

PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Thursday, 27 October 2016 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.55 pm

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Liz Brighthouse OBE – in the Chair

Councillor Sam Coates
Councillor Janet Godden
Councillor Mark Gray
Councillor Patrick Greene
Councillor Jenny Hannaby
Councillor Stewart Lilly
Councillor Charles Mathew
Councillor John Sanders
Councillor Neil Owen (In place of Councillor Steve Harrod)
Councillor David Wilmshurst (In place of Councillor Yvonne Constance OBE)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Heathcoat (for Agenda Item 6)

By Invitation: Anthony Stansfeld, Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley
Francis Habgood, Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police

Officers:

Whole of meeting Steven Jones, Policy and Performance Officer; Colm Ó Caomhánaigh, Committee Officer

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
6	Benedict Leigh, Strategic Commissioner (Adults)
7	John Courouble, Research Intelligence Manager
9	Daniel Ruaux, Strategic Lead for Missing Children; Hannah Farncombe, Deputy Director – Safeguarding.

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.

48/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Constance (Councillor Wilmshurst substituting) and Councillor Harrod (Councillor Owen substituting).

49/16 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2016 were approved and signed as a correct record.

50/16 THAMES VALLEY POLICE AND POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER'S ANNUAL REPORT

(Agenda No. 5)

Mr Stansfeld presented the Police and Crime Commissioner's challenges and issues for 2016/17 and beyond:

- The PCC elections have resulted in a divided situation where the posts in larger conurbations are dominated by one party and the rest are mostly with another party.
- National events have resulted in a changed team of Ministers and Shadow Ministers.
- Finances should now be on an even keel following cuts made over the last four years.
- Many special capabilities, such as air support for example, will have to be resourced at a regional or national level.
- At a national level radicalisation and cyber attacks are major problems. The IRA threat is under control but hasn't gone away.
- At a local level organised crime, modern slavery, prostitution, drugs and illegal sales of tobacco and alcohol are significant issues.
- The Government has signalled its intention to legislate to enable PCCs to hold their local fire and rescue services to account if PCCs are able to demonstrate a clear business case for doing so.
- The PCC is required by law to have a 5 year plan. This is under consultation now and must be in place by the end of March 2017.

Members of the Committee challenged Mr Stansfeld's intention to bring the Fire and Rescue Service under the PCC and asked that consideration be given to the way in which the Service works well with other council services such as Adult Social Care. The point was also made that the Service is very representative of the communities it serves and this could be lost if centralised. The Commissioner responded that the amalgamation of police forces into the Thames Valley Police was successful and the fire services are much smaller organisations. It is estimated that savings of £8m to £10m could be made if there was one regional service. The Chairman requested that the Committee have an opportunity to discuss the draft case being made by the Commissioner.

Members of the Committee questioned the appointment of a Deputy to the PCC without public advertisement of the post. The Commissioner responded that the law allows him to make a personal appointment and he is not aware of any deputy positions being advertised in other areas. The appointment is subject to a confirmation hearing.

Chief Constable Habgood presented slides outlining the force's commitment to the public and made a number of additional points:

- The current number of Community Support Officers will be maintained.
- He conceded that the police website was a bit clunky for members of the public so they tend to revert to more traditional methods of contact. That is being addressed with a new design.
- Changes in recording methodology are mostly responsible for the increase in the figures for violent crime.

Members of the Committee asked about measures to improve safety on the A34. The Chief Constable reported that the Transport Minister had decided to review safety on the road even though the accident level had not hit the point that would normally trigger a review. Distraction (for example by mobile phones) was a growing problem and one that cannot be easily tackled by increasing the number of patrols – it's more a matter of educating people. Research is being conducted on the appropriate level of police activity to reduce accidents. In 2015 the number of prosecutions increased despite fewer hours of operation of speed cameras.

Asked how the police force deals with mental health issues, the Chief Constable described how front line staff are trained to deal with such issues whether it arises with victims of crime or those brought into custody. They support victims in helping them to avoid repeat instances.

In relation to Neighbourhood Action Groups, members of the Committee reported that it was difficult to retain volunteers and suggested that even a small amount of funding would make a big difference. The Chief Constable responded that sometimes Parish Councils can play a role and suggested that councillors contact their neighbourhood inspector to discuss any issues.

The Commissioner reported that he had been lobbying for a greater proportion of court fines to be returned locally. However, the change of Ministers meant that he had to start again on that issue.

Further information requested by the Committee included:

- an estimate from TVP of the proportion of offenders who are drug users in order to assess the extent of the problem.
- details from the PCC of the money given to OCC for Community Safety Funds and Victims Grant.
- the number of victimless prosecutions in relation to domestic violence.

51/16 REVIEWS AND CONSULTATIONS ON RESPITE, OXFORDSHIRE CARERS' STRATEGY AND CARERS' PERSONAL BUDGETS CONSULTATION AND DAYTIME SUPPORT

(Agenda No. 6)

Mr Leigh introduced the report emphasising that the focus here was not on proposals but on the consultation process. This co-production process builds on previous work and developed the way that service users are consulted at an early stage to help shape the proposals. Financial constraints do mean that the Council needs to get best value for the money spent, but this is not at the expense of shared design and effective services. In the case of the three services covered in the paper, members of the public often don't see the organisational divisions between respite, daytime support, and carers support. For example many carers say they see daytime support and respite as crucial forms of carer support.

The Performance Scrutiny Committee

- welcomed the approach being taken in the consultation;
- asked about the feasibility of finalising the report from the daytime support consultation, and bringing it back to scrutiny, in time for the January Cabinet meeting and heard that staff were committed to working over Christmas to achieve this. An outside agency has been engaged to look at the reviews;
- discussed the demographic statistics on the participants and were reassured that the participants were a reasonably representative sample;
- agreed that the Chairman will discuss with officers and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care how best to bring information from the consultation before this Committee in advance of the report going to Cabinet.

52/16 EXEMPT ITEM

(Agenda No. 8)

RESOLVED: to agree that the public be excluded during the consideration of the report since it is likely that if they were present during that discussion there would be a disclosure of "exempt" information as described in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 and specified below the item in the Agenda.

PUBLIC SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS FOLLOWING THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC.

53/16 SAFEGUARDING MISSING CHILDREN REPORT

(Agenda No. 9)

The Chairman proposed, and it was agreed, to take item 9 before item 7, to facilitate the Officer, following the late running of earlier items.

The information contained in the report is exempt in that it falls within the following prescribed category:

7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime

and since it is considered that, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, in that confidential police operations could be compromised.

Mr Ruaux explained that the report needed to be restricted due to the information on police operations in paragraph 18. In future, he will ensure that such sensitive information is included in a confidential annex so that the main paper can be made publicly available.

Responding to questions from the Committee, Mr Ruaux and Ms Farncombe made the following points:

- Typical ages of children who repeatedly go missing are 12 to 17.
- Many unaccompanied minors go missing when they reach 18 and face deportation.
- Police staff have a list of 10 questions to ask a person who reports a missing child to determine if they are missing or absent.
- Children can be deemed to be absent “not where expected” rather than missing, again there is clear guidance on this that the police go through with the person calling to make a report.
- The Missing Children’s Panel can identify over-reporting and respond to it.
- With regard to Looked After Children, the Council has no more legal right than parents.
- Power of entry can be granted by a court or other police-issued orders where there is concern that children are visiting a risky address.
- Missing Children are not solely dealt with under the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) but there are daily operational links between the missing children’s co-ordinators and the MASH.

In response to questions about involvement in dealing with the drug problems in East Oxford:

- Adult Social Care colleagues are involved as well.
- Early warning signs triggered a response.
- It has the potential to become a very serious problem.
- Relevant people in schools are involved.
- District councils are helping with regard to addresses of concern.
- It is not being dealt with under the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) but there are daily operational links.

54/16 OXFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT ON PARTNERSHIPS
(Agenda No. 7)

Mr Courouble introduced the report and reminded Members that it also has to go to Council on 1 November 2016. The individual partnership reports refer to the time period from mid-2015 to mid-2016. The Strategic Schools Partnership Board is new since the last report. A new section has been included in the report template on governance arrangements. He suggested that the Committee focus on identifying which bodies might be invited to come before the Committee for further scrutiny.

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The Performance Scrutiny Committee

- 1) expressed concern about the ability of elected members, particularly backbenchers, to engage directly with Partnerships, to have timely and accurate information about the decisions they are making, and their use of OCC's contribution to the partnership, whether in cash or in officer time;
- 2) noted comments from a National Audit Office report similarly expressing concern at the lack of accountability for Local Enterprise Partnerships;
- 3) recognised that the governance arrangements for many partnerships, in particular the Local Enterprise Partnership, are mainly a choice of central government not specific to Oxfordshire, but would welcome timely publication of the agenda and minutes for meetings, and regular updates about opportunities to input to key decisions and strategies;
- 4) requested the Chairman to raise these points when reporting to the full Council meeting.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

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