

The Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee met at the Shire Hall, Warwick on the 14 July 2009.

Present:

Members of the Committee:

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|-------------|--------------------------|
| Councillors | John Appleton (Chair) |
| | Martyn Ashford |
| | Martin Barry |
| | Peter Butlin |
| | Richard Chattaway |
| | Chris Davis |
| | Jim Foster |
| | Mike Gittus (Vice Chair) |
| | Brian Moss |
| | Martin Shaw |
| | Dave Shilton |
| | David Wright |

Other Councillors

Councillor Martin Heatley, Cabinet Member for Resources
Councillor Richard Hobbs, Cabinet Member for Community Safety
Councillor Bob Stevens, Cabinet Member for Performance and Health

Officers:

Customers, Workforce and Governance

David Carter, Strategic Director
Nathan Devereux,
Jean Hardwick, Member Services
Kate Nash, Head of Community Safety and Localities
Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer
Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer

Environment and Economy Directorate

Andy McDarmid, Environment Management and Performance Manager.
Mark Ryder, Head of Trading Standards, Regulations and Emergency Management

Fire and Rescue Service

Glen Ranger, Deputy County Fire Officer

Resources Directorate

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources
Louisa Jackson, Development Officer – Performance and Consultation

Oliver Winters, Head of Finance

1. General

(1) Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Heather Timms, Portfolio holder for Customers, Workforce and Governance and ACC Lewis Benjamin, Warwickshire Police.

(2) Members' Disclosures of Personal and Prejudicial Interests.

None

(3) Remit of Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee's remit, as agreed by Council on 23 June 2009, was noted.

A member questioned the reasoning behind combining the former Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Resources Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee and whether the Committee would have sufficient time to accommodate this wide remit.

The Chair undertook to provide the member with this information outside the meeting and would monitor whether the Committee had the capacity to deal with its workload.

(4) Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the following meetings be approved and signed by the Chair -

- (1) Resources Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 21 April 2009;
- (2) Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 May 2009;
- (3) Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 June 2009.

There were no matters arising.

2. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)

There were no questions from members of the public.

3. Effective Scrutiny – Scrutiny Officer

Paul Williams, Scrutiny Officer gave a presentation to members on effective scrutiny and the development of a work programme. He undertook to provide members with an email link to the Centre for Public Scrutiny website where many examples of good scrutiny could be accessed.

The Chair thanked Paul Williams for his presentation.

4. Challenges and Opportunities for Next 12 Months – Portfolio Holder (s)

Councillors Heatley and Hobbs each gave a presentation to the Committee on the challenges and opportunities for the next 12 months. Councillor Heatley also presented a briefing paper on behalf of Councillor Timms who was unable to attend the meeting.

The issues identified by Councillor Hobbs, for the Community Safety portfolio included –

Fire and Rescue Service

- He referred to the Fire Service's excellent performance but highlighted the need to improve results (see Corporate Report Card, item 5 (c) below;
- Fire prevention and fire safety

Road Safety

- Reduce speed on C&D roads;
- Concentrate on road safety and education.

Community Safety

- To continue and improve the good and effective working relationship with the Police and other partners and to re-align objectives and targets.

Trading Standards

- To creating a more flexible and efficient workforce by increasing the overall skill-base of staff and increasing the flexibility and career versatility of the workforce;
- Fair Trading – working to protect and create healthy communities and to welcome fair traders to Warwickshire.

In reply to questions Councillor Hobbs said that priority areas would be –

1. Improving performance within the Fire and Rescue service, which would be achieved without additional resources and by delivering the service more effectively; creating greater capacity and building on partnership working.
2. To only reduce speed limits on roads where it was judged to be effective and necessary and to improve road safety training with young people.

Councillor Heatley presented the issues identified by Councillor Timms for the Customers, Workforce and Partnership portfolio which included –

1. Review partnerships with a view to consolidate and streamline, to avoid duplication of effort and (in conjunction with the review with partners of voluntary sector funding) ensure there is effective targeting of resources.
2. Ensure effective governance arrangements for partnerships.
3. Further consolidate locality working - recognising its importance in "Narrowing the Gap" and working with partnerships (including breaking down barriers).
4. Review locality forum governance arrangements by end of 2009 to include looking at governance models that would enable greater member engagement and responsiveness to local need.
5. Current re-organisation and de-layering, to be completed with plans in place by April 2010.
6. Workforce planning is put into action to ensure redeployments where possible following streamlining.
7. Learning and development of staff and councillors against the backdrop of academy development.
8. Continue improvements on equality and diversity.

The Chair advised that Councillor Timms would be available at the next meeting to answer questions on the above.

The issues identified by Councillor Heatley, for the Resources portfolio included –

Finance

- Balancing the Council's budget with less funding.
- Managing Resources well
- Managing the direct financial impacts of the down turn in the economy.

Asset Management

- To ensure the right assets are in the right place (portfolio of 1170 properties and other assets totalling £820m).
- Developing a Strategic Asset Management Plan/ review stock alongside our partners and the challenge to turn potential opportunities for collaboration around buildings into joint progress that can be implemented in the near future.
- The Challenge – to remove poorly performing, inefficient and expensive property from the portfolio to release and recycle resources (some building stock is exemplar, some poor and a backlog of £130 m. maintenance).
- Developing the portfolio – some significant challenges in upgrading the remaining portfolio.
- Critical development projects in 2009/10 – completion of North Leamington School, the redevelopment of Woodloes Primary School and Ridgeway Special School Warwick, extensions to Stratford High School, the amalgamation of Rokeby Junior and Infants Rugby, the refurbishment of Northgate House to provide a training and conference facility, small projects to deliver additional accommodation to schools and the Disability Discrimination Act
- Managing our buildings and using space well
- Carbon Reduction Commitment – to be introduced in 2010/11.

Information Computer Technology (ICT) – (critical to the successful delivery of front line services and key element in delivering savings in the front line).

- Major changes include – replacing a number of elements of the wireless network; moving away from Lotus Notes to Microsoft; computer room facilities; modern and flexible working within the authority and electronic document management.
- Implementation of new financial systems (new supplier agreed by Cabinet in May, implementation of the system scheduled by April 2011 which was key to the delivery of a leaner finance function through the automation processes (discussion taking place with Coventry City Council to offer services to other district councils).

Other Challenges

- Financial input into major projects – solid financial analysis is crucial to all major Projects. During 2009/10 – the main modelling of the impact of Single Status Phase 2 will be carried out by the Directorate together with Project Transform and the Personalisation agenda.
- Collaboration with partners – financial services are provided to the Police and Probation Service and payroll provided for four district councils
- Warwickshire Direct Partnership – the County Council has its own Contact Centre and joint One Stop Shops. The technical elements of a planned co-location of the Contact Centre and the option of a joint option of a joint contact centre(s) with all five districts.
- Property and Construction Services – project management to Stratford District Council to deliver the customer facing facilities at Elizabeth House Stratford and Globe House Alcester, an ongoing project management advice to Rugby Borough Council and a repair and maintenance service to a number of Coventry Secondary Schools – access via the Council's property Hotline contractors.
- Collaborative property solutions – Public Service Centres, Atherstone, Kenilworth and Southam; Training Academy – lead expertise on buildings, ICT and facilities and management work stream.
- Further opportunities for collaboration will continue e.g. financial systems.

In conclusion Councillor Heatley said that, at the end of the next four-year period, a balanced budget would be achieved.

The issues highlighted by Councillor Bob Stevens Portfolio for Performance and Health included –

- Streamlining the performance framework
- Each Directorate identifying a Performance Champion

5. Full-Year Report Directorate Report Card 2008-09 (April 08 - March 09)

The Committee considered the reports relating to the full-year report cards 2008-09 of the Performance and Development, Resources and Community Protection Directorates. The reports provided an analysis of the Directorates' performance for 2008/09 and detailed performance against the key performance indicators as set out in each Directorate Report Card.

(a) Performance & Development Directorate

David Carter David Carter, Strategic Director of Performance and Development introduced the report.

The following points were noted during discussion:

- that 68% of targets had been achieved or exceeded;
- some targets were over ambitious
- Indicators L1800 (% of service transfers to Customer Service Centre) and L1329e (% year end variance from budget) - ongoing remedial action was being undertaken to address the underperforming areas;
- Indicator N1004 (% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality) – This result was taken from the Place Survey and was a national Government best value indicator and was considered not to be necessarily a good measure. Lead officers would be reviewing this measure and would make suggestions to the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM) that the matter should be reconsidered when the next Local Area Agreement (LAA) is refreshed.

The Chair thanked David Carter for his presentation.

(b) Resources Directorate

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director for Resources presented the report and highlighted -

- That 85% of targets had been achieved or exceeded;
- That extremely good results had been achieved in connection with the use of resources and Member support and outstanding results in relation to the staff survey.
- The remedial action being taken in respect of Indicator L1901 – Debt outstanding over 42 days and Indicator L1193 - Improvement in staff learning days.

The following points were noted during discussion:

- Indicator L193 – Number of reported accidents – the increase in the number of accidents was being addressed by a safety campaign based on a Health and Safety Executive's initiative and further measures would be required to sustain a long term reduction;
- Indicator L1337f - Number of working days lost by sickness – this indicator

was showing an improvement and the number of days lost was reducing.

David Carter undertook to report to a future meeting with details of sickness absence across the authority. He was happy to provide this information twice yearly as he had done previously to the Resources, Performance and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chair thanked Dave Clarke for his presentation.

(c) Community Protection Directorate

Councillor Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety presented the report of the Chief Fire Officer, Paul Fuller and David Carter, Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance.

Fire and Rescue Service

Councillor Hobbs highlighted that overall the results were good but there was need for improvement in certain areas. The remedial action to bring about this improvement was outlined in the report.

The following points were noted during discussion:

- The high proportion of missed targets was of concern but it was noted that the targets had been set over a three year period and that the direction of travel had shown improvements;
- It was acknowledged that the Fire Service was in a transitional period and that the improvements should be acknowledged.

Crime

Councillor Hobbs attributed the apparent increase in violent crime to the change in recording criteria brought about by the Government half way through the year and the impact that the recession and unemployment. Overall crime in Warwickshire had in fact reduced. He highlighted good performance in respect of Indicator N1040 – Drug users in effective treatment.

The following points were noted during discussion:

- That there was no separate target for alcohol related crime because there was no sure method of deciding whether a crime was due to alcohol. The Police did, however, record whether alcohol was a factor in any crime.
- That hospital admissions were monitored to assess whether assaults or injuries were drug or alcohol related and recorded on a database. A report on this issue could be brought to a future meeting of the committee.
- That the public's perception of crime did not reflect the good work the Police was doing protecting people from harm. It was suggested that consideration should be given as to how this might be better publicised and to recognise the role of local members in this respect.
- That the Police would be attending full Council to brief new Members on their role.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hobbs for presenting the report.

(d) Environment and Economy Directorate – Road Safety

Councillor Hobbs presented the Performance indicators for Road Safety and graph showing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Warwickshire roads. He highlighted –

1. Indicator L1047a – a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents, but said there was still room for improvement.
2. That work was currently taking place on preparing a local transport plan for the next 10 years and that part of that process would be the introduction of differential targets.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hobbs for this presentation.

6. Progress and Performance of the Trading Standards Service – 1 April 2008 to 31 March 2009

Councillor Richard Hobbs presented the report summarising the progress and performance of the Trading Standards Service. He highlighted paragraph 2, Value in Service Delivery and congratulated Mark Ryder on creating a flexible, well trained and responsive workforce that had enabled capacity to be increased with less staff.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hobbs for his presentation and –

It was agreed that Trading Standards Service be asked to arrange an open day for the Members of the Committee.

7. Any Other Items

None

8. Workshop

The Committee then broke into a workshop session to identify priority issues for the Committee's annual work programme.

The Committee rose at 4.25 p.m.

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Chair of Committee