



Notice of a Meeting

Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee Monday, 18 February 2013 at 10.00 am County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Membership

Chairman - Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Stewart Lilly

<i>Councillors:</i>	John Goddard	Susanna Pressel	Alan Thompson
	Anthony Gearing	Bill Service	Carol Viney
	Patrick Greene	Chip Sherwood	

Notes:

Date of next meeting: 22 April 2013

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

- Community safety; anti-social behaviour; crime and the fear of crime; fire and rescue; consumer protection; emergency planning; police issues; coroner's service; gypsies and travellers; drugs and alcohol awareness; road safety (police, trading standards, fire and rescue); libraries; museums and heritage; the arts; archives; leisure and recreation; registration service; community cohesion; voluntary and community sector.
- The functions of the responsible authorities (local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, the police, primary care trusts and the Probation Service) which comprise a Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership/Community Safety Partnership.
- Those regulatory functions of the Planning & Regulation Committee not falling within the remit of the Growth & Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee.

How can I have my say?

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman	-	Councillor Lawrie Stratford E.Mail: lawrie.stratford@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	<i>Eira Hale</i> , Tel: (01865) 323969 eira.hale@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

February 2013

About the County Council

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 74 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 9 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

About Scrutiny

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

What does this Committee do?

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session

If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting

A hearing loop is available at County Hall.

AGENDA

- 1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
- 2. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note on the back page**
- 3. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November and 10 January and to note for information any matters arising from them.

- 4. Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**

SCRUTINY MATTERS

- 5. Director's Update** (Pages 13 - 16)

10.10

The Head of Law and Culture, Peter Clark, will give a verbal update on key issues affecting Registration, Coroner's Services and Cultural Services.

The Chief Fire Officer, Dave Etheridge will update the committee on key issues for the Fire & Rescue Service and Community Safety. An update on the authority's use of activities falling within the scope of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act is included with the papers for the committee's consideration and any questions on this paper will be taken during the Director's update.

- 6. Death Certification**

10.30

Jacquie Bugeja, Head of Registration & Coroners Services, will provide a verbal update on the current changes in this area.

- 7. Forward Plan**

10.45

The Committee is asked to suggest items from the current Forward Plan on which is may wish to have an opportunity to offer advice to Cabinet before any decision is taken.

The current Forward Plan can be found on the Council's website

<http://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=159&RP=115>

- 8. Draft OFRS Strategic Integrated Risk Management Plan 2013/18 & Integrated Risk Management Plan - Action Plan 2013/14** (Pages 17 - 24)

10.55

The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which Fire Authorities must have regard when

discharging their functions. The latest (2012) Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) covering a minimum period of three years which should be appropriately consulted upon.

In order to improve accessibility and public understanding, OFRS has titled its IRMP as a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) - highlighting its aim to manage and mitigate the overlapping risks facing the local communities in Oxfordshire. This strategic five-year CRMP has undergone a 3-month public consultation process and is ready for final approval and publication. At the same time, the 2013-14 CRMP action plan (detailing specific projects related to the strategic analysis work) was also consulted upon and is ready for publication.

This report summarises the consultation approach taken by OFRS and any key commentary and subsequent changes to the plans.

This report will be presented by the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, Nathan Travis.

9. Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan Report

(Pages 25 - 30)

11.35

This report provides an overview of the new structures in place for partnership working aimed at tackling crime and improving community safety in Oxfordshire. It outlines the key achievements from the first year of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan 2012-17 and looks ahead to the annual refresh of that plan for 2013/14. The report will be presented by Carys Alty, Safer Communities Unit Manager.

10. Village Hall and Community Centre Grants Policy (Pages 31 - 34)

12.15

This paper sets out the criteria by which Village Hall Community Grants are made and provides an analysis of the last five years of grants made. The committee are asked to note the contents of this report. The report will be presented by Karen Warren, Cultural Services Manager.

11. Councillor Community Budgets (Pages 35 - 38)

12.35

This paper outlines how this initiative had been used, giving examples of some of the projects funded, and a summary of the spend to date. The committee are asked to note the contents of the report. This report will be presented by Claire Phillips, Senior Policy and Performance Officer.

12. Close of Meeting

12.50

Declarations of Interest

The duty to declare.....

Under the Localism Act 2011 it is a criminal offence to

- (a) fail to register a disclosable pecuniary interest within 28 days of election or co-option (or re-election or re-appointment), or
- (b) provide false or misleading information on registration, or
- (c) participate in discussion or voting in a meeting on a matter in which the member or co-opted member has a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Whose Interests must be included?

The Act provides that the interests which must be notified are those of a member or co-opted member of the authority, **or**

- those of a spouse or civil partner of the member or co-opted member;
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as husband/wife
- those of a person with whom the member or co-opted member is living as if they were civil partners.

(in each case where the member or co-opted member is aware that the other person has the interest).

What if I remember that I have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest during the Meeting?

The Code requires that, at a meeting, where a member or co-opted member has a disclosable interest (of which they are aware) in any matter being considered, they disclose that interest to the meeting. The Council will continue to include an appropriate item on agendas for all meetings, to facilitate this.

Although not explicitly required by the legislation or by the code, it is recommended that in the interests of transparency and for the benefit of all in attendance at the meeting (including members of the public) the nature as well as the existence of the interest is disclosed.

A member or co-opted member who has disclosed a pecuniary interest at a meeting must not participate (or participate further) in any discussion of the matter; and must not participate in any vote or further vote taken; and must withdraw from the room.

Members are asked to continue to pay regard to the following provisions in the code that *“You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself”* or *“You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned.....”*.

Please seek advice from the Monitoring Officer prior to the meeting should you have any doubt about your approach.

List of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Employment (includes *“any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain”*.), **Sponsorship, Contracts, Land, Licences, Corporate Tenancies, Securities.**

For a full list of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and further Guidance on this matter please see the Guide to the New Code of Conduct and Register of Interests at Members’ conduct guidelines. <http://intranet.oxfordshire.gov.uk/wps/wcm/connect/occ/Insite/Elected+members/> or contact Rachel Dunn on (01865) 815279 or Rachel.dunn@oxfordshire.gov.uk for a hard copy of the document.

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SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday, 12 November 2012 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at Time Not Specified

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair

Councillor John Goddard
Councillor Patrick Greene
Councillor Susanna Pressel
Councillor Bill Service
Councillor Chip Sherwood
Councillor Alan Thompson
Councillor Carol Viney
Councillor Michael Gibbard
Councillor Ray Jelf

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor (for Agenda Item)

By Invitation:

Officers:

Whole of meeting

Part of meeting

Agenda Item Officer Attending

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

55/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Cllr Ray Jelf substituted for Cllr Stewart Lilly and Cllr Michael Gibbard substituted for Cllr Anthony Gearing.

56/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

57/12 MINUTES
(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September (**SSC3**) were approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

Matters arising from the meeting 3 September.

- Item 45/12: Councillor Pressel requested a road safety update. The chairman confirmed he would investigate if this formed part of the work programme with Environment and Economy.
- Item 46/12: Councillor Pressel requested a figure for the number of applicants for the community library co-ordinator. It was confirmed that an update on progress would be covered in the meeting but the number of applicants can't be disclosed at this stage.

58/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE
(Agenda No. 4)

There were no requests to address the committee or petitions.

59/12 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE
(Agenda No. 5)

Jacque Bugeja gave a verbal update on Behalf of The Head of Law and Culture Peter Clark. The update included, amongst other items:

- The customer satisfaction for the registration service remains high (98% of certificate application clients and 100% of key partners). Since the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 came into force in October 2012 only one enquiry has been received and no firm bookings made regarding couples being able to get married any time of day or night.
- The Oxfordshire Coroner's Service has, in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council been organising training sessions for Coroner's, Coroners' Officers, Court Clerks and Volunteers.
- The library service had the following updates:
 - Implementation of the roll out programme for phase one of the self-service machines.
 - Working with the Arts Council and partners to apply for funding through its Grants for the Arts programme to deliver initiatives designed to attract people to arts and cultural activity through libraries.

- Launched the new audiobook download service on 10th September. The service offers unlimited downloads of nearly 1,000 popular titles, most of them in MP3 format.
- The Oxfordshire History Service has started work on digitizing the tithe maps of Oxfordshire, funded by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.
- The committee wished to thank Carol Boardman for his contribution to the History Service as he is leaving.
- Pegasus Theatre Trust was shortlisted and won the Lifetime Achievement Award at OCVA's Charity and Volunteer Awards on Tuesday for longstanding and consistent contribution as a charity to the sector

Chief Fire Officer, Dave Etheridge, gave a verbal update from Community Safety. The update included:

- The OSCP has developed the business plan approach from the new Police & Crime Commissioner and this will be communicated to the new candidate at the earliest opportunity.
- Richard Webb has been appointed permanently as trading standards officer. The whole committee offered their congratulations. Trading standards is currently experiencing a lot of operational activity.
- Buckinghamshire have formally asked to be part of the Thames Valley Centre. Oxfordshire Fire Service will make a strong recommendation to support this request and the delegated decisions paper is due in December.

Dave Etheridge explained how the Police and Crime Commissioner would operate across the 18 local authorities in the Thames Valley region. The Police and Crime Panel will be the main way to challenge and hold the Commissioner to account.

The committee noted that we have signed up to a national programme Stop Hate UK to tackle hate crime. Members were interested to explore whether this is something to put on the forward plan.

Given recent flooding concerns the committee was told that relationships with the Environment Agency have matured and we now have early notification of potential flooding situations.

60/12 DRAFT OFRS STRATEGIC INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2013/18 FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION
(Agenda No. 6)

Dave Etheridge, Chief Fire Officer gave a presentation updating the committee on the Fire and Rescue Authority's next draft five-year Strategic Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP) (**SSC6b**), also known as its Community Risk Management Plan.

The report identified 5 main groupings of risks for people and communities of Oxfordshire:

- Risk at home
- Risk at work
- Risk whilst travelling
- Heritage risk
- Extreme events

This strategic IRMP will then form the evidential basis of future annual action plans over the next five-year period (the 2013-14 action plan is presented under a separate paper), providing the Fire and Rescue Authority with the flexibility to manage the foreseeable risks within the wider context of the County Council's priorities and pressures. Following scrutiny consideration of the plan there will be a 12-week public and stakeholder consultation process before final approval is sought from the Cabinet in February 2013.

Nigel Wilson answered a range of questions and confirmed that there are no current plans to reduce frontline staff. Dave Etheridge confirmed the fire services are communicating a strong message to the public to encourage all homes to have smoke alarms. Cllr Heathcoat praised her recent home risk assessment and highlighted the importance of finding an exit route. Oxfordshire fire service remains the most cost effective in the UK.

The committee noted the push for fire stations to integrate into their local communities.

The need for the Fire service to work closely with Environment and Economy who maintain responsibility for engineering elements of road safety.

The Chairman commented on how useful the report with particular reference to the statistics used. Dave Etheridge **agreed** an update would come back to the committee in the February meeting.

The committee supports the strategic risk profiling methodology and the full consultation on the proposals.

61/12 INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN - DRAFT ACTION PLAN 2013/14 AND UPDATE ON NATIONAL FRAMEWORK (Agenda No. 7)

Nigel Wilson, Operations & Resilience Manager, presented a report (**SSC7**) on a number of projects to be included within the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Action Plan (IRMP) for the fiscal year 2013-14, based on the analysis contained within its latest strategic IRMP (2013-18).

The projects that have been proposed for the action plan 2013-14 will be subject to consultation for 12 weeks starting on the 12th November 2012. The proposals summarise areas where the Service's Senior Leadership Team believe service improvements may be achieved.

Dave Etheridge confirmed the service follow an intelligence led approach where they send the firefighters best able to deal with the situations. He also confirmed that there are many levels of support available for firefighters that have been involved with horrific incidents.

There was some discussion about the support provided to firefighters for difficult circumstances. Dave Etheridge outlined the different levels of support that is provided for employees.

The committee **Agreed** the report and endorsed the findings.

62/12 OFRS RESPONSE STANDARDS ANNUAL REPORT
(Agenda No. 8)

Nigel Wilson, Operations & Resilience Manager, presented a report (**SSC8**) on the Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service performance against our agreed local Response Standards for attending emergency incidents in the county.

In Oxfordshire 80.5% of all emergency incidents are responded to within 11 minutes (above the local response standard of 80%) and 93.25% are responded to within 14 minutes (just short of the local response standard of 95%). The trends show that performance is increasing.

It was noted that performance has been affected by travel traffic management, increased traffic levels and more reduced speed limits. The service has reviewed the attendances of vehicles to ensure quickest response and seeks to anticipate likely traffic management issues in advance. It is anticipated Automatic Vehicle location system will be in place by late 2014 and this will allow the service to mobilise the nearest fire appliance.

Nigel Wilson confirmed they consult with other organisations and directorates within the Council when events can be predicted. Nigel also noted Cllr Goddard's interest in mapping population density against response time.

63/12 UPDATE ON THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT POLICY
(Agenda No. 9)

Richard Webb, The Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety, presented a report on the Authority's revised RIPA policy (**SSC9b**) following the publication of The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 introduces two important amendments to RIPA. These amendments take effect from 1st November 2012. Firstly, a local authority can only authorise directed surveillance under RIPA where the authority is investigating particular types of offences. These are criminal offences which attract a minimum custodial sentence of six months or more criminal offences relating to the underage sale of alcohol or tobacco. Secondly, internal authorisations granted under RIPA will not take effect until approved by a Magistrate.

It was noted that the implications for the Council should be minimal as all authorisations in recent years have met the serious crime threshold. This revised policy makes clear that authorisation still needs to come from a senior officer able to authorise activities under RIPA and that advice should be sought from the County Solicitor. It was confirmed that in a circumstance where surveillance is required urgently judicial approval is not required.

64/12 THE CITIZEN'S CONSUMER SERVICE

(Agenda No. 10)

Trading Standards Team Leader, Kate Davies, presented a report (**SSC10**) with an overview of the performance of the Citizens Advice Consumer Service and a summary of Oxfordshire.

In the first 6 months of operation Citizens Advice have established the new national service, now called the Citizens Advice Consumer Service and have developed new working arrangements with local Trading Standards Services. Consumer cases are now referred to Oxfordshire Trading Standards through this national portal.

Citizens Advice has been working to relaxed performance targets while new arrangements are in their initial stages and audit reports show the service is meeting these relaxed KPI's. The service will now work to the official KPI's.

Kate Davies, a team leader in Oxfordshire Trading Standards Service has joined a national working group between Citizens Advice and Trading Standards which meet quarterly. At the meeting in September Citizens Advice identified the current issues of staff training and retention issues and high numbers of protocols. It is currently focusing on quality improvement with new advisors beginning work in September and additional briefing documents.

It was **agreed** an update on performance would be presented to the committee in six months.

65/12 FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda No. 11)

The Chairman confirmed the January meeting would be to discuss the budget and items should be suggested for the meeting in February. The Chairman suggested the committee should first review the Community Centre grants criteria on the website before considering if a review of the grants should be added to the work programme. The Chairman agreed to extend an invite to Councillor Mallon to talk about community cohesion and equalities. It was agreed that the committee would look into the voluntary sector and the impact of the current economic situation.

Requested information on Road Safety. The chairman will question this with E&E.

66/12 CLOSE OF MEETING

(Agenda No. 12)

The meeting finished at 12.30pm.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 10 January 2013 commencing at 4.15 pm and finishing at 5.10 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair

Councillor Stewart Lilly (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor John Goddard
Councillor Anthony Gearing
Councillor Patrick Greene
Councillor Susanna Pressel
Councillor Alan Thompson
Councillor Carol Viney

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Judith Heathcoat (for whole meeting)

By Invitation:

Officers:

Whole of meeting Sue Scane
Lorna Baxter
Dave Etheridge
Karen Warren
Jacquie Bugeja
Peter Clark

Part of meeting

Agenda Item Officer Attending

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting [, together with a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

67/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

Apologies from Councillor Bill Service.

68/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE

(Agenda No. 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

69/12 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 3)

There were no speakers or petitions.

70/12 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING 2013/14 - 2016/17

(Agenda No. 4)

Judith Heathcoat asked members to note that this was the third year of a four year planning cycle and to bear this in mind with their considerations. She also thanked officers for their hard work and professionalism in the continued delivery of the business strategy that is going to plan.

Lorna Baxter gave an overview of the report to the committee. In response to questions for clarification the following points were noted:

- The changes in the planning were mainly due to changes in the way certain grants are treated by central government.
- That some of the grants were not ring fenced and could be used flexibly.

Dave Etheridge gave an overview of proposals relating to Fire and Rescue and Community Safety. In response to questions for clarification the following points were noted:

- The recently announced funding for flood reduction measures are not for emergency response so would fall under the remit of Economy and Environment.
- Whole time fire-fighters can be used as a 'standing asset' to carry out prevention work. Retained staff are only used for emergency work so are not available to work as a 'standing asset'.
- Both whole time and retained fire fighters are trained to the same high level, so that when called upon they can deliver the highest quality service the public expect, recognising the need for 'real-life' scenario training.

Peter Clark gave an overview of proposals relating to Registration Services, Coroners and Cultural Services. In response to questions for clarification the following points were noted:

SSC3

- Plans to meet previously agreed savings were on track and that there were no additional savings required
- Members' appreciation for protecting the currently agreed service and resource plans for both library services and Fire and Rescue.
- Oxfordshire buck the national trend and have seen an increase in the number of weddings carried out, focusing on marketing our high quality venues.
- Military repatriations are carried out at no additional cost to the council as a result of grants received.

The committee agreed to support the business strategies, savings proposals and pressures for the relevant service areas taking account of the Service and Community Impact Assessments.

In giving their support, members stated they wished to note the difficulty of working to make decisions without being in full receipt of all information from Central Government, regarding available funding.

The committee recognised that planned savings are being delivered, and although there are challenges ahead Officers are confident that the services are well placed to address them.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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ITEM 5

CABINET MEMBER FOR SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES 18TH February 2013

Report on the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 by Oxfordshire County Council

Report by the County Solicitor & Head of Law and Governance

Introduction

1. The use of covert investigatory techniques, such as surveillance on an individual or a premises or accessing records of the use of a telephone number, is sometimes necessary for the effective detection or prevention of crime. However, by their nature such actions impinge on human rights, particularly the right to a private and family life.
2. The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) provides the legislative framework governing the use of covert investigatory techniques by public authorities. Compliance with the requirements of this Act when carrying out such activities ensures that the actions are lawful. In broad terms, the Act requires the activity to be authorised by an appropriate, senior officer. In considering an application to conduct an activity which falls within the scope of the Act the authorising officer must be satisfied that the activity is necessary for one of a limited range of purposes and is proportionate to what it seeks to achieve.
3. Recent changes introduced to RIPA require local authorities to seek judicial approval for any activity that falls with the scope of this Act. These changes took effect from 1st November 2012. Codes of Practice under the Act require elected member oversight of applications to carry out covert surveillance.

Exempt Information

4. This report contains no exempt information. However, if specific details of operations or activities are required by the committee it may be necessary for the committee to exclude members of the public from the meeting in order to either-
 - a. Prevent the disclosure of information relating to an individual, or
 - b. Prevent the disclosure of information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime.

Types of Covert Investigatory Techniques

5. There are three types of covert investigatory techniques.
 - a. Directed surveillance. The covert observation, recording or monitoring of a person, person(s) or location in a way that is likely to result in the obtaining of private information.
 - b. Use of a covert human intelligence source. Establishing a relationship with someone in order to covertly obtain information from that person.
 - c. Obtaining and disclosing communications data (e.g. the name and address of the user of a telephone number or e-mail address).
6. RIPA does not allow the use of any other covert techniques by local authorities to be authorised. In particular it does not allow the use of 'intrusive' surveillance, namely surveillance carried out in relation to activities taking place within residential premises.
7. To undertake any activity within the scope of RIPA a senior officer must consider and authorise the activity. Before any of these techniques can be authorised the authorising officer must be satisfied that the activity is necessary for the purpose of prevention or detection of crime and that the actual activity is proportionate to what it seeks to achieve (this involves balancing the level of intrusion with the need for the operation or activity taking account of the seriousness of the issue and other means to obtain the information that is sought).
8. From 1st November 2012 local authority authorisations under RIPA for the use of particular covert techniques can only be given effect once an order approving the authorisation has been granted by a Justice of the Peace. In addition, further amendments to the Act from that time limit a local authority's ability to authorise actions within the scope of the Act to instances where the authority is investigating serious criminal offences. Serious criminal offences are those which attract a maximum custodial sentence of six months or more or criminal offences relating to the underage sale of alcohol or tobacco.

Use of Activities within the Scope of the Act by Oxfordshire County Council

9. Since the last report to the Committee the following applications have been considered. Where authorisations have been granted in relation to matters that may result in legal action these matters are not included in these activity summaries but will be detailed once any legal proceedings have concluded. Some of the activities outlined below were authorised before the last report to the Committee but can only now be reported.

Date	Service requesting authorisation	Description of activity	Granted/refused	Outcome
24/2/12	Trading Standards	Installation of covert camera to record persons approaching doorstep crime victim's home (Oxford).	Granted	Removed after suspect identified at another location. No further contact with the victim likely as a result of the subsequent investigation.
11/4/12	Trading Standards	Installation of covert camera to record persons approaching doorstep crime victim's home (Boars Hill).	Granted	Suspected arrested and bail conditions made to prevent further contact with victim. Investigation supported a prosecution by another agency resulting in conviction and imprisonment.
24/8/12	Trading Standards	Age restricted sales test purchase exercise. Various locations.	Granted	No illegal sales made.
17/5/12	Trading Standards	Installation of covert camera to record persons approaching doorstep crime victim's home (Nr Reading).	Granted	No further visits made by suspects to victim's property. Camera removed.
25/10/12	Trading Standards	Test purchase exercise to identify shops selling age restricted goods illegally (various locations).	Granted	1 shop sold fireworks person under 18 years of age. Currently under investigation.

10. The Council publishes a summary of the authorisations granted under this Act on the public website. This summary includes the date of the authorisation, type of surveillance or communications data concerned and the purpose of the operation or investigation.

Recommendation

11. The Committee is recommended to consider and note the periodic and annual use of RIPA by Oxfordshire County Council.

NAME: Peter Clark, County Solicitor & Head of Law and Governance

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Richard Webb, Trading Standards and Community Safety Manager

February 2013

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18th FEBRUARY 2013

**STRATEGIC COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) 2013 - 2018 AND
CRMP ACTION PLAN 2013 - 2014 - PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Report by Chief Fire Officer – Fire & Rescue

Introduction

1. The Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 requires the Secretary of State to prepare a Fire and Rescue National Framework to which Fire Authorities must have regard when discharging their functions.
2. The latest (2012) Framework requires each Fire and Rescue Authority to produce a publicly available Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) covering a minimum period of three years which should be appropriately consulted upon.
3. In order to improve accessibility and public understanding, OFRS has titled its IRMP as a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) - highlighting its aim to manage and mitigate the overlapping risks facing the local communities in Oxfordshire. This strategic, five-year CRMP has undergone a 3-month public consultation and is ready for final approval and publication. At the same time, the 2013-14 CRMP action plan (detailing specific projects related to the strategic analysis work) was also consulted upon and is ready for approval and publication.
4. This report summarises the consultation approach taken by OFRS and any key commentary and subsequent changes to the plans.
5. It should be noted that the consultation finishes on 1st February 2013 - after the submission date for this report (24th January 2013), so any significant commentary that is received in the final week of the consultation will be provided as a verbal update to Safer & Stronger Scrutiny members on 18th February meeting, along with any additional proposed changes to the two plans.
6. Both draft plans have already been submitted to the Cabinet member for Safer & Stronger Communities (October 2012) and the Safer & Stronger Scrutiny Committee (November 2012). The final version of the documents will be presented to Cabinet for approval on 26th February 2013 with a summary of the consultation process (the same as is report), as well as a verbal update on any key scrutiny challenges and the subsequent changes to the final plans.

Consultation Process

7. The Strategic CRMP consultation process has been as follows:

May-August 2012	Pre-draft consultation (internal and external focus groups and on-line survey)
October – November 2012	Initial SSC Scrutiny of Draft
November 2012 – February 2013	Full Public consultation
February 2013	Final SSC Scrutiny & Cabinet Approval

8. The Scrutiny and public consultation process for the 2013-2014 CRMP Action Plan has been run in tandem with the Strategic CRMP from October 2102 – February 2013.
9. The full public consultation for both plans has taken the following structure:
- Invitation to approximately 1200 individuals & organisations associated with OCC (e.g. staff representative groups, parish, district & neighbouring councils and other parties with interest in the Fire & Rescue Service) to take part in an on-line questionnaire To date, around 100 responses have been received.
 - Another 1200-3000 invites will be sent to the Citizens' Panel members. It is anticipated 50-80 responses will be received by the beginning of February. The Service is expecting the broad representative nature of the Citizens' Panel will provide a strong commentary from a robust cross-section of Oxfordshire communities.
 - The Service is also planning to hold between 6-10 public roadshows in a number of local communities (e.g. Banbury, Witney, Bicester, Oxford, Henley, Abingdon, Didcot & Wheatley), with the aim of providing another 50-100 public responses to the same questions detailed in the on-line questionnaire.
10. The focus of the consultation process has been to positively engage staff, interested parties and the public in the development of both the strategic CRMP and the associated action plan, as well as significantly increasing both the quantity and quality of consultation responses. By 24th January, the Service had received over 200 responses to both the pre-draft and draft plans (compared against previous years where the totals have ranged from around 10-100 responses).

Consultation Outcomes

11. Overall, both the strategic five-year plan and one-year action plan have received strong support from all areas.
12. In respect to the on-line questionnaire, the consultation questions for the strategic plan were focused on the following key risk areas:
 - Risks at Home (including Leisure activities)
 - Risks at Work
 - Risks whilst Travelling
 - Heritage Risks
 - Risk from Extreme Events

Risks at Home

13. In relation to reducing risks in the home, the questions were related to the benefits of installing domestic sprinkler systems, as well as the Fire & Rescue Service carrying and being able to use emergency medical equipment such as defibrillators.

Domestic Sprinklers - although strongly supportive of established fire prevention measures in the home (e.g. smoke alarms), a number of respondents raised concerns about both the cost of installing domestic sprinklers and the potential for water damage if activated accidentally.

OFRS response – the Service will continue to recommend the installation of domestic sprinklers from a professional perspective, particularly in the homes of vulnerable people, as they are a proven fire suppression tool. However, we recognise the national economic situation in respect to costs of fitting such devices. On the issue of potential water damage, we recognise that we need to raise public awareness about the overall benefits of domestic sprinklers, as the new systems do not pose a significant risk of accidental damage (since they are now designed to minimize such occurrences). There is no statutory requirement for people to fit domestic sprinklers in England, although recent legislation has been made in relation to ‘new build’ properties in Wales by the Welsh Assembly.

Emergency Medical Services – partnership working with the Ambulance Service was strongly supported by a number of respondents, with some even suggesting Fire and Rescue Services undertake aspects of Ambulance Service work.

OFRS response – we recognise the benefits to casualties of joint working with other emergency responders - such as the Ambulance Service and the Police – during an emergency incident. As a consequence, we are already providing frontline crews with trauma care training and defibrillators. We will also look to develop that working relationship further for the wider public benefit, whilst still being mindful of the specialist role of a paramedic and the Ambulance Service in relation to dealing with medical emergencies.

Risks at Work

14. In relation to risks at work, the questions were related to continuing to develop a risk-based approach with businesses to their fire safety responsibilities and the need to respond - in a timely fashion and with the right amount of resources - to any emergencies in commercial property.

Risk-Based Audits – respondents were broadly supportive of OFRS helping businesses to manage their fire safety responsibilities dependent on their risks – stating that education and support could actually reduce costs. Although some respondents were concerned that meeting any deficiencies could increase costs to Business at a difficult economic time.

OFRS Response – The Fire and Rescue Service has a statutory duty to enforce fire safety in businesses, although OFRS is committed to working with companies to support them with their responsibilities, using our enforcement powers only when it is necessary (e.g. in high-risk circumstances or where other alternative approaches have not been effective).

Responding to Emergencies in Businesses – again, respondents were supportive of maintaining and developing the right amount of resources (able to respond in a timely fashion) to effectively tackle emergency incidents in commercial properties.

OFRS Response – we will regularly assess the effectiveness of the current quantity and disposition of our fire stations and appliances, as well as any proposed future changes that may be required as a result of the changing risk profile of the county.

Risks whilst Travelling

15. In relation to risks whilst travelling, the questions were related to OFRS's development of the OCC Road Safety Education function (which we now directly manage), as well as the benefits of effective joint working with other agencies when dealing with road traffic collisions.

Road Safety Education – respondents strongly supported the continued drive to educate all road users about the risks and potential consequences of road traffic collisions, stating 'prevention is best'. Some respondents focused specifically on the need to educate adult cyclists and motorcyclists, in particular.

OFRS Response – OFRS will continue to work with partners, such as Thames Valley Police, to develop targeted education initiatives – although we will need to take into account that there is no statutory support to compel some groups, such as adult cyclists, to undertake road safety education.

Road Traffic Collision Response – respondents were strongly supportive of the three main emergency services working closely together when dealing

with road traffic collisions. Some respondents felt it would be appropriate to share buildings as well – putting ambulance on fire stations, for example.

OFRS Response – we continue to develop procedures and training with both South Central Ambulance Service and Thames Valley Police, in order to improve our joint working arrangements at such emergencies. As part of OCC, we are also in the process of looking to maximize the public building assets we have by exploring any appropriate opportunities to share them with other agencies.

Heritage Risks

16. In relation to heritage risks, the questions were related to supporting the owners of heritage properties in the effective management of their risks, as well as being able to respond effectively to any emergencies.

Prevention and Response – although respondents supported the need to mitigate the risks to heritage properties, many stated that the owners had the primarily responsibility to put in any prevention measures. It was also noted by some respondents that heritage properties were wide spread across the county and efforts should not just be focused on the larger and more well-known examples.

OFRS Response – OFRS already has resources in place to assist the owners of heritage properties as they consider how to best mitigate the risks of fire, as well as identifying heritage value as part of our own risk management processes. We are also currently researching new extinguisher technology that could assist in firefighting in complex, old buildings whilst minimising any resulting water damage.

Risks from Extreme Events

17. In relation to extreme events, the question focused on continuing to develop effective joint working arrangements with other agencies involved in such major incidents.

Prevention, Mitigation and Response – respondents strongly supported the need to work more pro-actively, closely and effectively with other responding agencies prior to any event, so that efforts are not duplicated when the emergency actually happens. Some respondents focused on specific prevention measures, such as gulley clearing to alleviate the impact of flooding, as well as stating that property owners had a responsibility to prepare and put in place their own prevention measures.

OFRS Response – as the service responsible for overseeing OCC Emergency Planning, we have already made good progress in developing county-wide plans and multi-agency training to support effective joint-working arrangements. The preparation work for the 2012 Olympics and Torch Relay, in particular, helped us to develop our multi-agency plans and procedures. We also continue to support local communities as they develop their own parish

'continuity' plans. This work will continue to evolve and develop as we learn the lessons from recent events, such as the 2012 flooding in the county.

Action Plan Consultation Response

18. The consultation on the 2013-2014 CRMP Action Plan focuses on specific initiatives linked to road safety, the research of new fire suppression technology, training firefighters to effectively respond to complex incidents and the implementation of the Thames Valley Fire Control Service.
19. Although the public were in broad support for most of the projects, there was some mixed commentary specifically around the Thames Valley Fire Control Service – with support for the improved facilities and technology, but concerns about the loss of local knowledge, in particular.

OFRS Response – the Thames Valley Fire Control Service has been created in order to improve the overall service it delivers to both the public and firefighters across the Thames Valley. From the outset of the joint Control project, the improvements have been centred on three main areas – operational resilience, operational effectiveness and the realisation of financial efficiencies.

In response to the specific concern about the loss of local knowledge, we are confident the new joint Control Room will actually improve upon the current situation, as the local fire crews will continue to maintain and update their local knowledge (as they do now) – but, in addition, the new Control Room will be able to use the latest technology not only to identify the location of callers more precisely, but also support the responding fire crews more effectively, by using the new ICT and communications systems, for example, to send additional relevant local and risk information directly to the fire engines – if they do not already have the information to hand.

It should also be noted that the project has been financed by central government funding - totalling £3.6m (being given Oxfordshire and Royal Berkshire) - with additional funds also becoming available now with the recent re-inclusion of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes FRS into the project. Therefore, the improved service has not needed to be financed from local council tax.

Changes to the 2013-2018 CRMP and 2013-2104 Action Plan

20. Taking into account the OFRS responses to these consultations, as detailed above, there are no significant changes to either the five-year CRMP or the one-year action plan. Where any changes have been made, these are in relation to the terminology, plain English, design and layout – in order to improve the relevance and understanding of the documents.

Financial and Staff Implications

21. Although there are no immediate financial and staff implications relating to these documents to report, the resulting project work and initiatives may have such impacts. As a consequence, each CRMP project will fully recognise the prevailing economic constraints, delivering efficiencies or allowing existing/additional services to be delivered more effectively.

RECOMMENDATION

The agreed documents will be adopted as the final version of the Strategic 2013-2018 CRMP and 2013-2014 CRMP Action Plan subject to Full Cabinet approval.

Dave Etheridge –Chief Fire Officer – Fire & Rescue
Associated Papers: 2013-2018 CRMP / 2013-2014 CRMP Action Plan
2012 National Framework for Fire & Rescue Services

Contact Officer: Nathan Travis 01865 855206

February 2013

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SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 FEBRUARY 2013

OXFORDSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES PARTNERSHIP BUSINESS PLAN: PROGRESS AND ANNUAL REFRESH 2013/14

Report by John Jackson, Director for Social and Community Services

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Provide an overview of the new structures in place for partnership working aimed at tackling crime and improving community safety in Oxfordshire;
- Outline the key achievements from the first year of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan 2012-17; and
- Look ahead at the draft annual refresh of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan for 2013/14

Exempt Information

There is no exempt information.

Background

1. Over the past year there has been considerable change in the community safety landscape. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced new structural arrangements for police accountability, both nationally and locally. One of the principal changes has been the election of a police and crime commissioner – the Commissioner - which took place in November 2012. In addition to the ballot box, the Commissioner will be held to account by a police and crime panel – the Panel - which is composed of locally elected councillors from each Thames Valley local authority area plus two lay members. The Commissioner is responsible for holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. The new Commissioner for Thames Valley is Anthony Stansfeld who will be in office until the next election in May 2017. One of his first tasks is to produce a five year Police and Crime Plan setting out the strategic objectives for reducing crime across Thames Valley. A draft plan was published for consultation in January 2013 and will be scrutinised by the Panel.
3. The Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership is a statutory county-wide partnership that provides strategic direction for community safety partners to work together to reduce crime across Oxfordshire. It performs this role through delivery of the five year Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan (the current plan covers the period of 2012-17) which sets out

the strategic context and priorities for community safety activity. This plan is refreshed annually.

4. The Board is elected member-led consisting of members and officers from all six Oxfordshire local authorities. This member-led approach encourages councils to ensure that the elected member with responsibility for community safety represents that authority on the Board. Each elected member on the Board is also the member on the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel. Chairmanship of the Board is rotated around the local authorities every two years and is currently Councillor Bill Service, the South Oxfordshire District Council member for community safety and member of the Panel. Councillor Kieron Mallon is both the Oxfordshire County Council member on the Board and the County Council representative on the Police and Crime Panel.
5. The Board is supported by a Business Group whose role is to provide guidance and advice to the Board and ensure development and delivery of the OSCP Business Plan.
6. Looking ahead, the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership is currently reviewing its existing county-wide priorities for the annual refresh of the Business Plan.

An overview of the linkages between the new structures in place for tackling crime in Oxfordshire

7. A diagram illustrating the relationships between the different bodies and plans concerning crime and community safety in Oxfordshire is in Annex A. In his draft Police and Crime Plan the Commissioner has set out his six strategic objectives for Thames Valley which are:
 - 5.1 **To cut crimes that are of most concern to the public and to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities:** violent crime, anti-social behaviour, acquisitive crime, troubled (thriving) families, domestic and other inter-personal abuse including child sexual exploitation, safeguarding vulnerable adults, children and young people
 - 5.2 **To increase the visible presence of the police and partners to cut crime and the fear of crime, and reassure communities:** patrol staff, anti-social behaviour teams, neighbourhood wardens
 - 5.3 **To protect the public from harm arising from serious organised crime and terrorism:** serious organised crime, preventing terrorism,
 - 5.4 **To communicate and engage with the public in order to cut crime and the fear of crime, and build trust and confidence with our communities:** two way communication with communities, promote crime reduction and prevention activity, hear the views of hard to 'seldom heard' groups, publish information about accessing, delivery and outcomes of policing and crime services

5.5 Work with Criminal justice Partners to reduce crime and support victims and witnesses: integrated offender management, youth crime services, support for victims and witnesses, tackling drugs and alcohol

5.6 To ensure policing, community safety and criminal justice services are delivered efficiently and effectively: collaboration, commissioning, evidence-based practice, reducing bureaucracy, productivity strategy

8. The draft plan itself has a strong focus on tackling the causes of crime. This is of particular concern where crime occurs as a consequence of excess alcohol (for example, anti-social behaviour and the late night economy, domestic abuse) or through drug addiction (for example, acquisitive crime). The Commissioner is also keen to see an appropriate balance between tackling urban and rural crime. The draft plan also emphasises the importance of partnership working to tackle crime. Importantly, the Commissioner has confirmed his budget for 2013/14 which includes the new Community Safety Fund remaining at 2011/12 levels. However, access to this funding from 2014/15 will require evidence of how the funds will be used to reduce crime.
9. The draft plan is out for consultation until 8 February 2013. Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership has submitted a response on behalf of Oxfordshire's community safety partners. The Panel scrutinise the plan at their meeting with the Commissioner in March 2013.

Key achievements from the first year of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan 2012-17

10. The current Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership business plan was agreed in 2012. Objectives for the first year of this Plan focused on preparing for the new Commissioner. The key concerns of community safety partners at the time that the plan was prepared included ensuring reliable data on crime trends and patterns was available, improving performance monitoring at the county level, supporting outcomes-based approaches to tackling community safety concerns and ensuring data sharing practices and procedures were robust. The Business Plan has four county-wide thematic priorities: Domestic Abuse, Alcohol, Reducing Re-Offending and Hate Crime which are currently under discussion as part of the annual refresh of the Business Plan.
11. One of the key achievements of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership has been the development of the community safety Information Management System. This is an on-line website portal which brings together core data and information on community safety issues that is easily accessible and provides information in a user friendly way. The website has been developed alongside the Joint Strategic Needs Health Assessment and therefore has been developed at no cost to community safety partners and has facilitated closer working with Health colleagues.
12. In addition to the community safety Information Management System, it was recognised that there is a gap in crime and community safety data at the

Oxfordshire level. Therefore, partners agreed to the development of a new Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment to provide a robust evidence-base to underpin the county-wide themes. This assessment draws on a range of data including statistical trends and comparisons with similar areas, as well as looking across the Commissioner's priorities and priorities identified in local Community safety Partnership Plans to suggest six themes for county-wide action:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Domestic Abuse
- Acquisitive Crime
- Violent Crime
- Road Traffic Accidents
- Reducing Re-offending

13. Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership has also developed a performance scorecard to enable the Board to monitor progress of its county-wide and local community safety priorities and provide support and challenge, as appropriate. The scorecard will ensure regular updates are provided to the Board and Business Group showing progress against agreed measures of success.

14. A new Business Case Template has been developed to help partners and local voluntary sector organisations present a compelling story about a project, service or initiative. The template will eventually form part of a wider commissioning framework, if the Board is required to distribute funds on behalf of the Commissioner in future.

15. The partnership is piloting a new approach to supporting victims of hate crime. This approach called Stop Hate UK now provides 24 hour support, 7 days a week for victims of hate crime and can be contacted by telephone, email, TEXT Relay etc. The service links to Thames Valley Police, district anti-social behaviour teams and Victim Support where local support or action is required. There was a positive coverage of the service at the Press launch last November and the service will be evaluated in October 2013.

16. The existing community safety Information Sharing Protocol has been reviewed. This protocol establishes the legal basis for the sharing data and information and a simpler process for maintaining the document is being developed.

Looking ahead: annual refresh of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan for 2013/14

17. The next stage of the process in developing the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Plan will be to bring together the Commissioner's priorities in his draft plan, alongside the county-wide themes that have come out of the Oxfordshire Strategic Intelligence Assessment and to consider how they 'fit' with Oxfordshire's local context. For example, child sexual exploitation is obviously a key community safety concern for partners

in Oxford and force-wide, and it is an important child safeguarding issue, but it has not been identified as a priority for three out of the four Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnerships. Similarly, there are existing structures in place to support the national programme for Troubled (Thriving) Families which the Board will wish to support.

18. The Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership Business Group will be meeting in March 2013 for a workshop to discuss all of the evidence to finalise the county-wide themes and what structures need to be put in place to support them, for consideration by the Board. A draft refresh of the Business Plan will be prepared in April 2013.

Financial and staff implications

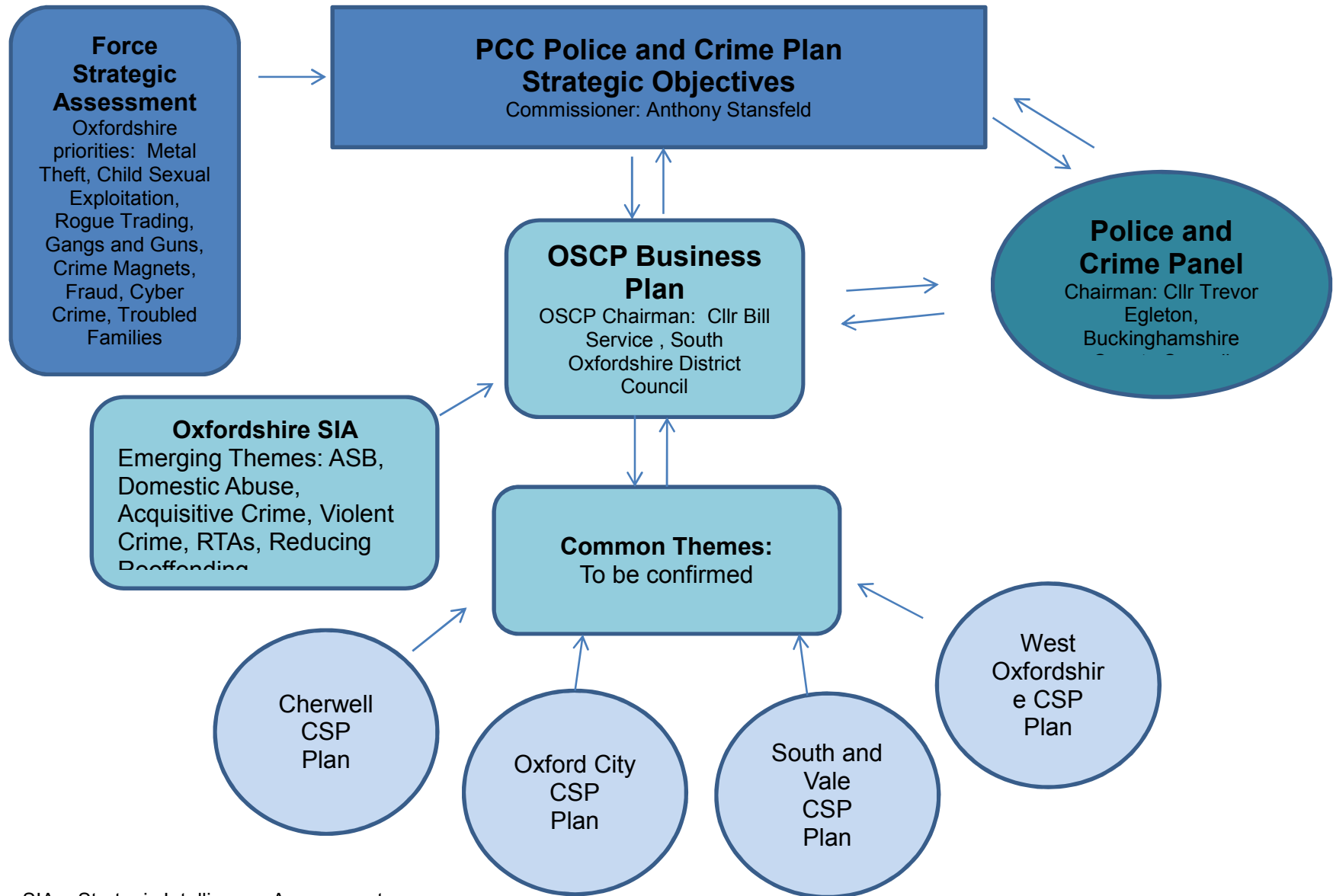
19. There are no financial implications.

Recommendations

20. The committee is invited to consider the emerging crime and community safety themes in Oxfordshire as Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Abuse, Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime, Road Traffic Accidents and Reducing Re-offending and make comment in advance of the final OSCP Business Plan being prepared.

Report by John Jackson, Director for Social and Community Services
7 February 2013

Contact: Carys Alty, Manager, Safer Communities Unit 01865-815406



SIA – Strategic Intelligence Assessment
 ASB – Anti Social Behaviour
 RTAs – Road Traffic Accidents

Division(s): ALL

ITEM 11

**SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 FEBRUARY 2013**

VILLAGE HALL/COMMUNITY CENTRE GRANTS

Report by Head of Law and Culture

Introduction

1. The County Council's grant scheme for the improvement of village halls and other community buildings is administered by the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC). The annual budget for the grants is currently £59,137. This Report sets out the criteria by which applications are assessed, the level of grants awarded and presents an analysis of grants awarded over the last five years.

Eligibility Criteria

2. Village halls and community centres i.e. buildings in urban and rural areas which are available for use by a wide range of local people and organisations are eligible to apply. The managing body of the building should be a properly constituted voluntary organisation representative of users or a town/parish council in a community of under 10,000 population.
3. Buildings managed by one particular sectional organisation will not normally be eligible. If such a building serves a wider role in the community and no publicly-owned facility is available, an application can be considered on its merits. In the case of any building not held on trust for public use, the managing body must undertake to make the building available for general public use for at least 21 years.
4. Grants will be considered for:
 - acquisition of land or buildings
 - adaptation and improvement of existing buildings and their accessibility
 - erection of new buildings
 - professional fees, including assistance with initial design and costing work
 - other associated expenses, e.g. fencing, car park

- major replacement items such as a new floor, new roof, new heating system

Grants will not be considered for:

- routine repairs or maintenance work
- associated outdoor facilities, such as play areas, sports facilities and associated changing rooms, which are not related to the indoor use of the building.

5. Other criteria are also taken into consideration:

- There should be sufficient security of tenure of the building – a freehold or long lease.
- Planning permission and building regulations approval should have been obtained.
- The property should not be subject to a mortgage or a loan secured on the property
- Grant aid is not available for any expenditure on the project which has already been committed or incurred.

6. Applicants also have to show that:

- there is a need for the project which could not be met by any other means
- there is financial need for a grant
- other sources of finance are available to supplement the grant requested from the County Council to meet the total cost of the project. It will normally be expected that grant aid support will be sought from the Town/Parish Council and District Council
- the project is technically feasible and reasonably priced. At least 3 estimates or a costing by a quantity surveyor should have been obtained
- the design and construction meet health and safety and other relevant regulations
- all building work whether or not it requires building control approval should comply with Part M (2004) of the Building Regs. 2000
- the property is adequately insured

Award of Grants

7. The County Council seeks to make available grants of up to 35% of total project costs, normally up to a maximum cash limit of £10,000. For projects to provide access/facilities for people with disabilities, the Council seeks to make available grants of up to 50% of total project costs (normally subject to the same cash limit). For schemes affected by the maximum cash limit there is the possibility of applying for grant aid phased over more than one year.
8. All applications should indicate how projects will result in accommodation which is more effective and better able to meet local needs. The County Council will give priority to the following:
 - Projects where there is no existing publicly-owned provision and no other suitable alternative facilities or where existing provision is seriously inadequate.
 - Work on existing accommodation which if not carried out would seriously threaten the future of the building or seriously restrict its use.
 - Work required for health and safety reasons.
 - Work to provide access/facilities for people with disabilities and to ensure, as a minimum, compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act
9. It is expected that building work should commence within 12 months from the date on which grant aid is agreed. Work should be completed within 2 years from that date.

Grants Awarded

10. An analysis of grants awarded over the last five years is attached at Annex 1.

RECOMMENDATION

11. **The Scrutiny Committee is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a) **note the report.**

PETER CLARK
Head of Law and Culture

Background papers: Notes on Applications

Contact Officer: Karen Warren, Cultural Services Manager

VILLAGE HALL/COMMUNITY CENTRE GRANTS - ANNEX A

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL VILLAGE HALL/COMMUNITY GRANTS AWARDED 2008 - 2012					
DISTRICT	HALL	PROJECT	OCC Funding	PROJECT COST	
Cherwell	Claydon	Install disabled w.c.and repairs to roof	4,710	13,466	
	Drayton	Make building water tight	7,500	30,383	
	Balscote	Equip new kitchen, install disabled ramp and pathway	2,500	13,700	
	Shenington	Improve disabled access	5,000	16,450	
	Wigginton	Build new toilet block to include new disabled toilet	7,500	28,241	
	Amcott	Refurbish kitchen	1,500	16,638	
	Steeple Aston	Update heating and fit secondary glazed windows	3,000	15,381	
	Begbroke	Replace windows	4,000	12,529	
	Chesterton	Provide disabled w.c. and refurbish kitchen	2,500	31,050	
	Merton	Install disabled w.c. and refurbish toilet/kitchen area	3,000	43,815	
	Upper Heyford	Install disabled w.c. and refurbish existing toilets	2,500	19,159	
	Fencott & Murcott	Refurbish kitchen	2,000	7,906	
	Horton	Extend kitchen, replace windows update changing rooms	4,500	98,112	
	Somerton	Equip new kitchen	2,000	14,854	
	Steeple Aston Rec Trust	Replace hall flooring	2,800	9,344	
	Mollington	Refurbish kitchen	2,500	17,605	
	Shenington	Refurbish kitchen	3,180	11,585	
	Tadmarton	To cover over disabled access to building	1,000	3,290	
	Wroxton	Refurbish existing facilities	9,000	48,178	
	Wendlebury	Redevelop kitchen and bar area	2,000	54,746	
				72,690	506,432
	Oxford City	Oxford Asian Centre	Demountable stage and chairs	3,400	9,758
		East Oxford Comm Centre	Refurbish Centre	defer	35,000
Mortimer Hall, Old Marston		Install disabled w.c. and refurbish existing toilets	4,258	42,573	
Mortimer Hall, Old Marston		Remove stage to create new space for toilets	2,500	8,075	
			10,158	95,406	
South	Cholsey	New Parish Hall	10,000	1,136,331	
	Cuxham	Refurbish hall	7,500	23,443	
	Garsington	Refurbish and extend hall to include better DDA facilities	10,000	246,000	
	Mapledurham	Repair and replace roof including insulation	6,500	18,750	
	Tetsworth	Install disabled w.c., improve access and renew heating	7,500	208,508	
	Ewelme	Replace 10 existing windows	1,307	4,757	
	Goring	Extend the existing hall	7,500	98,000	
	Great Milton Pavilion	Refurbish pavilion/hall to include new disabled facilities	7,500	192,398	
	Ipsden	Install disabled w.c. and refurbish existing toilets	5,000	16,199	
	Checkendon	Update heating, insulation, electrics and flooring	1,500	45,993	
	Rotherfield Peppard	Replace existing windows	2,500	17,000	
	Berrick & Roke	Install disabled w.c. and refurbish toilets and kitchen	3,000	34,494	
	Britwell Salome	Refurbish existing facilities to include disabled access	4,000	52,958	
	Great Haseley	Install disabled w.c. and refurbish existing toilets	1,585	18,785	
	Sydenham	Run gas, install heating and replace wooden floor	3,000	23,644	
	Shiplake	Install fire alarm and emergency lighting	2,800	8,941	
	Chinnor Village Centre	Redevelop existing facilities	5,000	60,000	
	Crowmarsh Gifford	Renew ceiling and lighting	1,000	5,200	
	Pyrtton	Lower and insulate ceiling and lighting	2,000	33,852	
	Rotherfield Peppard	Upgrade heating and refurbish kitchen	3,000	18,079	
	Chinnor VH	Extend and refurbish hall	5,000	561,059	
	Holton	Extension for storage	5,000	46,155	
	Kingston Blount	Refurbish toilets	1,400	19,467	
			103,592	2,890,013	
Vale	Grove	Refurbish kitchen	6,000	18,500	
	Kingston Lisle	Refurbish hall	5,000	28,800	
	East Hendred	Refurbish existing toilets	3,000	21,000	
	Childrey	Refurbish kitchen	3,000	15,967	
	Farmoor	Refurbish hall, to include new lighting and new heaters	2,000	16,388	
	Bourton	Install disabled w.c. and refurbish existing toilets	2,000	11,330	
	Northcourt Centre, Abingdon	Replace wooden floor	1,000	5,582	
	Appleton with Eaton	Install Fire Alarm system	1,950	5,955	
	Upton	Extend hall to increase space in main hall and storage	8,750	118,400	
	Wootton & Dry Sandford	To redevelop existing facilities	9,000	811,980	
			41,700	1,053,902	
West	Milton under Wychwood	Resurface Car Park	6,000	21,928	
	South Leigh	Renovate Hall	10,000	231,000	
	Over Norton	Install double doors to improve access to hall	5,000	30,018	
	Bampton	Refurbish kitchen	5,000	25,000	
	Combe	New storage	5,000	34,756	
	Filkins	Upgrade heating and refurbish kitchen	5,000	31,250	
	Ramsden	Meeting Room Developments	5,000	42,300	
	Bampton	Refurbish kitchen	3,000	25,000	
	Combe	New storage	3,137	34,756	
	Fifield Parish Hall	Refurbish existing facilities for Health and Safety	5,000	62,687	
	Asthall Leigh	Install disabled w.c., replace part of roof and window	1,500	49,364	
	Brownes Hall, Carterton	Install heating, update toilets and kitchen	4,000	23,500	
Finstock	To repair damage to floor and roof	380	1,965		
			58,017	613,524	
	GRAND TOTAL		286,157	5,159,277	

Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny 18th February 2013

Big Society - Councillor Community Budgets, report on progress

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to provide members with a progress report on the Councillor Community Budget scheme and to reflect on the process.

Background/Objectives

1. The fund was launched in July 2012. Each councillor is allocated a fund of £10,000. Each councillor has the discretion to support the projects they deem to matter most to their local communities. Each project application must meet a recognised community need. It cannot be used on projects which have a primarily religious or political nature. Funding is given on the understanding that it is one off funding with no on-going commitment from the county council.
2. Deadline for applications for this financial year is the 28th of February 2013.
3. The objective was to better allocate funds to projects that communities would really value. The scheme was designed on the principle that councillors are best placed to recognise and meet the needs of their local communities.
4. The qualifying criteria for organisations are relatively broad. This enables smaller, local groups who do not have the level of support and organisation of established larger groups to apply to the fund. This should improve access to the fund to all groups in a locality. As long as the basic requirements that a committee exist, some form of standing orders and a group bank account.
5. There is currently no funding for this scheme in the budget proposals for 2013/14.

Review of spend/progress to date

6. Total Fund: £740,000
 - Amount spent: £412,665.28
 - Amount remaining: £327,334.72
 - Percentage spent: 56%
7. Applications:
 - Total number: 253
 - Average award: £1,671.60
 - < £3,000: 84% of applications are for less than £3,000
 - > £5,000: 6% of applications are equal to or above £5,000

Observations

8. Grant size & volume

The average size of grants has been relatively low, but there has been a relatively high volume of applications. Many Councillors want to spread their grant around to as wide a group of worthy projects as possible within their division. This explains the low size, but high volume of grant applications.

9. Matched funding

There have been some projects where the CCB grant enabled matched funding to be sought. These applications have usually been for larger sums and as part of a construction project. However, this has applied to a small proportion of applications. Most grants have not been used for to seek match-funding.

10. Applicant type

Applications have been from a wide variety of groups. However, a majority have been registered charities (119 – 47%) or town/parish councils (47 – 18.6%). The majority of groups who have taken advantage of the scheme are organisations which were already organised and comfortable with the system of public sector grants, like Town and Parish Councils and Registered Charities. This raises the question of whether the scheme has been successful in supporting local projects which would not otherwise have been able to source funding.

11. Themes

Certain themes have emerged as this initiative has been used to fund a wide variety of projects:

- Playground extension: There have been a number of applications for funds repair or upgrade play areas. These applications have usually been greater than £3,000.
- Community space: A number of applications aimed at repairing and improving the fabric of the space or the community equipment therein.
- Youth projects: This has also been popular with some early intervention programmes, respite relief for young carers and improving local youth facilities being funded by the scheme.
- Sports projects: There has also been a clear need to improve the facilities and equipment used by sports teams and local sports pavilions across Oxfordshire. A number of these have been aimed at the young.
- Elderly groups: There has been a clear focus on supporting social projects for the isolated elderly with the grant being used to extend and improve social activities for these groups.
- Community cohesion: There have also been a number of projects aimed at improving community cohesion by bringing together separate groups living in the same community. For example the military and local community.
- Deprived areas: There have been projects aimed at providing financial advice and additional health support and financial advice to deprived areas.

Issues for consideration

12. Whilst there is currently no provision for councillor community budgets in the 2013/14 if funding were to become available it is useful to reflect on the process. Scrutiny members may wish to consider the following questions;

- Spending has been quite variable between councillors. What are the barriers to Councillor spending? What support would help this?
- Should we attempt to reach out groups who are not already part of each Councillor's network? How aware are local groups of the scheme? There are a high proportion of applications by established groups.

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