

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Thursday, 6th November, 2008, at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 2, Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor Vickers (Chairman)
Councillor Cotterill (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Barlow, A. Finch, Ms. Foster, P. Harley, Jones, J. Martin, and Nottingham.

OFFICERS

Assistant Director of Finance (Revenue, Benefits and Management Support) (Lead Officer to the Committee), Senior Assistant Director of Finance, Head of Policy, Head of Contingency and Disaster Management and Drugs and Alcohol Team Manager (all Interim Chief Executive's Directorate), Head of Community Renewal (Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services), Principal Solicitor and Mr. J. Jablonski (Directorate of Law and Property)

Also in attendance:

Superintendent S. Johnson (West Midlands Police)

24

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Burston, Mrs. Martin and Ryder.

25

SUBSTITUTE MEMBER

It was reported that Councillor Barlow had been appointed as a substitute member for Councillor Mrs. Martin for this meeting of the Committee only.

26

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Vickers declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 - Adult Drug Treatment Plan, Drug Intervention Programme and Children and Young Persons Substance Misuse Plan, in that he is a Trustee of the Warehouse Project.

27

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11th September, 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed.

28 PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

29 CHANGE IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13(c), it was

RESOLVED

That Agenda Item 9 - Update on the Council's Strategy - be considered as the next item of business.

30 UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CAPITAL STRATEGY

A report of the Director of Finance was submitted on the update of the Council's Capital Strategy. A copy of the Strategy for 2009/2014 was attached as an Appendix to the report submitted.

The Senior Assistant Director of Finance in his presentation of the report referred in particular to paragraph 21 relating to safety matters; quality service matters being the main item in the Strategy relating to the Terms of Reference of this Committee.

As part of his presentation, he reported that £110,000 for each of the next three years had been awarded to the Council from the Safer and Stronger fund for use in the areas of crime reduction, anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and provision of CCTV. In response to a question regarding how the funding would be apportioned, reference was made, in particular, to the role of the Safe and Sound Strategic Board.

Regarding the second point in paragraph 21 in respect of the development of customer/citizen access to services, reference was made to the need to examine, as part of the capital strategy how shops in small shopping centre, for example on housing estates, might be utilised to deliver local services to local people and, given the recent spate of Post Office closures, how possible joint arrangements, with Post Offices being incorporated in shops, might be entered into which could mean that such shops would be more viable.

As part of the consideration of this matter, it was reported that the issue of Post Office closures should be pursued through Area Committees as they considered a report on closures at recent meetings. Also, that the relevant Directorates, Finance and Directorate of Adult, Community and Housing Services, for example, could start to examine now the delivery of local services, so that such considerations could impact on any rationalisation of property usage. Similar consideration could also be given in relation to developments in respect of Dudley Council Plus.

In response it was considered that Area Committees should be involved regarding the Post Office issues and it was suggested that the points made be referred to in the report to Cabinet arising from the consideration being given to the Strategy.

Another issue that it was considered should be referred to in the report to Cabinet was the need for the revenue implications of capital projects to be considered at the commencement of the consideration of such projects so as to avoid the difficulties that had occurred with a scheme referred to by a member of the meeting.

Reference was also made by a member to a gating issue in Saltwells Road and the Head of Policy undertook to look into the matter and respond back direct to the member.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Update of the Council's Capital Strategy, be noted and that the issues relating to property and consideration of revenue implications referred to above, be included in the report to be submitted to the Cabinet arising from the consultation on the Update of the Council's Capital Strategy.

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICE AGENDA

Superintendent Johnson, West Midlands Police, was in attendance at the meeting and gave an overview of the National Policing Model and how it was impacting on performance.

In his presentation he commented in particular on:-

- The evolution from Sector Policing to Neighbourhood Policing, seeking to become more deeply embedded in the community.
- The approach whereby there was a named police officer and police community support officer, whose contact details were available, with greater engagement in neighbourhood management.

- The development of trust/confidence, although there was a reassurance gap between falling crime rates and public perceptions.
- Improved performance but with some areas performing less well than others.
- A reduction in crime of 10% across the borough and although serious acquisitive crime and violent crime were down, serious crime was up.
- A detection of crime rate of 27% across the two operational command units (OCU's), with responsive policing being pretty effective.
- Seasonal trends to crime for which both OCU's were prepared.
- The use of PACT meetings to engage with the community and other methods, for example, use of websites and bluetooth.
- The provision of neighbourhood policing and protective services in the borough, together with responsive teams and specialist units.
- The move to customer satisfaction as a performance measure.

Arising from the presentation given, members made a number of comments and asked questions relating in particular to:-

- The need to be cautious of figures from surveys given their perceived limitations and that they may not accurately reflect the true position, although it was considered that the more contact people had with the police, the better opinion they had of them.
- That there was a significant difference between the detection rates of the two OCU's.
- The current position on the PACT review; the differences in operation of PACT's in the different areas reflecting local circumstances and the view expressed of the need for such meetings to be ones local members and the community would wish to participate in with an appropriate level of frequency.
- A request for a summary of the verbal update given, especially the figures quoted. It was noted the relevant figures were available on the website myneighbourhood.com.

In response to the points raised, it was reported that whilst the samples used for surveys were small, the West Midlands force was one of the few areas using such methods, however, the move to customer satisfaction would be a positive step, although it was considered that a lot of credence could be given to the figures indicated.

It was also confirmed that the detection rates between the OCU's were different in that Dudley North was stronger than Dudley South. However, trends were cyclical and there were good reasons for putting the two areas together in that crime in one area was often related to crime in the other area and the two areas did work together in detecting crime.

In respect of the PACT review, work on the review was still on-going, as indicated at the meeting, and it was hoped that the outcomes would be available shortly and possibly in time for reporting to the next meeting of this Committee.

Regarding contacting local officers, mention was again made of the new website and in accepting the point made about the difficulty in contacting local officers, Superintendent Johnson indicated that he would be happy to take the issue back to see whether further improvements could be made. In this context a member suggested that being put in contact with the station at which a local officer was based would be helpful.

Superintendent Johnson also agreed to provide a summary of his verbal update which would be circulated to all members of the Committee.

At the conclusion of comments and questions, the Chairman thanked Superintendent Johnson for his attendance.

RESOLVED

That the information given in the verbal presentation on the neighbourhood police agenda, and associated matters, as indicated above, be noted.

32

NEXT GENERATION LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (NGLAA) COMMUNITY SAFETY RELATED TARGETS AND INITIATIVES

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the community safety related targets agreed in the recently negotiated NGLAA and on some of the initiatives planned to deliver against them.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the community safety related targets agreed in the recently negotiated next generation local area agreement and on some of the initiatives planned to delivery against them, be noted and that a further report be submitted to the Committee following the final agreed action plans from the Task and Finish groups responsible for each indicator.

ADULT DRUG TREATMENT PLAN, DRUG INTERVENTION
PROGRAMME AND CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS SUBSTANCE
MISUSE PLAN

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on performance in respect of the Adult Drug Treatment Plan, Drug Intervention Programme and the Children and Young Persons Substance Misuse Plan for the first quarter of 2008/09.

Attached as appendices to the report were details of the Quarter 1 performance in respect of the Adult Drug Treatment Plan and Performance Indicators for 2008/09 in respect of the Drugs Intervention Programme.

In her presentation of the content of the report, the Drug and Alcohol Action Team Manager reported on the good progress that had been made by those engaged in the drug treatment programme in taking up employment and that performance against targets was good.

Arising from the presentation given, members commented in particular on the accessibility of drugs and queried how this could be tackled and on the related issue of alcohol abuse.

In response to the first point made, activities undertaken particularly in relation with the police were reported on with the longer term emphasis being, it was considered on reducing the demand for drugs and in respect of the alcohol issue raised, it was reported that a report on the development of Dudley's Alcohol Strategy had been prepared for submission to the next meeting of the Select Committee on Health and Adult Social Care, to be held on the 20th November, 2008. A report on this matter could be submitted to this Committee in the next municipal year.

In response to a further query, it was reported that although the police had not routinely involved alcohol awareness services when persons who had abused alcohol were held by them, there were proposals to do so in the future.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted on the Adult Drug Treatment Plan, Drug Intervention Programme and Children and Young Persons Substance Misuse Plan, be noted.
- (2) That a report on the development of Dudley's Alcohol Strategy be included in this Committee's Work Programme for 2009/2010.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF CONTINGENCY AND DISASTER
MANAGEMENT FOR 2007/08

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the Annual Report of the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management for 2007/08 indicating the state of preparedness within the Council to respond to those major incidents which could befall the community of Dudley either from natural, man-made disasters or terrorism within the Borough.

Arising from the presentation of the content of the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted by the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management, members made a number of comments relating in particular to an incident involving the flooding of the River Stour which had involved officers from the Contingency and Disaster Management Team, together with police, fire and other directorates of the Borough and in recognition of the work done, members requested that appreciation of their work be recorded.

Particular comments were also made relating to the new area of work indicated in the report submitted in respect of Tension Monitoring, Integration and Cohesion and in this respect, comments were made regarding the work undertaken by the Council and its partners, in particular, the police in this regard.

Overall, tribute was paid to the activities and approach of the Contingency and Disaster Management Team to their role.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendices to the report, submitted in respect of the Annual Report of the Head of Contingency and Disaster Management for 2007/08, be noted.

35

COMMUNITY RENEWAL - AN UPDATE

A report of the Director of Adult, Community and Housing Services was submitted, updating the Committee on the arrangements for the Community Renewal Service (previously Neighbourhood Management) and on some current activities.

As part of her presentation of the content of the report, the Head of Community Renewal gave a presentation illustrating some specific examples of the work of the Community Renewal Unit and its impact.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and as illustrated in the presentation given in respect of specific examples of the work of the Community Renewal Unit, be noted and that support continue to be given to the work of the Community Renewal Team in community localities.

QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the performance of the Council in relation to the activities relating to the Terms of Reference of this Committee for the first quarter of 2008/09, April to June, 2008.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report, and Appendix to the report, submitted on the Council's quarterly performance for the first quarter of 2008/09, on the activities relating to the Terms of Reference of this Committee, be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm

CHAIRMAN