

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 12 May 2016 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.26 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair
Councillor Neil Fawcett (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor John Christie
Councillor Sam Coates
Councillor Mark Gray
Councillor Stewart Lilly
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor Patrick Greene (In place of Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE)
Councillor Jenny Hannaby (In place of Councillor Janet Godden)

Other members in attendance Councillor Lovatt (Agenda Item 5)
Councillor Mallon (Agenda item 5)

Officers:

Whole of meeting John Courouble, Research Intelligence Manager; Sue Whitehead (Corporate Services)

Part of meeting

| Agenda Item | Officer Attending |
|--------------------|--|
| 5 | Carys Alty-Smith, Head of Prevention, Richard Webb, Community Safety Manager |
| 6 | Graham Mitchell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer |
| 7 | Lucy Butler, Deputy Director, Children's Social Care & Early Intervention Service; Lara Patel, Social Care Manager Central |

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

23/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS (Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillors Atkins, Constance (Councillor Greene substituting), Godden (Councillor Hannaby substituting) and Harrod.

24/16 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 March 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

25/16 COMMUNITY SAFETY AGREEMENT - ANNUAL BUSINESS PLAN

(Agenda No. 5)

The Committee considered the report and presentation on the work of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (2015-16) and Safer Oxfordshire Partnership (2016-17). Carys Alty-Smith, Head of Prevention, and Community Safety Manager, Richard Webb attended together with Councillor Sandy Lovatt, the former Chairman of Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership and Councillor Kieron Mallon the new Chairman of Safer Oxfordshire Partnership.

During questioning Performance Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Sought more information on the reasons behind the upturn in violent crime. They were advised that in addition to more people being confident to come forward there had been a change in the way incidents were recorded so that in the past one incident with several people involved would be recorded as one incident but would now be recorded as a separate incident for each person involved. They asked to receive further details on recording, the increase in violent crime and the reasons behind it based on independent analysis.
- 2) Noted that with regard to domestic abuse cases there had not been a surge in current cases and the growth was largely historic. Protecting vulnerable people was a priority but Carys Alty-Smith would take comments back about making a specific priority around domestic abuse.
- 3) Received information on the close partnership working around rogue traders and scams.
- 4) Commented that they would wish to see more information on youth justice services and funding.
- 5) Received details on how outcomes and the effectiveness of the actions taken were determined. More detailed information was available via the web site and Carys Alty-Smith undertook to circulate a link.
- 6) Commended a diagram circulated at the meeting setting out the responsibilities and relationships of the various partners in community safety partnerships.
- 7) Considered the work being undertaken on the PREVENT agenda.
- 8) Queried what was being done to tackle internet trolling and cyber bullying. They heard that a Group had been set up to look at this area and that it was tackled with young people through the Junior Citizens programme. The police were a key player as they had the necessary technology to tackle such crimes.
- 9) Expressed concern that the elderly who had the most fear of crime were not mentioned in the report.

26/16 365 ALIVE - ANNUAL REPORT AND VISION

(Agenda No. 6)

Graham Mitchell, Assistant Chief Fire Officer, introduced the paper that outlined the new vision for the 365 Alive programme.

The Committee congratulated OFRS on their work and commended the new plan. Questioned about their work on dealing with mental health issues for staff Mr Mitchell outlined the steps following an incident to ensure support was in place. This included an immediate debrief, a structured debrief with specialist staff and use of occupational health services. Asked about planning for population growth in Oxfordshire he explained that although not a statutory consultee they were consulted on large housing schemes. They advised on the response standards that could be expected and where appropriate advised on the use of domestic sprinklers. In response to a question Graham Mitchell commented that they were proud of the work done with children; a new Unit was being developed and 85 children joined weekly.

27/16 FUTURE DIRECTION FOR THE MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH)

(Agenda No. 7)

Lucy Butler (Deputy Director, Children's Social Care & Early Intervention Service) presented a paper on the work and performance of the MASH. John Capps, an operational manager for the Thames Valley Police and Lara Patel, Social Care Manager Central were in attendance.

Charlie Payne highlighted concerns in the report and spoke in support of children's centres which complemented the work of the MASH and provided vital support to mothers and families. In responses to questions she referred to the additional funding agreed by full Council but expressed concern that gaps would remain in the service provided in areas such as Wantage and Chalgrove. She added that she had been told that social worker caseloads would double if Children's Centres closed.

Lucy Butler presented the findings of the recent inspection and work that had already been underway to find a new model. She undertook to bring further details of the new model to Committee when available.

During discussion the Performance Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Queried the effectiveness of the referral process and commented on issues related to the inappropriate referral of cases that should be dealt with at an early stage without the need for MASH involvement. The Committee heard that the threshold of needs matrix was being reviewed to make it easier to understand and would be rolled out to professional across the County.
- 2) Explored the role of the Locality and Support Teams in the new model in providing early support to vulnerable families.
- 3) Noted that it had been in place for 18 months and had had some success. What was important was to focus on those areas requiring improvement. The Committee was advised that a project group had been formed to learn lessons from the review and experience and it would develop an action plan.

- 4) Explored the issue around supervision of social workers and were assured that it was an area where officers were always looking to improve.
- 5) Expressed concern at the level of case work carried by social workers. The figure of 65 cases was not one that had been reported to the Committee previously. Lucy Butler explained that the one high figure of 65 related to multiple cases within a smaller number of families. They were aware of the caseloads increasing and it was one aspect that the new model was designed to address. A Member suggested that a paper setting out the costs relating to social worker caseload be brought back to this Committee.
- 6) Raised concerns in relation to domestic violence cases and queried how many cases had been prosecuted without the need for the victim having to do that. Figures were to be provided. The Committee heard that a piece of work was being carried out looking to make triage work within the MASH more effective to address concerns that linkages were made based on serendipity rather than process.
- 7) Commended the work being done on child sexual exploitation.

Following discussion the Committee endorsed the approach and looked forward to ensuring that the new model was fit for purpose of keeping children safe. The Committee welcomed the opportunity to comment on the new model at the earliest opportunity.

28/16 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2015-16

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee had before them the Annual Scrutiny Report prior to its consideration at full Council in May.

During discussion concern was expressed over Cabinet Advisory Groups and it was agreed that there was a need to review the way in which they operated.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

2016