

## **SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Monday, 12 November 2012 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.20 pm

**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 Judith Heathcoat (for whole meeting )

**Officers:** Claire Phillips, Chief Executives Office

*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)

## SSC3

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)

Jacquie 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.

## SSC3

- The committee wished to thank Carl 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 Fire Control Service. 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 the 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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