

Notice of a Meeting

Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 9 May 2011 at 09.30 am

County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Membership

Chairman - Councillor Lawrie Stratford
Deputy Chairman - Councillor Carol Viney

<i>Councillors:</i>	John Goddard Patrick Greene Stewart Lilly	Lorraine Lindsay- Gale Sajjad Hussain Malik Susanna Pressel	Bill Service Alan Thompson
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Notes:

Date of next meeting: 4 July 2011

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); adult learning (oversight of the adult learning service in provider mode); libraries; museums and heritage; the arts; archives; leisure and recreation; registration service; community cohesion; equalities and social inclusion; 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	- Sean Gibson Tel: (01865) 815482 Email: sean.gibson@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Peter G. Clark
County Solicitor

April 2011

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 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Monday 14 February 2011 (**SSC3**) and any matters arising on them.

4. Speaking to or petitioning the Committee

5. Director's Update

9.45

The Director for Social & Community Services, Chief Fire Officer and the Acting Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety will give a verbal update on key issues.

SCRUTINY MATTERS

To consider matters where the Committee can provide a challenge to the work of the Authority and its Partners

6. Thames Valley Police: Presentation and Q&A

10.15

The presentation from the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police will cover performance in priority crime and other measures such as confidence and satisfaction. The presentation will highlight some key processes that are underway to improve performance and productivity.

Chief Constable Sara Thornton QPM will attend for this item.

The Committee is invited to question the Chief Constable regarding the Plan.

7. Operation of Birmingham City Council's Illegal Money Lending Team in Oxfordshire (Pages 9 - 12) **11.45**

Richard Webb, Acting Head of Trading Standards & Community Safety, 01865 815791

On 30th November 2009 the Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities delegated authority to the Head of Community Safety and Trading Standards to enter into an agreement with Birmingham City Council that would allow the Illegal Money Lending Team operated by that authority to work in Oxfordshire. At this time it was requested that the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee receive periodic reports of the progress made by this team in identifying and tackling illegal money lending in Oxfordshire. This is the second progress report.

The formal agreement permitting the Illegal Money Lending Team to operate in Oxfordshire was signed in January 2010. On 29th January 2010 the Stop Loan Sharks project (the name given to the project work undertaken by the Illegal Money Lending Team) was launched at a partnership event in Barton. The agreement which enables the Birmingham City Council Team to operate in Oxfordshire expired at the end of March 2011 but should have been extended by the time this report is received. The work undertaken by the team since the project launch is detailed in this report.

8. Road Safety **12.00**

Colin Thomas, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, 01865 855206.

Verbal update on progress to date.

9. Fire Control **12.10**

Colin Thomas, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, 01865 855206.

Verbal update on current status.

10. Scrutiny Work Programme **12.20**

To consider work programme (to be sent separately).

11. Forward Plan **12.25**

The Committee is asked to suggest items from the current Forward Plan on which it may wish to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Cabinet before any decision is taken, together with details of what it thinks could be achieved by looking at any items.

INFORMATION SHARE

Listed below are reports for information and links to background information that may be of interest to Members for noting only.

Subject Matter	Document

12.30 Close of Meeting

Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Part 9.1 of the Constitution for a fuller description.

The duty to declare ...

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, ie where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

Whose interests are included ...

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

When and what to declare ...

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

Taking part if you have an interest ...

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

"Prejudicial" interests ...

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

Exceptions ...

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

Seeking Advice ...

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

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SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday, 14 February 2011 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.45.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Lawrie Stratford – in the Chair

Councillor John Goddard
Councillor Patrick Greene
Councillor Stewart Lilly
Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale
Councillor Susanna Pressel
Councillor Bill Service
Councillor Alan Thompson

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Judith Heathcoat
Councillor Kieran Mallon

By Invitation:

Officers:

Whole of meeting Seán Gibson (Chief Executive's Office)
Nathan Travis (Fire & Rescue Service)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
5	John Jackson, Director for Social & Community Services), Colin Thomas (Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Richard Webb (Acting Head of Trading Standards & Community Safety)
6	Alexandra Bailey (Corporate Performance & Review Manager)
7	Richard Webb (Acting Head of Trading Standards & Community Safety)
8	Colin Thomas (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)
9	Colin Thomas (Deputy Chief Fire Officer)

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.

105/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Carol Viney (Councillor Timonhy Hallchurch substituting).
Councillor Sajjad Malik

106/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

None

107/11 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

Minute 91/10 – Colin Thomas, Deputy Chief Fire Officer to respond to question about proper standards for fire safety.

Minute 92/10 – Cllr S Pressel raised the concern that the proposed minimum unit price may be too low. The Chairman undertook to refer matter to relevant committees.

Minute 93/10 – Cllr Judith Heathcoat to provide update on work on simplifying the grant process for communities.

108/11 SPEAKING TO OR PETITIONING THE COMMITTEE

(Agenda No. 4)

None.

109/11 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

Updates were given by The Director for Social & Community Services, the Deputy Chief Fire Officer, and the Acting Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety.

The Director for Social & Community Services gave an update on:

Library provision

Proposals to amend provision of libraries in Oxfordshire were announced in November 2010. A large amount of correspondence has been received which has been collated by staff in Chief Executive's Office with specific queries being responded to by the Director or members of staff in the Chief Executive's Office.

Councillor Judith Heathcoat and the Director have been holding public meetings about those libraries which may be closed. The Director stressed that council will work with community groups who wish to take on the responsibility of maintaining a

library at risk of closure. In light of this, he believed that he and local councillors have been able to work closely together on issue.

Council also working closely with Museums & Libraries Association (MLA) as one of the pilot authorities in the MLA's 'Future Libraries programme'.

Director reported that he has met with LSSi, John Lang (Hounslow Borough Council) and Tim Coates, former executive at Waterstones who has worked with Hillingdon Borough Council on its Library Service re-design, but this was more a consultancy offer than a bid to run local libraries.

Broad issues being raised to date can be considered as follows: (i) value of libraries, (ii) impact of proposals on vulnerable groups, (iii) 'pain' should be shared across all libraries, and (iv) belief that community libraries initiative will not work.

- i. The Director stressed that the library service is valued, and current proposals would have the least impact. (He noted that the 23 remaining libraries account for 82% of provision).
- ii. This has already been identified as an issue, said the Director, with many existing building not being suitable for people with disabilities.
- iii. Prior to current proposals being announced, a 30% reduction in opening hours which would have been a significant reduction for the Central Library (the fourth busiest in the UK) and would not reflect people's expectations vis-à-vis a 'big' central library with good opening hours.

The Director noted that we have experience of the effect of reducing opening hours in Oxfordshire's library as in 1998-1999 a 15% reduction was put in place to make savings, and book issues fell by 20%. He stressed that the current proposal should have no major reduction in book issues.

- iv. The Director did not agree that volunteers would not be found to help run local libraries, and referred to the public meeting at Benson which showed great support for the initiative. However, practical issues were being raised which would need to be addressed.

Formal consultation was expected to begin at the end of February 2011, and last three months. This would mean that a final decision of the current proposals was likely to happen in July 2011. A document outlining the broad approach along with specific information about libraries would be published at the beginning of the formal consultation.

Cllr Judith Heathcoat added to the Director's report that alternative providers such as LSSi were being considered cautiously, but that council is opened to other options or models. She stated that a review of the council's property was being undertaken with the view to see if there are any opportunities to co-locate services.

The Chairman noted that communication of the overall process should have been clearer.

Members comments and discussion fell under the following headings: (i) guidance on proposals, (ii) impact assessment, (iii) options for running libraries, and (iv) training for volunteers.

- i. Communities were awaiting guidance on the proposals and how they may be involved. This was expected by end of February and would be linked to the Big Society exercise.
- ii. Some members voiced concern that any impact assessment was to happen late in the process. The director said that, at the moment, we were only in the position to give an overall assessment. A detailed assessment would follow based on the development or not of a community library.
- iii. Private sector as well as community-run solutions were welcomed. Concerns were noted about the experience of alternative provision elsewhere in the UK. For example, it was asserted that there have been problems with certain companies running a library service, and in keeping libraries open with voluntary support.

Cllr Pressel suggested a 'partnership model' between the county council and communities with the council providing 50% funding, and premises being shared with other services.

- iv. It was considered that training for volunteers was crucial if community-based libraries were to be sustainable, and able to offer a quality service. Details of how much funding may be available for training purposes was not known at this point.

Organisational change

SCS and CYPF to have a joint position (Head of Quality & Compliance) and will not be proceeding with the creation of Deputy Director, Communities at this time.

The County Librarian, Caroline Taylor, would be moving to Nottingham Trent University where she would be running the library. Caroline was thanked for her work at Oxfordshire County Council.

The Deputy Fire Officer gave an update on:

Fire Futures

Fire Futures is a strategic review of the Fire and Rescue Service with the objective of shaping the future structure and direction of the Fire and Rescue Service in England. The Fire Minister, Bob Neill MP, defined the content of the review earlier in 2010. Four workstreams were identified:

- Role of the fire and rescue service – Delivery models
- Efficiency, Effectiveness and Productivity
- Localism and Accountability

- National Interests

These workstreams were chaired by a range of people, including 3 elected members.

Reports, marking the output of the first stage of the review were published in December 2010, and present a series of options for the short, medium, and long term. The Minister will be reflecting on the reports over the coming months before responding. The authority will then consider this subject further.

Business Strategy Development and organisational structure

The former Community Safety Directorate continues to work on the delivery plans that underpin the 2011/12 business strategy, and are factoring items such as Fire Futures and more locally the evolving plans for the Communities and Quality and Compliance Joint Services. The intended transfer of the Road Safety Education team to the Fire and Rescue Service is being further refined with a proposal being available in March 2011.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer introduced the new Assistant Chief Officer, Nathan Travis.

The Acting Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety gave an update on:

The Consumer Landscape Review which concerns the transfer the consumer protection functions of the Office of Fair Trading to local authority Trading Standards Services. It is expected that a consultation document will be published in March 2011 with transfers beginning in 2012.

Funding for Community Safety Partnerships – the Area Based Grant which included funds for Safer Communities has ceased and the Local Government Settlement confirmed that a new unringfenced Community Safety Fund was in place.

110/11 THE BIG SOCIETY AND LOCALITY REVIEWS

(Agenda No. 6)

The Corporate Performance & Review Manager referred to the letter that all Councillors had received in December 2010 outlining the council's approach to the Government's Big Society initiative, the council's Locality Reviews and its Big Society Fund.

Locality Reviews

Three Locality Reviews had been held to date and would carry on until the summer. Briefings, covering information on community groups and assets were available for initial discussion. However, overall the focus of the reviews would be informed by local members.

Big Society Fund

A 'micro-website' dedicated to the Big Society Fund was scheduled to launch on 16 February 2011. The website would include information on what the county council was offering, information on applications to the fund, and service specific information. The website would be updated in line with locality review development.

Rather than a single deadline for applications, there would be instead 'waves of applications' allowing communities time to organise bids.

As part of the communication framework, a link would be placed in District Council websites, and Parish Council clerks would also be emailed the link.

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Cabinet Member for Police and Policy Coordination) emphasised that the approached envisaged councillors as community leaders within the localities, but stressed that it would be possible for pro-active groups within a locality to set the pace for change.

Councillor Mallon explained that pump-priming would cover set-up costs for community initiatives, but groups would have to organise long-term funding.

Members of the committee supported the involvement of District and Parish Councils, but were concerned about the sustainability of funding. However, they recognised that this was the beginning of the process. In light of this, it was agreed that regular updates would be useful.

111/11 CRIME AND DISORDER ANNUAL REVIEW

(Agenda No. 7)

The report was presented by Richard Webb and covered: legal context, the role of the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP), the work carried out by OSCP in the previous six months, the review of OSCP, challenges ahead for Community Safety, and changes to Policing in Oxfordshire.

Councillor Kieron Mallon (Cabinet Member for Policing and Policy Coordination) commented on the review of OSCP. He said that OSCP had achieved a great deal, but had to evolve to engage with changes to police and emerging government policy. The review would focus on the aims of the partnership, challenges, governance and Big Society.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted: changes to funding, increased activities for local police, alcohol treatment orders waiting list and challenges faced by families with complex needs.

Richard Webb would respond about the alcohol treatment orders waiting list query.

It was agreed that early intervention was important in helping families with complex needs. With this in mind, the Chairman asked for a report back on the 'Brighter Futures' project being run in Banbury.

112/11 DRAFT OFRS INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (IRMP) 2011-12

(Agenda No. 8)

Committee supportive of IRMP and considered that limited consultation response more a comment on effectiveness of the plan than lack of interest. Deputy Chief Fire Officer noted that further consultation could be carried out on specific issues, and that other directorates, for example Environment & Economy had suggested that Fire & Rescue could assist with Area Stewards initiative.

Committee agreed that IRMP showed that the Fire & Rescue service were an integral part of the delivery of council services in Oxfordshire.

Councillor John Godden suggested that project should be tracked at committee.

113/11 REGIONAL CONTROL ROOM PROJECT CANCELLATION

(Agenda No. 9)

The briefing was given by Colin Thomas who confirmed that the Fire Minister, Bob Neil MP, had announced on 20 December 2010 the termination of the contract with Cassidian (formerly EADS) for the delivery of the fire control centres.

He asked the committee to note that the Delegated Decisions meeting would be considering a paper directing our nominated SEFRCC Director, Councillor Rodney Rose, to vote for the formal winding up of the company at its next meeting on 18 February 2011.

Oxfordshire would be considering its options for the future provision of call receipt, mobilising and incident management against the following strategic objectives:

- Operational resilience – technical and for spate conditions
- Ability to meet our local requirements, and
- Cost effectiveness

A formal invitation from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Authority to work jointly with them and the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority to investigate if a Thames Valley approach is viable.

Oxfordshire would be well placed to secure the benefits of the early deliverables, for example; Mobile data Terminals in all 'red' fleet vehicles and 24 new station end mobilising systems. However the financial consequences also remain unclear at this time.

Colin Thomas paid tribute to our staff who have remained positive and professional during the 7 years of the project. He also thanked Members for their long standing interest, and commended the council for the continued financial support which has

proven to be prudent ensuring that a control room remains resilient in the interim before alternative arrangements can be implemented.

The Chairman thanked Colin Thomas and his staff for their work on this project over the years, and added that the quality of the information provided to the committee has been impressive.

114/11 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

(Agenda No. 10)

Management Review of Sweatbox Youth Centre, Wantage

Councillor Bill Service updated the committee on the Management Review of the Sweatbox Young People’s Centre, Wantage. He reminded the committee that the review had been undertaken after some events had to be cancelled due to health and safety concerns given the high numbers expected to attend and the interest being shown in the events by local and national media.

Councillor Service reported that the reports recommendations were adequate, and would ensure improved clarification of roles, expectations and communication between the centre and the programme managers and their Area line managers.

It was recommended that an update is received in 12 months.

Work programme

Agreed to update work programme, and bring in line with the committee’s remit.

115/11 FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda No. 11)

Nothing raised.

116/11 12.45 APPROX CLOSE OF MEETING

(Agenda No. 12)

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

Division(s): All

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MONDAY 9 MAY 2011

TACKLING ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING PROGRESS REPORT

Report by John Jackson, Director of Social and Community Services

Introduction

1. Birmingham City Council operates an illegal money lending team funded by central Government. The purpose of this team is to investigate allegations of illegal money lending (loansharks), to establish whether illegal activity is taking place and, if so, to take enforcement action to bring that illegal activity to an end. Enforcement actions centre on the licensing requirements of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 which require anyone carrying on a consumer credit business (which includes anyone providing credit on a commercial basis) to have a licence to do so. Commonly those involved in unlicensed money lending are often also involved in more serious offending.
2. Alongside identifying and tackling illegal money lending, the Team also builds financial resilience within communities affected by loansharks. In doing so they are able to ensure communities have access to legitimate lending opportunities and financial support when loanshark activity ceases.
3. Oxfordshire County Council has entered into an agreement with Birmingham City Council to authorise the Illegal Money Lending Team to enforce the provisions of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 in Oxfordshire. The Illegal Money Lending Team commenced work in Oxfordshire in January 2010.

Exempt Information

4. None

Progress to Date

5. The focus of the Illegal Money Lending Team in its first year of operation in Oxfordshire was to raise awareness of the problems associated with loansharks and to raise awareness of the help that the Team can provide. A significant barrier to tackling loansharks is that their activity is often invisible to enforcement agencies. The Team operate by encouraging reporting of illegal activity, from the public and from partners who may become aware of loanshark activity or have suspicions that there is loanshark activity in a particular area. These reports are used to trigger investigations.

6. Partners in particular play a key role in tackling loansharks since victims will often seek help or advice from existing community support groups (e.g. Citizen's Advice Bureaux). Fear of reprisal frequently makes victims reluctant to report loansharks themselves despite the confidential reporting facilities that the Team offer and the witness protection services that they can utilise. Therefore, initially the Team aims to raise partner organisations' awareness of the problems associated with loansharks, the warning signs and the reporting facilities in order to generate intelligence from third parties and also to encourage more reporting by victims.
7. The Illegal Money Lending Team and Oxfordshire Trading Standards Service coordinate activities but often operate independently within Oxfordshire. Regular communication takes place between the Trading Standards Service and the Illegal Money Lending Team to avoid duplication, maximise opportunities and ensure mutual support where necessary. However, the Illegal Money Lending Team will frequently plan and undertake initiatives without requiring support from the Trading Standards Service.
8. The main focus of the Team's activity in the last few months was a door-to-door awareness raising campaign in Barton. This campaign took place in December 2010 and involved the Illegal Money Lending Team with staff from Oxfordshire Trading Standards and was supported by the Thames Valley Police Neighbourhood Team. Homes in Barton were visited with a view to discussing debt and money issues with Barton residents as well as providing information about the Stop Loansharks project.
9. A summary of the Team's other awareness raising activities for January to March 2011 follows:

Date	Group/Meeting	Activity
07-03-11	Abingdon Job Centre Plus	2 presentations
08-03-11	Abingdon Job Centre Plus	2 presentations
15-03-11	Banbury CAB	1 hour presentation to 35 advisors
16-03-11	Didcot CAB	1.5 hour presentation to 20 advisors

In addition an awareness raising article was sent to all Job Centre Plus staff in the South East.

Recent partnership development actions have included a meeting with the Police BCU Commander for Oxford City to discuss delivering training to all police working across the region. This training has been agreed in principle and is currently being planned.

10. In addition, The Trading Standards Community Engagement Team has promoted the Stop Loan Sharks initiative as part of its normal community engagement activities (e.g. talks and presentations to community groups, displays at specific events, radio interviews, etc). The Trading Standards website also includes a dedicated section on loansharks.
11. Clearly, promotional work is on-going and the Team would welcome invitations to present to further community groups.

Outcomes to Date

12. The Team do not make available any detail on any on-going investigations in order to reduce the risk of these investigations being compromised. Until arrests are made we may not be aware of loanshark activity that is being investigated. The protocol underpinning the operation of the team provides for confidential communication between the Illegal Money Lending Team Manager and the Head of Trading Standards in order to ensure efficient investigation and mutual support where necessary.
13. Since January 2009 the Illegal Money Lending Team have undertaken and concluded an investigation into a report of potential loanshark activity in Oxfordshire. However, after investigation it was established that there was no illegal activity taking place and that the reported concerns did not stem from illegal money lending.
14. No specific performance indicators apply specifically to this project in Oxfordshire. The Illegal Money Lending Team is funded by central Government and reports on national performance to the funding department (the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills).

Government Policy

15. In late 2009 the Government announced continued funding would be provided for the Illegal Money Lending Teams. Until this announcement it was uncertain whether the team would operate beyond March 2011. There will be some changes to the structure of the project which will see the some regional teams operating elsewhere in the country coming under the control of the Birmingham City Council team in future. This change is being initiated to ensure efficiency in the project but will not affect the team's operation in Oxfordshire.

NAME: John Jackson
Director of Social and Community Services

Background papers: None
Contact Officer: Richard Webb
Acting Head of Trading Standards and Community Safety

April 2011

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