

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

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Monday, 8 November 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 2.30 pm

### **Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair  
Councillor John Goddard  
Councillor Patrick Greene  
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale  
Councillor Sajjad Hussain Malik (Saj)  
Councillor Susanna Pressel  
Councillor Bill Service  
Councillor Alan Thompson  
Councillor Carol Viney (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Steve Hayward (in place of Councillor Stewart Lilly)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Judith Heathcoat

### **Officers:**

Whole of meeting: Belinda Dimmock-Smith, Sue Whitehead (Chief Executives Office)

Part of meeting:

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer Attending</b>
5	Chief Fire Officer
6	Jackie Wilderspin, Assistant Director of Public Health - NHS Oxfordshire, Ruth Whyte, Manager – Safer Communities Unit
7	Head of Partnership Working
8	Chief Fire Officer
9	Nigel Wilson, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer
10	Nigel Wilson, Acting Assistant Chief Fire Officer
11	County Solicitor and Monitoring Officer Richard Webb, Deputy head of Trading Standards

*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.*

**89/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Stewart Lilly (Councillor Steve Hayward substituting).

**90/10 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 3)

Minutes agreed.

Minute 85/10 - The Chairman agreed with the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities that given the development at the recent Council meeting it was probably better to defer this piece of work.

**91/10 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chief Fire Officer outlined the significant challenges as a result of the Government Spending Review announcement. In particular in relation to trading standards and safer communities he referred to changes in several specific grants; there would be in-year and future year cuts and inclusion in into general grants.

The Chief Fire Officer referred to discussions being held on possible joint working in relation to trading standards and undertook to bring detailed information to a future meeting.

Referring to encouraging figures on availability due to the effect of full time watch officers the Chief Fire Officer undertook to keep the Scrutiny Committee informed.

The Chief Fire Officer advised the Committee of the sad news of a fire fatality in Banbury. Investigations as to cause was underway and the response to the incident provided a good example of a joined up response, involving the Oxfordshire Fire service, the London Brigade, Social and Community Services and the relevant Housing Association. They would be looking at any follow up work including publicity around smoke alarms. The Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities commended the bravery of the fire fighters.

The Chairman commended the joint working and there was some discussion of how this could be extended across the County. The Chief Fire Officer advised that a trial was to be held in West Oxfordshire with an evaluation before taking further. No timescales were available at this point.

There was some discussion about the changes to the National Consumer Helpline with the current position that negotiations were taking place to extend the current contract for 1 year from 31 March 2011 to allow alternative arrangements to be put in place.

**92/10 DRAFT OXFORDSHIRE ALCOHOL STRATEGY 2011-2014**

(Agenda No. 6)

The Committee considered the new draft Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy 2011 – 2014 (**SSC6(a)**) which outlined the priorities in relation to alcohol for the next 3 years.

The Committee also had before them the Director of Public Health's Annual Report (Version 4 – May 2010) which reports on 2009-10 and includes recommendations for 2010-2011 and included a section on alcohol for the first time (**SSC6(b)**).

During discussion the following points were made:

1. The priority being given to alcohol abuse was welcomed.
2. Responding to a question from the Chairman it was clarified that the figures on alcohol consumption could not be broken down by age group.
3. Responding to concerns that there were no action plans in place the Committee was advised that work was ongoing on the existing Strategy and that a progress report could be circulated to members of the Committee.
4. The importance of community involvement was recognised. Different approaches would be needed to target specific groups, such as young people. A member highlighted the importance of targeting school children and the need to do more work with schools. There was some discussion over the use of posters and it was queried whether a harder message was needed.
5. A member suggested that there was a lack of emphasis on the 18-45 years age group. In some way alcohol needed to be socialised and civilised to encourage moderate drinking. It was noted that the Strategy did not refer to AA and it was suggested that there could be better links with hospitals.
6. With regard to health promotion GP's were doing a lot although there was possibly a lack of consistency across the County. A good screening tool existed and the position was likened to the smoking cessation campaigns of 10 years ago.
7. There was some discussion over the use of sentencing to address problems and it was noted that alcohol treatment orders already existed.
8. Reference was made to the figures on retesting of premises (page 47 of the report )in relation to under age sales of alcohol in Oxfordshire and the need for effective enforcement was highlighted.
9. A link was made between the increase in drinking and the decrease in the unit cost of alcohol. Councillor Goddard suggested that the unit cost should be increased.

It was agreed that Committee Members receive a copy of the progress reports on the current action plan. It was further agreed that all councillors receive a list of alcohol services in Oxfordshire.

**93/10 SELF HELP COMMUNITIES - PROGRESS UPDATE**

(Agenda No. 7)

In July this Committee conducted a select committee investigation into community pride/self help and put forward a number of recommendations as part of the officer paper to the County Council Management Team (CCMT), which was considered on

28 July. This paper was subsequently circulated to all members of the Committee for information. The Committee now considered a written progress update.

The Head of Partnership Working explained that there had been a delay in the production of the Framework as it was important that the right people were consulted but that it remained an important objective. He advised that there was a meeting that afternoon and the views of the Committee would be reported.

During discussion the following points were made:

1. The importance of joining up grants was highlighted. There was some discussion on the respective roles of the County and District Council and Paul James recognised the need to simplify grant processes.
2. With regard to community development it was important not to duplicate work being done elsewhere, such as by the OSCA.

The Chairman highlighted that there was consensus about the need for a combined approach. It was AGREED that Alison Baxter, OCVA and the Bishop Colin Fletcher be invited to attend a future meeting.

## **94/10 SUMMARY OF OFRS OPERATIONAL ASSURANCE PEER REVIEW INSPECTION REPORT AND OFRS RESPONSE** (Agenda No. 8)

The Scrutiny Committee considered the report (**SSC8**) that summarised the most significant findings of an operational peer assessment overseen by the Improvement and Development Agency (IdeA) and led by the Chief Fire Officer of Cornwall, Des Tidbury.

During discussion the following points were made:

1. The peer approach to inspection was welcomed.
2. The role of other partners in relation to the target to decrease serious injury road traffic collision numbers was recognised.
3. Some concern was expressed about the ongoing sustainability of the resilience of the retained duty system. The Chief Fire Officer replied that for a rural service resilience was vitally important and he outlined actions being taken to secure ongoing resilience.
4. The Chief Fire officer responding to comments on the need in a small service to ensure that people were recruited externally to bring in outside expertise gave an assurance that this was already happening. He added that there was a system of mentoring in place.
5. There was some discussion of the activity to reach motorcyclists with accident prevention information

The Chairman congratulated the Service on an excellent report commenting that the Committee's expectations were regularly exceeded.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and AGREED that the Chief Fire officer report progress on the action plan as appropriate.

**95/10 OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE RESPONSE STANDARDS PERFORMANCE 2009/10**

(Agenda No. 9)

The Scrutiny Committee considered a report (**SSC9**) that provided details of Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service's performance statistics for fire appliance response times to emergency incidents during 2009/10. The report provided details of that performance and the actions being undertaken to mitigate risk.

Responding to comments Nigel Wilson confirmed that the Service was consulted on the broader highway/planning implications at the planning stage for major developments. They were also advised about traffic changes. There was a balance between traffic safety considerations and the need for ease of access. Use was made of over the border appliances as needed and this was also true the other way. Improvements at Goring were due to a new Watch manager so that mobilisation was quicker.

There was recognition by the Chairman and Committee that snow could have an adverse impact on responses. The Chairman added that he was interested in the traffic related figures and found the information helpful.

The Committee noted the contents of the report

**96/10 DRAFT OFRS INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (IRMP) 2011-12**

(Agenda No. 10)

The Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities considered Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service's Draft Integrated Risk Management Action Plan for 2011-12 on 4 October 2010 and approve the proposed projects for consultation.

Scrutiny Committee members commented on the individual projects and noted that they would be contacted by email to agree a response to the consultation. They AGREED that if possible following consultation the plan be brought back to the Scrutiny Committee prior to final consideration by Cabinet.

**97/10 QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE USE OF THE REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 BY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

(Agenda No. 11)

The Scrutiny Committee noted the report (**SSC11**) that provided an overview of the use of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 by Oxfordshire County Council in the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The report summarised applications for authorisation to undertake activities within the scope of

the Act made during this period. Where those activities have been concluded the report included the outcomes achieved.

Responding to comments Richard Webb explained the difficulties in achieving successful prosecutions and that it was better to work with premises and shops. He outlined how young volunteers were recruited and explained the limitations on the number of operations that could be mounted.

There was some discussion of the role of magistrates and the limitations of the legal process. It was confirmed that there was joint working with District Councils making use of local knowledge. Members queried whether there was duplication of effort as responsibility was shared.

The Scrutiny Committee AGREED that the next report include examples of partnership working between the County Council and District Councils.

**98/10 REPORT RELATING TO DEBT ADVICE SCRUTINY REVIEW**

(Agenda No. 12)

The Scrutiny Committee noted a paper detailing the Group's findings

The Chairman in referring to the work undertaken advised that there was no intention that the review continue and it was AGREED that the Debt Advice Review was now concluded.

**99/10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

(Agenda No. 13)

The timeline for the Scrutiny Work Programme was noted.

**100/10 FORWARD PLAN**

(Agenda No. 14)

No items raised.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing ..... 2011