

Minutes of the Corporate Performance Management, Efficiency and Effectiveness Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 5th March, 2015 at 6 p.m.
In Committee Room 2, The Council House, Dudley

Present:

Councillor D Blood (Chair)
Councillor B Cotterill (Vice-Chair)
Councillors C Baugh, D Caunt, J. Cowell, Elcock, A Finch, P Harley, S Henley, M Mottram and D Russell.

Officers:

G Thomas (Assistant Director – Policy and Improvement) – Lead Officer to the Committee, M Wooldridge (Principal Policy and Performance Management Officer), M.Baines (Principal Officer, Project Management) and J.Jablonski (Assistant Principal Officer, Democratic Services)

Also in attendance – for agenda item no.5 – Update on Crime and Community Safety

Councillor J.Foster – an Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner; Chief Superintendent Johnson; Detective Chief Inspector J.Skyrme and S Haywood, Head of Community Safety.

23 **Apology for Absence**

An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Marrey.

24 **Declaration of Interest**

No Member made a declaration of Interest in respect of any matter to be considered at this meeting..

25 **Appointment of substitute Member**

It was reported that Councillor J Cowell was serving in place of Councillor Marrey for this meeting of the Committee only.

Minutes

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November, 2014, be approved as a correct record and signed.

Update on Crime and Community Safety

In introducing this item the Chair reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), David Jamieson, had unfortunately now been unable to attend the meeting. Councillor Foster was in attendance in her capacity as an Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner and commented on her role, which included being the Lead for the PCC for Dudley and other Black Country boroughs, and to respond to questions asked.

Prior to responding to certain questions, of which she had been given prior notice, she then commented on the PCC's priorities for 2015/16 and how they contributed to making Dudley a safer place. In this connection she referred to the Strategic Policing Care Plan and the role of local Police and Crime Boards; the priorities of Dudley's board reflected those of other boards.

Following consultation events in Dudley the priorities were domestic abuse and vulnerable people, drug misuse and hate crime. Other concerns were also commented upon including home burglary, dog fouling and inconsiderate parking. It would be up to the Safe and Sound Partnership to see how these were addressed. Dudley's priorities were therefore those of the PCC and consultations highlighted a number of other issues including troubled families, business crime and inappropriate use of vehicles.

It was also noted that within the Dudley area Dudley North would continue to be a priority area.

Questions were then asked and responded to relating to –

- the impact of abolishing the office of PCC. This was responded to in relation as to what any replacement would look like and that it was difficult to say whether the replacement would be better or worse than the PCC.
- Business crime in that this included theft of petrol from supermarket petrol stations; theft from displays at large stores and metal theft. Such crime involving shop theft was the largest crime type in Dudley. These crimes were not victimless and were often linked to other types of crime.

- Regarding numbers of police constables, it was noted that when comparing 2011/12 with the end of 2015/16 there would be 2,000 fewer officers. However, given the pledge made to recruit 450 posts which had been achieved ,overall in twelve months time it was hoped that the force would be in the same position as it is currently, given the 450 posts recruited.
- In response to questions asked, Councillor Foster undertook to inform the Lead Officer of the budget underspend in 2013/14 and 2014/15 so that this information could be forwarded to members of the committee.
- Given the precept of 1.99% resulting in the freeze grant not being paid, it was queried as to the amount the precept would raise and how much would be lost by putting the precept up compared with receiving the freeze grant. Councillor Foster undertook to provide the Lead Officer with the information required so that it could be forwarded to Members.
- Given the reduction in budget and the impact especially on recruitment this would have on the level of service provided it was noted that the requirement for officers with 30 years service to leave the force had now been lifted.
- The near doubling of reserves to £150m was commented on and the non-use of such reserves queried. In response reference was made to the workings of the grant formula and the significant funding gap requiring the need for reserves.

Following the asking of questions, Detective Chief Inspector Jenny Skyrme then gave a presentation entitled Service Transformation – Public Protection Services in Dudley. A copy of the presentation would be placed on the Council's Committee Information Management System. The comprehensive presentation given detailed the changes introduced to tackle child abuse and domestic abuse within the overall context of the force area and specifically in Dudley. The positive outcomes achieved were noted ,together with the partnership working undertaken and the need for further work to be done.

In concluding the presentation DCI Skyrme outlined challenges ahead and in addition to the three issues raised commented on a fourth challenge that of hidden crime involving crimes such as female genital mutilation and honour crimes which were complicated by cultural considerations. There was a need to further gain the trust and confidence of communities in relation to such crimes.

A number of questions were then asked and responded to, including -

- The relationship of mental health issues, drugs and alcohol to domestic violence and the need to try and break the relationship with one or all of these factors. A view was expressed that there was a need to change the current licensing laws.
- Joint working with social workers when it is known that child abuse is occurring.
- That the work undertaken was scrutinized and there was confidence that it was done so transparently as regarded officers of the council and the Police.

- That as regards sex offenders Dudley did not have a high number of such offenders.
- Regarding female genital mutilation, it was noted that this was dealt with at the local police level and that Health were the lead on this. Currently there were no successful prosecutions for this crime.
- It was noted that there were three rape suites serving the west midlands area at Walsall, Castle Vale and Nuneaton which serves Coventry and Solihull.
- It was noted that a new custody facility serving Dudley but based in Sandwell would open in June, 2015.
- Arising from comments made about referrals from council officers to the police it was considered that further work did need to be done by all agencies in the making of referrals so that referrals were made early and to the right place, Also that work needed to be done on reviewing those referrals. A joint approach on referrals was required.
- That the sub-group of the Dudley Safeguarding Children Board, chaired by DCI Skyrme did challenge officers in relation to child sexual exploitation with a view to achieving a joined up approach. However there was a need to do more in developing intelligence.
- It was considered that schools had an important role to play in relation to safeguarding children. A view was expressed that sex education at primary school could help with this so that as children grew older they would be more aware of the dangers.

Following closing remarks from Councillor Foster and Chief Superintendent Johnson, the Chair thanked them for attending and to DCI Skyrme for her comprehensive presentation.

Resolved

That the information given at the meeting and in the presentation given, together with the responses set out above, be noted and that the Lead Officer be requested to forward the information requested to Members following receipt from Councillor Foster.

Corporate Quarterly Performance Management Report

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the third Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Report for 2014/15 relating to performance for the period 3rd October to December, 2014.

In considering the content of the report particular reference was made to PI 120 - % of 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Lead Officer undertook to review the target with the officers concerned.

Resolved

That the information contained in the Quarterly Performance Management Report in respect of performance for the period from 3rd October to December, 2014 be noted.

29

Update on Corporate Services Utilisation

A presentation was given by Martin Baines on the current position regarding the review of Corporate Services Utilisation in respect of printing, training, graphics and communication and catering. Details of the approximate spend on outside sources for these services, £4,350,000 were given over a twenty-one month period – April, 2013 to December, 2014 together with the methodology used. A note of caution regarding the figures was also given together with aspects of the spend in each of the areas.

Interim conclusions reached were that there was reassurance about external commissioning; appropriate use made of in house resources and that the restructure proposals provided further opportunities for savings.

Resolved

That a further report on the Review of Corporate Services utilisation be submitted to a future meeting incorporating the following recommendations contained in the presentation –

Further analysis of Graphics and Communications due to significant spend, volume of transactions and use of generic coding; and Re-state standing orders ie the obligation to use in-house services which will be done as part of the restructuring proposals.

30

Comments of the Chair

As this was the last scheduled meeting of the committee in the current municipal year the Chair expressed his thanks to Geoff Thomas, Lead Officer to the Committee, for his contribution to the work of the committee over recent years, as this was his last meeting of the committee in that capacity. The Chair also referred to Councillor Caunt, who was not standing for election in May and expressed his appreciation to him for his work on the committee and best wishes to those Members standing for election in May.

The meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.

CHAIR