressions towards Fire-Fighters within Warwickshire

Phil Edwards with the aid of a power-point presentation (attached) briefed members on the statistics and the control measures applied by Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Service (WFRS) for combating violence and aggression to Fire-fighters in Warwickshire. He highlighted the –

- (1) definition of violence at work;
- (2) national statistics, regional statistics as compared to Warwickshire's statistics and the different categories of violence and aggression;
- (3) reduction in the number of incidents that had been recorded over the previous 4 years;
- (4) training, methods and policies used to address acts of violence and aggression;
- (5) risk assessments undertaken;
- (6) future initiatives.

The Chair welcomed the reduction in the number of incidents, which he said he would raise at the next West Midlands Regional Management Board and questioned the reason for this reduction.

In reply to questions Phil Edwards and Glen Ranger said that –

- (1) the reduction in incidents was not solely related to the use of cameras, as they were only fitted onto 3 vehicles, the material recorded was useful for training, debrief and evidence gathering purposes;

- (2) incidents were broken down into different categories;
- (3) the methods open to fire-fighters to combat and deal with incidents included receiving training on dealing with the violence and aggression, carrying out risk assessments of every incident attended and following up particular incidents with education and training sessions;

A Member said that despite the reduction in incidents involving fire-fighters there appeared to be an increase in incidents involving the ambulance and police services. He hoped this trend would be addressed by the emergency services combining their efforts and hoped that working together would be encouraged and promoted by new council members.

The Chair thanked the officers for an interesting presentation and noted the key point, which was the progress made on reducing the number of incidents. He asked that, after the election, the new committee be provided annually with the statistics to assess the trends. He also suggested that further consideration be given to how the different categories of incidents could be reported and highlighted the concern about the assaults sustained by the other emergency services and asked that this be conveyed to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Glen Ranger undertook to report annually to the Committee with the statistics relating into incidents of violence and aggression involving fire-fighters.

4. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy and Action Plan Update

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance, which summarised progress made on the implementation of the Warwickshire Anti- Social Behaviour Strategy and 2008-09 Action Plan.

Councillor Richard Hobbs highlighted –

- (1) that the overall success of the Strategy would be measured though the Local Area Agreement target for National Indicator 21 ‘Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police’;
- (2) the visual audits carried out in advance of Your Town, Your Choice week in Old Town, Leamington;
- (3) the overall reduction in arson achieved in 2008/09 compared to 2007/08 figures.

A member welcomed the report, said he had enjoyed reading it and moved that the report be accepted.

In reply to questions Kate Nash explained that –

- (1) there was a reluctance to put a target on reducing ASB incidents because of the initiative taken to encourage and educate the public to report incidents;
- (2) an ASB action plan was put in place in Kenilworth because ASB was the top three Kenilworth Safer Neighbourhoods Panel priorities;
- (3) action was being taken in rural areas to reduce ASB which involved a role for PCSOs in engaging with young people at risk of committing ASB and supporting voluntary activity where they could;

- (4) with regard to Hams Hall and the county-wide injunction, the impasse around the legal process had been resolved. Legal opinion now was that there was a case in law to proceed with a county-wide injunction and it had been agreed to pursue this case together with another authority (Stoke-on-Trent).

The Committee noted the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy end of year report.

5. Older People's Safety Review: Progress Report.

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance, which outlined progress against the recommendations of the Older People's Safety Review completed in June 2007.

The Chair referred to Appendix A of the report and the Committee expressed their satisfaction with the outcomes subject to the following exception –

Recommendation 3 - Alternative service provider for the Help On Call Service: It was noted that a report was being prepared for Cabinet.

Recommendation 7 - Sharing of information on district/borough councils Housing Benefits database: It was noted that a response had not yet been received from the district/borough councils. Louise Denton undertook to contact the district/borough councils.

Recommendation 15 - District/Borough councils and Housing Associations to review entry points into older people's properties: It was noted that one response had been received from Stratford on Avon District Council. Louise Denton undertook to contact district/borough councils and Housing Associations.

Recommendation 16 - The Police to consider how the views of older people who cannot/do not want to attend evening meetings, can be obtained. Councillor Hobbs reported that Police had recently consulted older people by means of the "Citizens Wave" and Kate Nash reported that Whitnash Community Forum had been quoted as an exemplar of good practice for arranging a seminar for older people on an early evening time slot. Louise Denton added that the Police had held surgeries in a variety of community locations, including residential and sheltered housing complexes.

Resolved to note the progress made against the Committee's recommendations and decisions of the Older People's Safety Review completed in June 2007.

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

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

The Committee considered the provisional items for future meetings.

Louise Denton reported that the proposed agenda for the first round of Overview and Scrutiny Committees after the election would include the following items –

1. a presentation from the relevant Portfolio Holder outlining challenges and opportunities for the next 12 months;
2. a report outlining the most up-to-date performance information;
3. an introduction to the principles of effective scrutiny, elements of an effective work programme, previous work undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny Committees and outcomes achieved; and
4. a workshop session with members working in groups to discuss/ identify priority issues to be addressed and appropriate scrutiny methods.

The Committee agreed the future work programme and noted the agenda items for the meeting scheduled for 14 July 2009.

(b) Forward Plan – Items Relevant to this Committee

Noted

8. Any Other Items

Chair's thanks to the Committee

The Chair thanked the members of the Committee for their work, which he said, reflected the good work that they undertook in the community and for the people of Warwickshire.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 3:55 p.m.