

COMMUNITY PROFILE & PARTNERSHIPS
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
24 JULY 2014

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Profile & Partnerships Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 24 July 2014

PRESENT: **Councillor Brian Dunn (Chairman)**

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Chris Dolphin, Ian Dunbar, Joe Johnson, Brian Lloyd, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Robin Guest, Ron Hampson, Dennis Hutchinson and Paul Shotton

CONTRIBUTORS: Chief Executive and Policy & Performance Manager

For minute number 10

Acting Superintendent Dave Owens of North Wales Police

Mr. Godfrey Hayes, Substance Misuse Programme Manager of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

Team Leader - Community Safety

Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator

Substance Misuse Co-ordinator

IN ATTENDANCE: Member Engagement Manager and Committee Officer

Mr. Paul Goodlad of the Wales Audit Office was in attendance as an observer.

8. DECLARATIONS ON INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

No declarations of interest were made.

9. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2014 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

Councillor Brian Lloyd referred to the Committee's recent site visit to the Clwyd Special Riding Centre at Llanfynydd and asked for a letter of thanks to be sent and extending an apology for the low turnout of Members. The Member Engagement Manager advised that he already written to the centre on behalf of the Committee to express appreciation.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14

The Chief Executive introduced a report outlining the activities of the Community Safety Partnership (SCP) over the past year. In acknowledging the challenges in tackling anti-social behaviour issues, he said that the Council's record had been excellent and that the Partnership's role transfer to the Local Service Board had helped to sharpen focus.

The main points of the presentation were:

- Background to the partnership
- Performance statistics compared with 2012/13
- Local Developments
- Links with the Council's Improvement Plan
- Details of the Community Safety Team
- Regional Developments - making a difference through collaboration

The Team Leader - Community Safety highlighted the key priorities within the North Wales Safer Communities Board Plan for 2014-17 which had been adopted by Flintshire's CSP. The Plan reflected the recommendations of the regional Strategic Assessment together with the findings of the Substance Misuse Needs Assessment which had identified the misuse of alcohol as one of the main areas of concern.

Overall crime and disorder statistics for 2013/14 indicated a steady reduction from the previous year. The Team Leader - Community Safety pointed out that figures for victim-based crime reflected ongoing operations resulting from reports of historic incidents both in Flintshire and Wrexham. The increase in burglary dwelling incidents reflected an emerging trend throughout North Wales, however figures for Flintshire had levelled off during the first quarter of 2014/15 as a result of intervention work with Police colleagues to identify key individuals and task group working with involvement from Neighbourhood Wardens. A reduction in anti-social behaviour statistics from 2012/13 had been further reduced by 21.5% during the first quarter of 2014/15.

On local developments, the Chief Executive spoke of positive progress by the CSP on the 'People are Safe' priority, focussing particularly on tackling alcohol abuse. More detail could be shared with Members outside the meeting.

The achievement milestones for 2013/14 in the report indicated a 'green' status on all areas apart from substance misuse. Mr Godfrey Hayes of Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board advised that employee sickness issues had mainly been resolved and that performance figures for the first quarter of 2014/15 had seen a significant improvement, with 99% of service users receiving treatment within 20 days. He added that alcohol related crime was on the increase across the whole of North Wales.

During an update on team members, the Team Leader - Community Safety said that co-location had made communication easier between officers, Neighbourhood Wardens and Community Police Officers. This would also be of benefit when the new legislation on Anti-Social Behaviour was due to come into force, on which the Committee would receive an update.

The Chairman thanked the Team Leader - Community Safety and her team for their hard work and asked about a breakdown of crime figures relating to drugs and alcohol. Whilst Acting Superintendent Dave Owens of North Wales Police was able to provide some data on crime and anti-social behaviour, he advised that this may not reflect the true position as it was not possible to capture in every case whether drugs or alcohol had been a contributory factor.

After expressing his appreciation for the excellent Member training sessions which had taken place earlier in the year, Councillor Ian Dunbar made reference to the increase in reported sexual crime offences and shoplifting, the latter of which had been commented on by the Police & Crime Commissioner. On shoplifting, the Chief Executive said it was his view that signposting to food banks was not an alternative to preventing crime and appropriate prosecution and enforcement.

Acting Superintendent Owens spoke of the support offered by Police forces to encourage individuals to report sexual crimes which in turn impacted on the statistics. He explained that many cases involved domestic violence and that a recent change in legislation meant that a Domestic Violence Protection Notice could be issued to impose restrictions on the individual. The increase in shoplifting offences was evident not just in Flintshire, but across Wales and England. Positive intervention by North Wales Police alongside the SCP to work with local retailers had resulted in only one incident of shoplifting reported during the past month. Acting Superintendent Owens stressed the importance of looking at the actual figures behind the percentage changes in recorded crime statistics, as these were small numbers. He went on to say that Flintshire was regarded as one of the safest areas to work and visit in Wales.

When asked by the Chairman about any difficulty in identifying incidents of shoplifting as a result of the carrier bag charges, the Acting Superintendent said that the general consensus amongst retailers was that this was not an issue.

In response to queries from Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer, various examples of non-victim based crime were given such as drug possession and some Public Order Act offences. The Chief Executive explained that the Welsh Government (WG) commissioned '10,000 Safer Lives' project, of which Flintshire was the lead in North Wales, was aimed at identifying and supporting those at risk from domestic abuse through a multi-agency approach.

Councillor Brian Lloyd spoke of the need for appropriate sentences for violent crimes, such as the incident recently reported in Mold. Acting Superintendent Owens agreed that violent crime was a concern, however these types of incidents in safer areas such as Flintshire appeared to be more pronounced. Many reported incidents of violence were domestic related and a collective effort was made to encourage the reporting of offences to avoid repetition, with support from the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit in Deeside. In addition, the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) were specifically tasked with assessing and managing risks from identified violent offenders. The Acting Superintendent added that many violent crimes involved drugs and alcohol, although it could not always be proven that these were a contributory factor. He added that effective schemes were in place within areas

of Flintshire to exclude identified repeat offenders and to advise retailers on the promotion of higher strength alcohol.

Councillor Joe Johnson commented that the difference in statistics from the previous year was not substantial and asked what was being done to identify re-offenders and potential crime hotspot areas. Acting Superintendent Owens reminded Members that crime statistics had significantly reduced over the past ten years and that Police forces were aware of re-offenders, using regular forum meetings to discuss emerging trends and hotspot areas through analysis of victims, offenders and locations.

Councillor Dave Mackie said that previously reported substance misuse figures had indicated some individuals not completing their treatment and asked whether this was still an issue. He also suggested that the 'Cat's Paw' project be extended to help educate young people on the impact of anti-social behaviour.

Mr. Hayes explained that the figures on substance misuse services included drug and alcohol issues, and that there had been an increase in individuals with new emerging drugs and those with associated alcohol problems. A large proportion of referrals on alcohol related issues were via GPs or self-referrals, some at the instigation of the service user's partner. Mr. Hayes said that individuals followed through on their referrals and that one session alone was able to make a difference. However, the main challenge was sustaining this through lifestyle changes and appropriate after-care plans were in place to help the individual complete their treatment. In acknowledging the complexity of alcohol-based issues, Mr. Hayes recognised that positive steps were being taken through the CSP.

The Team Leader - Community Safety spoke of the success of the WG funded Cat's Paw campaign to raise awareness of domestic abuse and sexual violence at secondary schools and colleges across North Wales. However, due to significant reductions in grant funding, it was not possible to extend the scheme. She went on to explain that a multi-agency approach was being taken to engage with young people in secondary schools to raise awareness of such issues. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator added that the CSP also worked with school liaison officers to help educate young people through the use of CDs and the 'Decision Street' theatre props to re-enact scenarios.

Following comments from Councillor Mackie on the CCTV policy, the Chief Executive explained that the review was driven by funding and need to review and modernise equipment. Having expressed disappointment that the need for a regional CCTV service had not been supported, he said that the approach taken in Flintshire to involve Town and Community Councils was working effectively, as noted by the Deputy Police Commissioner. The review to consider a new model, taking account of depreciation of equipment, was due to be concluded in October 2014.

Acting Superintendent Owens commented on CCTV as a valuable, effective toolkit in crime prevention and praised the approach taken by Flintshire. He confirmed that use of private or commercial CCTV was an integral part of the response taken by the Police, particularly in victim-based crime.

On CCTV, Councillor Paul Cunningham said it was useful to receive regular breakdowns of issues in Flint and actions taken, and spoke of the increasing problem of some individuals consuming alcohol in public areas. In response to a question on the breakdown of statistics for criminal damage and arson, the Acting Superintendent explained that both areas were grouped together for reporting purposes. He said that there was now a shift in focus on arson due to some incidents identified as anti-social behaviour issues, with data analysed to establish trends.

The Chief Executive said that the completion of the review on CCTV provision in October 2014 would require significant debate and impact on budgetary decisions. A report would be brought to the Committee during the Autumn.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the contents of the report be endorsed; and
- (b) That the Committee look forward to receiving the report on future CCTV provision, when it is available, together with an update on the implications of new legislation on Anti-Social Behaviour.

11. YEAR END IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

The Member Engagement Manager introduced a report to note and consider elements of the 2013/14 Year End Improvement Plan Monitoring Report relevant to the Committee for the period January to March 2014. Much of the report had already been covered in the previous item.

In response to comments from Councillor Ian Dunbar, the Chief Executive said that a significant reduction in grant funding from the Welsh Government and central Government had impacted on the funding received by the Community Safety Partnership from the Police and Crime Commissioner.

There were no comments to feed back to the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee on this occasion.

RESOLVED:

That the progress be noted.

12. LSB AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE - END OF YEAR 2013/14 REVIEW

The Policy & Performance Manager introduced the end of year assessments for:

- the progress of the Local Service Board (LSB) Priorities and its key Strategic Partnerships and;
- the priorities for each of the Strategic Partnerships for the year ahead.

The four priorities which had been adopted by the Flintshire LSB and linked to the Council's Improvement Plan were:

1. Lead by example as employers and community leaders.
2. People are safe.
3. People enjoy good health, wellbeing and independence.
4. Organisational environmental practices.

An end of year assessment indicated good progress on Priorities 1, 2 and 4 whilst satisfactory progress had been reported for Priority 3 due to this being a new Board and developing the working relationship between the Council and the Health Board on locality working.

The Policy & Performance Manager highlighted several changes to the key related strategic partnerships to the LSB, including two new areas, and explained that some names had been changed to focus on supporting the delivery of the Single Integrated Plan.

Councillor Nigel Steele-Mortimer said that he hoped these changes would be of benefit. The Chief Executive explained that for example the Health, Social Care & Well-being Partnership Board had covered too large an area and that its replacement, the Health, Well-being and Independence Board was more focussed and operational around specific Priorities.

In response to a query from Councillor Ian Dunbar, the Policy & Performance Manager provided clarification on key areas of work on Priority 1 including the development of apprenticeship frameworks in housing and construction. The Chief Executive spoke of the initiative to create 20 shared engineering apprenticeships linked to the Deeside Enterprise Zone and Coleg Cambria, and work with secondary schools to develop a more consistent approach to promoting and accessing apprenticeships.

In relation to earlier discussion on the Community Safety Partnership and concerns on the effects of alcohol abuse, Councillor Dave Mackie asked if it was possible to review the approach to treating individuals with alcohol problems to identify a way forward. When asked by Councillor Joe Johnson about comparison with other Councils' activity on this issue, the Chief Executive reiterated previous comments about positive work in Flintshire. Whilst he shared the concerns, he stated that a priority of Public Health Wales was to tackle alcohol abuse and that the problem had been acknowledged at regional level, although there was no immediate fundamental solution.

The Chairman suggested that this topic was perhaps better dealt with under the remit of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Executive suggested that a report could be brought to the Committee on progress with the current review on use of resources. The Policy & Performance Manager reassured Members that there were a number of specific actions and activities within the Single Integrated Plan (SIP).

RESOLVED:

- (a) That progress made in the end of year reports be noted and that the commitments for the current year, as reflected in the Single Integrated Plan, be endorsed; and
- (b) That the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee investigate poor attendance at drug and alcohol education sessions.

13. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Member Engagement Manager introduced the report to enable the Committee to consider the Forward Work Programme. He advised that the item on budget setting and budgetary control arrangements was to be moved to the October 2014 meeting and following a number of suggestions, it was agreed that the following items would be scheduled for either of the meetings in October or November 2014:

- Implications of the new anti-Social Behaviour legislation;
- future provision of CCTV (following discussion earlier on the agenda);
- North Wales Credit Union (following discussion on the Flintshire Credit Union at the previous meeting);
- Samaritans (suggested by Councillor Paul Cunningham)
- Coleg Cambria (suggested by the Chief Executive) possibly for the November 2014 meeting.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the above amendments, the Forward Work Programme be agreed.

14. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.55 am)

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Chairman