

**The Corporate Services and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee met at the Shire Hall, Warwick on the 8 December 2009.**

**Present:**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors	John Appleton (Chair)
	Martyn Ashford
	Martin Barry
	Peter Butlin
	Jim Foster
	Mike Gittus (Vice Chair)
	Bob Hicks
	Jerry Roodhouse
	Martin Shaw
	David Wright

**Other Councillors**

Councillor Martin Heatley, Cabinet Member for Resources  
Councillor Richard Hobbs, Cabinet Member for Community Safety  
Councillor Heather Timms, Cabinet Member for Customers, Workforce and Partnership.

**Officers:**

**Customers, Workforce and Governance**

David Carter, Strategic Director  
Jean Hardwick, Democratic Services  
Tricia Morrison, Head of Performance  
Kate Nash, Head of Community Safety and Localities  
Gereint Stoneman, Corporate Planning Manager  
Martyn Thompson, Deputy Head of Workforce Strategy & Development

**Fire and Rescue Service**

Graeme Smith, Chief Fire Officer

**Resources Directorate**

Dave Clarke, Strategic Director of Resources

**Environment and Economy Directorate**

Estyn Williams, Group Manager, Road Safety Unit

## 1. General

### (1) Apologies.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dave Shilton and DCC Andy Parker, 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.

### (4) Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2009 be approved and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

### (5) Feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Board

The Chair reported on the key messages from the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) meetings on 4 November, as follows -

#### 1. Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

Mary Ann Bruce, CAA Lead for Warwickshire, attended and outlined the emerging picture from the CAA, which would be published on 10 December 2009. The Board agreed that the Chairs and Party Spokespersons of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee would reflect upon their work programmes in light of the CAA report to ensure that the work focussed on high priority areas.

#### 2. Protocol for the Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRP)

The Board agreed a protocol for the County Council and District Councils to scrutinise CDRPs with the aim of avoiding duplication and maximising resources across all authorities in Warwickshire.

### 3. Proposals for Corporate Business Plan and Budget Scrutiny

The Board agreed to hold a single event to scrutinise the Corporate Business Plan 2010-13, SDLT's Budget Report and Cabinet's budget proposals 2010/11 on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010. This meeting would be established as a Task and Finish Group of the O&S Board involving the 5 Overview and Scrutiny Chairs.

## **2. Public Question Time (Standing Order 34)**

None

## **3. Update by Portfolio Holders**

Councillor Martin Heatley, Portfolio Holder for Resources), reported on the following issues –

- (1) Property Works Schools – all critical work had been delivered on time.
- (2) North Leamington School – This school was a finalist for an Environment Performance Award;
- (3) Use of Old Shire Hall and Courts – a report was being presented to Cabinet on 7 December 2009 proposing a feasibility study be carried out on the future use of these premises;
- (4) Nutritional Standards Catering Services in Secondary Schools – (*D H ? Pilot for Healthy Food Mark Healthy Food Mark Activity – Cllr Heatley to complete*);
- (5) Customer Services (Caretaking and cleaning services) – had received the Charter Mark Award
- (6) New Financial Systems – WCC now was an Approved Signatory under the Prompt Payment Code.
- (7) Warwickshire County Council: Use of Resources – Received an Audit Commission score of 3 for Managing Finances and Governing the Business.

Councillor Heather Timms, Portfolio Holder for Customers, Workforce and Governance reported on issues that had helped to move the customer service agenda forward as follows –

- (1) Customer Service and Access (Contact Centre) – Warwick District Council had co-located to Shire Hall;
- (2) Warwick Police Station Reception Service – had relocated into the One Stop Shop, Shire Hall.

Councillor Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, reported on the following issues –

- (1) Fire Control Centre – All Members had been invited to visit the new Fire Control Centre in Wolverhampton, which had proved to be very interesting. The Government fully supporting the Centre but some issues were emerging that needed further consideration;
- (2) Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) of the Fire Service – would be

- published on 10 December 2009 advance indications had been given about areas that were performing well and areas that needed to be addressed;
- (3) Community Safety – The Government had given a small budget to the Police Public Confidence Board to develop an action plan to increase public confidence. Spasmodic crime was an issue throughout the county that was being addressed by targeting the worst (prolific) offenders who caused the most harm to society. Partnership work with the Police and with the Coventry and Warwickshire Community Partnership was very good.
  - (4) Road Safety – funding for engineering, education and enforcement would be an issue in the future;
  - (5) Trading Standards – Swine Flue was still an issue.
  - (6) Local Resilience Forum (Civil Contingency) – a new agreement had been reached on how this partnership would work.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That public confidence and perceptions of safety could be addressed by an increased Police presence on the street and would reduce crime;
- (2) That the public had complained about how difficult it was to contact the Police;
- (3) That the number of Police Officers attending community forums should be restricted and the resources allocated elsewhere;

Councillor Timms commented that attendance by the Police at Community Forums helped to increase confidence in the Police and helped address issues of local concern.

Councillor Hobbs, in response to the above, said that he would keep Members briefed and update them at the meetings.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holders for their updates.

#### **4. Fire and Rescue Service Update on Service Improvement Plan Consultation (Verbal report by Councillor Richard Hobbs)**

Councillor Richard Hobbs reported that the consultation period had finished that day during which time 25 public meetings had been held, 2,500 responses received and a 4,500 signature petition handed in by James Plaskitt M.P. In addition, the business community and all neighbouring authorities would be consulted. The next step would be to analyse the responses to ensure that the overall Strategic Plan could be guaranteed and scrutinised.

Graeme Smith added that the issues raised needed to be understood and explored further with the community, the district and borough councils and neighbouring authorities.

#### **5. Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Portfolio Holders for Customers, Workforce and Partnerships; Community Safety and Resources that outlined the mid-year performance for 2009/10 under the enhanced performance management arrangements.

Councillor Hobbs explained that the likely over performance for casualties related to the impact of the recession on reducing traffic volume and distances travelled, which was not anticipated when the targets were set. Casualty numbers were expected to increase when the county came out of the recession. A great deal of educational work had been done with young drivers, 50 mph speed limits introduced across the county and work was ongoing identifying accident hotspots (locations where there were random accidents with no pattern e.g. along the Fosse Way).

The Chair thanked Councillor Hobbs for his update.

## **6. ICT Development Programme 2009-10 Half-Year Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director, Resources relating to a Cabinet decision in 2007, that a more formal approach would be adopted to the development and management of the Corporate ICT Development Plan, and that progress against the plan would be reported to both the SDLT and Corporate Services and Community Safety O&S Committee on a half-yearly basis.

In reply to a question Councillor Richard Hobbs explained the benefits of the Fire and Rescue Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) that were being introduced across the county. He undertook to arrange a demonstration of a MDT at the Committee's next meeting.

The Committee noted the progress against the 2009/10 Corporate ICT Development Plan.

## **7. Treasury Management Monitoring Report**

The Committee noted the report of the Strategic Director, Resources which set out the progress of the treasury management during 2009/10.

## **8. Domestic Abuse – A Strategy for Warwickshire: 1-Year Progress Report**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Customers, Workforce and Governance outlining progress on the Warwickshire Domestic Abuse Strategy 2008-2011.

During discussion the following comments were noted –

- (1) That the Public Awareness Campaign (Phase 3) might see an increase in the number of incidents being recorded;
- (2) That the good working relationship with the Police had helped to bring forward prosecutions where previously victims had been reluctant to go to court;
- (3) That the action being taken to support victims and to prevent re-offending was welcomed;
- (4) The action being taken to increase the number of units to accommodate victims was also welcomed.

David Carter highlighted that indications from the CAA (to be published on 10 December 2009) was that the approach of the partner agencies to domestic violence was progressing well and worthy of praise.

The Committee welcomed the progress of the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2008-2011 - 1 Year Report and asks for a further update to a future meeting.

## **9. Employee absence management**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Customers Workforce and Governance which was the latest in a series of half yearly reports, describing the latest performance information on employee absence levels.

Martyn Thompson, in reply to questions, said that:

- (1) Absence levels had remained relatively static over the last two quarters and the last financial year, but the impact of swine flu, improved accuracy in the collection of sickness data and the stress of financial pressures on the County Council, might mean that these figures would increase despite the wide range of proactive and preventative initiatives;
- (2) Sickness absence was closely monitored. A system was in place to alert Managers as soon as staff reached absence triggers and return to work interviews were carried out by Managers after each incident of sickness;
- (3) The Occupational Health providers, Team Prevent, were now based in Shire Hall and staff could be referred when necessary or when absence triggers were reached.

The Committee noted the latest available performance information in relation to the management of sickness absence.

## **10. Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items Relevant to the work of this Committee**

### **(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings**

The Committee considered the attached table setting out provisional items for future meetings. Members referred to item "Fear of Crime", scheduled for next meeting and suggested that the issue that needed to be addressed was increasing public confidence in the Police and the difficulty experienced by the public when trying to contact the Police.

Following discussion the Committee noted –

- (1) The items listed;
- (2) that David Carter would provide a briefing note on "shared services".

### **(b) Forward Plan Items Relevant to the work of this Committee (Cabinet only)**

The Committee noted the Cabinet and County Council items relevant to the work of this Committee.

**PART B – (ITEMS FOR EN BLOC DECISION)**

**11. Staff Appraisal Process**

The Committee noted the report of the Strategic Director for Customers Workforce and Governance, which summarised the extent to which the Council's corporate staff appraisal process is applied across the workforce.

**12. Any Other Items**

None

The Committee rose at 4.15 p.m.

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Chair of Committee