

Meeting of the Council – 18th July, 2011

Annual Report of the Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Purpose of Report

1. To submit to the Council the Annual Report of the Community Safety and Community Services Scrutiny Committee for 2010/2011.

Background

2. Article 6 of the Council's Constitution requires that Scrutiny Committees report annually to the full Council on the work carried out over the previous municipal year making both recommendations for key areas of future work and any amended working methods, if appropriate, for the forthcoming year.
3. As in previous years, the work programme for the year was rooted in the Council's overall objectives in terms of both the key issues but also identifying the timetable for reports back.
4. The Committee, in discharging its overview and scrutiny functions as they relate to crime and disorder functions of the Council under the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 and other relevant legislation, has a wide and far-reaching remit. It is therefore difficult to single out a number of key issues from Borough-wide community safety issues such as social inclusion and Dudley Council Plus which all fall within the purview of the Scrutiny Committee.
5. The following matters were considered at meetings of the Committee in 2010/11:-
 - (a) Domestic Abuse Reporting;
 - (b) Safe and Sound, Dudley's Community Safety Partnership: The Role of the Responsible Authorities;
 - (c) Civil Parking Enforcement;
 - (d) Anti-Social Behaviour Minimum Service Standards;
 - (e) The Reluctance of Victims of Domestic Abuse to Pursue the Matter through the Courts;
 - (f) West Midlands Police Programme Paragon Update;
 - (g) Dudley Borough Hate Crime Role Update.

6. The Committee's Work Programme for the 2010/11 municipal year also included the following standard reports:
- Quarterly Corporate Performance Management Reports;
 - Review of the Community Strategy, Update of the Council's Capital Strategy and the Council's Revenue Budget;
 - The Equality and Diversity Report of the Directorate of Corporate Resources and the Report of the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management;
 - Safe and Sound Community Partnership;
 - Annual Report of the Committee 2009/10.

Anti-Social Behaviour Minimum Service Standards

7. A report was submitted on the progress made in establishing a set of common minimum service standards in response to complaints of anti-social behaviour. The Committee noted that Anti Social Behaviour Orders were under review.

The Reluctance of Victims of Domestic Abuse to Pursue the Matters Through the Courts

8. Detailed consideration was given to the reasons why victims of domestic abuse were reluctant to pursue the matter through the courts that in turn impacted on sanction detection rates. It was indicated that sanction detection rates were defined as offences for which someone was charged, summoned, received a caution or other formal sanction.

The Committee further noted that the Council carried out campaigns with hard to reach groups such as those in respect of sexual orientation and disabilities.

The Committee noted the Domestic Abuse Response Team and the number of referrals made to them.

The Committee noted the information contained in the report and as reported on during the meeting.

West Midlands Police Programme Paragon Update

9. A report was submitted, and noted, by Superintendent Stuart Johnson, Dudley Local Policing Unit on the developments within the West Midlands Police brought about through Programme Paragon. He also reported on Operation Advent that had taken place in December, 2010, which had focused on drug related crimes, referring to the success of the operation, which resulted in significant arrests.

Hate Crime Role

10. A report was considered on the Dudley Council and the Safe and Sound Partnership's approach to hate crime and outlined some of the achievements made to date. The number of hate crimes recorded by the Police was noted.

The Committee further noted that work continued to be undertaken examining the activities and profiles of offenders to ascertain the motivation for hate crime.

A report was also considered and noted on the Lord MacPherson definition of hate crime.

Civil Parking Enforcement

11. A report on the powers of the Council in operating Civil Parking Enforcement was considered. Police representatives were also in attendance and advised Members of their powers in relation to obstructive parking.

Arising from the presentation of the report, it was agreed that the Assistant Director of Environmental Management would send a briefing note to all Members advising them of the respective parking enforcement responsibilities of the Council and the Police, including details of the information presented during the course of the meeting.

It was also agreed that he would write to the Department of Transport advising them of a suggestion made by Members that a minimum distance should be set between the obstruction and the end of the pavement when determining whether obstructive pavement parking had occurred.

Reporting on Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act, 1998

12. At its meeting in March, the Committee considered a report on the work that the Directorate of Corporate Resources was involved in, in order to comply with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

Outline of the Work Programme for 2011/12

13. A proposed work programme for 2011/12 was considered by the Committee at its first meeting held in this municipal year and included the following matters:-
- Work Programme for 2011/12;
 - Annual Report of the Safe and Sound Board;
 - Annual Report of the Committee to Council;
 - Domestic Abuse Service;
 - Closed Circuit Television Monitoring;
 - Proposed Revenue Budget;
 - Anti Social Behaviour;
 - Reporting on Section 17 – Crime and Disorder Act, 1998;
 - Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill;
 - Provisional Work Programme for 2012/13.

14. At a meeting held on 9th June, 2011 detailed consideration was given to the Work Programme. Arising from this, the Work Programme is likely to be updated.

Conclusion

15. Areas forming the bulk of the Committee's work continue to reflect the concerns of local people. These include issues concerning community safety with particular emphasis on domestic abuse, Anti-Social Behaviour and measures to build safer and stronger communities through community-lead programmes to combat crime in the whole or parts of the Borough as well as the operations of Dudley Council Plus.

Finance

16. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage.

Law


17. The requirement for the Committee to submit an annual report to the Council is contained in Article 6 of the Constitution as read with Part II of the Local Government Act, 2000, together with Regulations, Orders and Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
18. Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, requires Local Authorities to consider the impact of community safety on its decisions.

Equality Impact

19. Reports that have been and might be submitted to the Committee during 2011/12 could have a direct bearing on children and young people who become involved in anti-social behaviour whilst issues such as social cohesion and community development will also have an impact on them.
20. Bodies representing children and young people will continue to be consulted on issues submitted for consideration by the Committee that might have a direct impact on children and young people. This report complies with the Council's equality and diversity policy.

Recommendation

21. That the Annual Report for 2010/11 be noted.



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**CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**