

**AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET**

**Name of Committee** Council

**Date of Committee** 20 March 2007

**Report Title** Annual Report of the Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Protection

**Summary** The annual report summarises the activities of the Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Protection over the last year.

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**Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework?** No.

**Background papers** None

**CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:-** Details to be specified

- Other Committees  .....
- Local Member(s)  N/A
- Other Elected Members  .....
- Cabinet Member  .....
- Chief Executive  .....
- Legal  .....
- Finance  .....
- Other Chief Officers  .....
- District Councils  .....
- Health Authority  .....
- Police  .....
- Other Bodies/Individuals  .....

**FINAL DECISION YES**

**SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:**

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee  .....

To Council  .....

To Cabinet  .....

To an O & S Committee  .....

To an Area Committee  .....

Further Consultation  .....

**Council - 20 March 2007.**

**Annual Report of the Cabinet portfolio holder for  
Community Protection**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Performance and  
Development**

**Recommendation**

That the Council receive the report from Councillor Richard Hobbs, the Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Protection.

**1.0 Introduction**

Leaders Liaison Group has been looking at ways of allowing a wider range of discussion at Council and ways on informing members of developments across the Council's services and has concluded that one way of doing this is to have Cabinet members report on the development of policies and activities within their portfolio, alongside the annual reports from overview and scrutiny committees. This will provide an opportunity for members to question both Cabinet portfolio holders and Chairs of overview and scrutiny committees on issues within their remits.

As this is the first meeting at which this approach has been taken, the process will be reviewed in the light of feedback from members.

**2.0 Programme of reporting**

The current programme for reporting is set out below for information. It has been designed so that Cabinet portfolio holder reports are presented alongside relevant overview and scrutiny committee.

15 May Children, Young People & Families and Schools Cabinet portfolio holders  
Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 June Health Cabinet portfolio holder  
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 17 July Adult, Health and Community Cabinet portfolio holder  
Adult, Health and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 11 Sept Resources and Performance and Development Cabinet  
portfolio holders
- Resources, Performance and Development Overview and  
Scrutiny Committee.
- 30 October Economic Development Cabinet portfolio holder  
Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### **3.0 Recommendation**

The Council is invited to receive the report from the Cabinet portfolio holder for Community Protection, as appended.

DAVID CARTER  
Strategic Director of  
Performance and  
Development  
Shire Hall  
Warwick  
8 March 2007

## **Annual Report of Councillor Richard Hobbs, the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Protection.**

### **Recommendation**

That Council receives the report.

#### **1. Background**

This is my annual report of activities undertaken as the portfolio holder for Community Protection over the last twelve months.

The Community Protection portfolio covers a cross section of areas, working to reduce risk in Warwickshire. These are mainly within the newly formed Community Protection Directorate which includes the Fire and Rescue Service, Emergency Planning Unit, Community Safety, Domestic Violence, Criminal Justice system and the Drug and Alcohol Team, whilst the Adult, Health and Community Services Directorate encompasses Trading Standards. It should be noted that I am also a member of the Police Authority.

I would like to thank all members of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee for all the work that they have done in the last twelve months to help and support me with my work, and pay tribute to the 700 staff split between the Directorates. The delivery of Community Protection relies heavily on partnership working and I would also like to thank our partners for the work that they have done to reduce the risks to the citizens of Warwickshire.

#### **2. Key Achievements of the past year**

The work encompassed within my portfolio is wide ranging and the list of achievements extensive, but below are some of the key areas of work undertaken in the last 12 months:

##### **2.1 Fire and Rescue**

The main priority of the Fire and Rescue Service is to reduce risk and to achieve this we have carried out a range of direct intervention and prevention activities, including communicating with hard to reach groups such as the elderly and have established a pilot project with the Afro-Caribbean community to identify their needs. I estimate that over 23,000 people have received community fire safety advice throughout the year. We have engaged with young people through the delivery of fire safety sessions in nearly all primary and secondary schools in Warwickshire, whilst the Young Fire-fighters Association now has over 250 members. In addition the service has continued to deliver the 'Firebreak' scheme and recently introduced the 'Flare' programme, both of which are aimed at less advantaged young people. The Area

Risk teams, which were established, have helped us to respond to local needs and I am pleased to report that we have reduced the total number of fires in Warwickshire by 27% from the 2003/2004 baseline. With the help of 'car clear scheme' the number of deliberate fires has fallen by 30% from the 2003/2004 baseline.

One of the main areas of work has been the LPSA2 negotiations and the development of the LAA and the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) 2007-2010, which will see us work in partnership across Warwickshire to deliver safer communities. We have undergone two inspections during the last year, Use of Resources and Direction of Travel, and 'Operational Assessment of Service Delivery' (OASD) scoring a two for OASD (we are awaiting the other results). The established relationship between Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority and the Warwickshire County Council partnerships was commended in the recent OASD. The IRMP, which is also presented to this Council meeting, will be the tool to develop detailed risk profiles to enable us to target prevention-based activity.

The decision to introduce two hybrid aerial /pumping appliances across the county will enable us to meet our efficiency savings in 2006/2007 without compromising the service and will provide us with greater flexibility at incidents.

## 2.2 Community Safety and Crime and Disorder

It has been a very challenging year for the Community Safety Team working in the new directorate. With a significant turnover of staff and a new Head of Service I feel confident that they are now ready to deliver the new community safety agenda. I have been working with our partners to draft the LAA and the delivery plan for the safer block is now complete. Work in the department has concentrated on: development of the LAA, reviewing the governance arrangements for community safety, reviewing all domestic violence provision and developing new domestic violence service proposals, developing four projects around anti-social behaviour, co-ordinating the development of projects to address the four main targets in the LPSA2 (violence, burglary, theft of and theft from vehicles) and developing protocols for prolific and priority offenders, as well as working with the police on the Safer Neighbourhood agenda. This is an area where partnership working has been very successful and, as a result the fear of crime continues to fall and is at the lowest since the year 2000. Although the volume of crime has increased this trend has now levelled off, and I am confident that with the ongoing work this trend can be reversed. Agreement has now been reached for the membership of the new proposed Stratford and Warwick combined Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).

### 2.3 Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)

We have now reached all three of our Drug intervention programme key performance indicators, and have more people in treatment for drugs than ever before. The criminal justice partner arrangements between NHS, Police and the voluntary sector are producing more adults engaged in treatment through arrest referral and other schemes.

We are now ready to implement the new alcohol strategy and in the meantime we have been very active in publicising the dangers of excessive alcohol consumption especially to young people. Partnership work with Trading Standards and the police continues to stamp down on sales of alcohol to those under eighteen.

### 2.4 Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence continues to be a major problem in modern society, and often innocent children are the forgotten victims, often suffering the most anguish. A first line of support has been established with Victim Support and a pilot programme for voluntary perpetrators started. The possibility of domestic violence courts are being investigated along with the piloting of a sanctuary scheme.

### 2.5 Emergency Planning Unit

The Emergency Planning Unit (EPU) is working closely with the Operations Department and the Area Risk Managers in Fire and Rescue to exchange expertise in preparing for, and responding to, emergencies. This proved to be very helpful in the successful running of Exercise Aurora in November 2006 which tested our arrangements at the Kingsbury Oil Complex. The Scrutiny Committee has also received a report on the implementation of the requirements of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The Emergency Planning Unit continues to ensure that Warwickshire County Council and Warwickshire Fire and Rescue Authority are addressing their responsibilities under the act. The EPU also facilitates the Warwickshire Local Resilience Forum and a range of sub groups that address key areas of responsibilities under the act such as risk assessment and communicating with the public.

### 2.6 Trading Standards

I have been very active in attending road shows in Warwickshire promoting the consumer protection team who work closely with our regional colleagues on such projects including 'Scambusters', 'Loan Sharks' and 'Rogue Traders' all of which are designed to protect vulnerable people in Warwickshire. The new Retail Enforcement Pilot, led by Warwickshire, received praise by central Government. Consumer Direct West Midlands, which is the new regional call centre for Trading Standards, has meant an increase in the volume of

enquiries received by Trading Standards from people who previously did not use this service. I have also attended schools to help promote firework safety and healthy eating.

Trading Standards have been very active gathering details of all poultry keepers in the county and are ready, in partnership with the EPU, to take action in the event of an outbreak of Avian influenza.

## 2.7 Policing

At a recent meeting with Party Spokespersons, Greta Needham and Eric Wood from the Police Authority reached agreement in principle to proposals to enhance communication channels between the County Council, the Police Authority and the Force. Leaders Liaison Group have since considered those proposals and fully support the need for more effective arrangements at both strategic and local level to enhance positive engagement between the three organisations. Some further work is to be undertaken to ensure that the arrangements reflect developments across the wider community safety agenda and that they avoid potential duplication or proliferation of meetings. It was also agreed that as an important step towards creating a closer relationship and increased awareness between the County Council, the Police Authority and the Force, leading Police Authority members, Eric Wood and the Chief Constable will be invited to the next meeting of the Leaders Liaison Group.

## 2.8 Criminal Justice

Warwickshire is leading the way with the success of the New Criminal Justice Centre in Nuneaton and the Leamington centre, which is on target to be opened in May 2010. Confidence in the criminal justice system in Warwickshire is 47%, the 6<sup>th</sup> highest in the country as well having the lowest percentage of dis-continuation cases in the country. We also have a good record of working with the Youth Offending Team who are able to divert young people from further offences.

## **3. Portfolio activities outside Warwickshire**

3.1 I represent Warwickshire on the West Midlands Regional Management Board (WMRMB) as Vice Chairman together with Cllr Chattaway and Cllr Shilton. The WMRMB has overseen seven projects including: Performance; Resilience; Fire Safety; Human Resources; Response; Procurement and Fire Control.

3.2 All of these projects have enabled us to achieve greater efficiencies and a better service and at a recent programme board meeting, when presentations were given to the Fire and Rescue Minister, Angela Smith MP, commented on the great success of the West Midlands Regional Management Board. New governance arrangements have been agreed for the new control centre and a company has been



formed with each authority appointing one elected member as a director. The principle of cost apportionment has been agreed based on the population of each authority area. The building of the new control centre near Wolverhampton just off the M54 is well under way.

- 3.3 Over the last twelve months I have attended the LGA Fire Conference which was held in Merseyside in March and the Fire 2006 conference which was held in Manchester in November. Fire-Buy, CPA, the Retained Review and the launch of the Ten Year Vision of the fire and rescue service were the main discussion topics. I have also attended two demonstrations of the new equipment supplied by the government to the region to cope with civil emergencies.
- 3.4 I am appointed by the LGA as a member of the Fire Services Management Committee (FSMC) which link between the CLG and the Fire Authorities of England. This committee organises the LGA Fire Conference and leads on such items as Self Sufficiency in the event of industrial action. This is important as we can no longer rely on the Army and the Green Goddesses. Fire Link and the new Fire Controls are also items high on the agenda when we are able to meet with the Minister and her senior civil servants. I am appointed by the FSMC to the sounding board of the Audit Commission that is consulting on the new inspection regime for Fire Authorities and I frequently sit in the National Joint Council (NJC) for the employer's side when negotiating with the unions. Only recently we agreed that the Retained Union (RFU) is able to have a seat on the council and there is going to be a separate negotiating body for middle management of the Fire officers association. The long dispute over the Long Service Increments has also been resolved. All these matters are reported to the Fire Forum, a regular meeting of all chairs of Fire Authorities.
- 3.5 On behalf of Trading Standards I have attended two national conferences during the last year. This has involved discussions on improving performance, information sharing and the pioneering work which is being done in the West Midlands with schemes such as Scambusters and Consumer Direct which have also been the subject of Regional meetings.
- 3.6 I am a member of the Association of Police Authorities neighbourhood group and regularly attend meetings to discuss the safer neighbourhood agenda and communications between police and the community.

#### **4. Challenges, issues and ambitions for the coming year**

Reducing crime continues to be one of the top concerns for the people of Warwickshire, to which we will work to address this year. Work with partners is vital to the success of our work in meeting local people's targets along with those set locally, regionally and nationally. The

following sets out a summary of the challenges for the portfolio for the coming year.

#### 4.1 Fire and Rescue

This year's budget creates new challenges. This council needs to agree a long-term plan for the service, and the implementation of the IRMP 2007-2010.

#### 4.2 Community Safety, Policing, DAAT and Crime and Disorder

To meet public expectations of the new Safer Neighbourhood arrangements and to agree the introduction of governance arrangements of the Safer Block of the LAA in Warwickshire. This would include the DAAT and the Warwickshire Youth Justice Management Board. We need to work with the Police and CDRPs to reverse the recent upsurge in crime figures to meet our LPSA2 targets by March 2008 and develop strategies to enable us to sustain drug treatment and prevention services for young people in face of the Governments 50% reduction in funding by 2009. We need to respond to the Police and Justice Act with regard to the CDRPs and new scrutiny arrangements. We must also work with police to reduce Violent Crime including domestic violence with the possible introduction of domestic violence courts.

#### 4.3 Emergency Planning Unit

We will raise awareness for elected members on all areas of resilience and specifically the role that they can play to assist in the coordinated response to an emergency, for example, any future outbreak of pandemic influenza. There is also a considerable area of work involved in ensuring that all new Directorates, in the County Council have up to date and detailed emergency plans and that they are validated by training and exercises.

#### 4.4 Trading Standards

We need to embed the new National Qualifications Framework into the service in order to improve the skills and opportunities for our employees. The unfair Commercial Practices Regulations will give us the opportunity to take action in areas of trading malpractice that were previously uncontrolled. An outbreak of Avian influenza would also present a major challenge to the service.

The challenges for the next year are considerable given the restraints on funding and we will need the full support of all our partners for them to be achieved.

Councillor Richard Hobbs  
Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Community Protection