

Public Document Pack

Notice of a Meeting

Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee

Monday, 6 September 2010 at 10.00 am

County Hall, Oxford, OX1 1ND

Membership

Chairman - Councillor Lawrie Stratford

Deputy Chairman - Councillor Carol Viney

Councillors:

John Goddard

Patrick Greene

Stewart Lilly

Lorraine Lindsay-

Gale

Sajjad Hussain Malik

Susanna Pressel

Bill Service

Alan Thompson

Notes:

Date of next meeting: 8 November 2010

What does this Committee review or scrutinise?

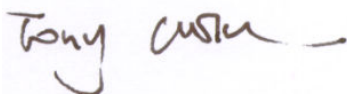
- Community safety; anti-social behaviour; crime and the fear of crime; fire and rescue; consumer protection; emergency planning; police issues; coroner's service; gypsies and travellers; drugs and alcohol awareness; road safety (police, trading standards, fire and rescue); adult learning (oversight 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) 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 | - | <i>Kath Coldwell, Tel: (01865) 815902</i> <i>kath.coldwell@oxfordshire.gov.uk</i> |



Tony Cloke

Assistant Head of Legal & Democratic Services

August 2010

County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND

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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 - 10)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 (**SSC3**) and any matters arising on them.

4. **Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**
5. **Director's Update**

10:15

The Chief Fire Officer 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. **Service and Resource Planning Presentation**

10:45

A presentation will be given to the Committee which will provide a high level overview of services provided and the challenges which will need to be addressed to meet the savings target. The Director for Social & Community Services and the Chief Fire Officer will cover their respective areas.

The Committee is invited to receive the presentation.

7. **Fire Service Command and Control Room - the FiReControl and FireLink Projects**
(Pages 11 - 12)

11:30

Contact Officer: Colin Thomas, Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer, (01865) 855206.

The Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer will provide an update and answer the Committee's questions.

| Subject Matter | Document |
|---|----------|
| Written update on progress of the Fire Service Command and Control Room (FiReControl and FireLink Projects) | SSC7 |

8. Paper on progress made in relation to increasing the County's resilience to Flooding (Pages 13 - 20)

11:50

Contact Officer: Bethan Morgan, County Emergency Planning Officer, (01865) 323760

A paper which provides detail on:

- progress by local resilience partners to increase resilience to flooding following the 2007 floods
- action taken to improve plans and processes to improve the local response to extreme weather incidents
- “Exercise Watermark” and the local activities planned to take place in relation to this national exercise

is attached (**SSC8**).

The County Emergency Planning Officer will attend for this agenda item in order to answer any questions which the Committee may wish to ask.

The Committee is invited to receive the update and to conduct a question and answer session.

REVIEW WORK

To take evidence, receive progress updates and consider tracking reports.

9. Nominations to Scrutiny Review in relation to Youth Centres

12:10

Contact Officer: Roger Edwards, Scrutiny Review Officer (Health), tel (01865) 810824

The object of this review will be to ascertain whether the appropriate policies are in place to control admittance to youth centres, as well as to ensure that young people behave properly once inside. The review will consider recent incidents around alcohol usage and other poor behaviour which have tested current policies and ascertain whether those policies were effective.

Once the membership of the joint working group has been established, a more detailed scope for the review can be agreed at the group's first meeting.

The Committee is invited to nominate two members to join the Joint Working

Group.

BUSINESS PLANNING

To consider future work items for the Committee

10. Future Items for Possible Scrutiny Consideration (Pages 21 - 24)

12:15

A list of items already logged for future scrutiny consideration is attached at **SSC10**.

Members of this Committee are asked to consider any items that they may wish to have presentations about in future and any items that they may wish to include in future agendas.

(a) Tracking Scrutiny Items

12:25

Report back on advice given by this Committee to the Cabinet, full Council, other scrutiny committees, relevant strategic partnership bodies and other organisations/bodies where appropriate.

• Self Help Communities

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.

The CCMT decision is given below:

The county council continues to value the voluntary and community sector and recognises that there are challenging times ahead for all. It is particularly important that the council continues to support initiatives that encourage volunteering where possible within the financial constraints that emerge from the government's spending review in December. The Chief Executive and other members of CCMT are meeting representatives of the voluntary sector in September to discuss how we can continue to work together productively to support vulnerable people and communities.

This Committee will be invited to comment on the framework/strategy at its 8 November meeting and will conduct a question and answer session on progress in relation to this at its 14 February 2011 meeting.

(b) INFORMATION SHARE_(Pages 25 - 28)

12:35

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

| Subject Matter | Document |
|--|----------|
| Tackling Illegal Money Lending Progress Report | SSC11(b) |

12. Forward Plan

12:50

The Committee is asked to note any items of interest on the current version of the Forward Plan which covers the time period September 2010 to December 2010.

13. 12:55 Approx Close of Meeting

Mrs Jacquie Bugeja, Head of Registration, will give a presentation on the Registration Service on the rise of this meeting.

The Committee is reminded that although the Service now sits under Legal & Democratic Services, it still falls within Councillor Heathcoat's portfolio and therefore falls under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

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, 5 July 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 4.30 pm

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
Councillor Carol Viney (Deputy Chairman)

Other Members in Attendance: Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities:
Councillor Mrs J. Heathcoat

Officers:

Whole of meeting K. Coldwell (Corporate Core); D. Etheridge and N. Wilson (Community Safety)

Part of meeting

Agenda Item

Officer Attending

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 5. | D. Etheridge (Community Safety) |
| 6. | P. James (Corporate Core) |
| 7. | R. Whyte (Community Safety) |
| 8. | C. Thomas (Community Safety) |
| 9. | D. Heycock, D. Etheridge & C. Thomas (Community Safety) |
| 12. | R. Webb (Community Safety) |
| 13. | D. Etheridge & N. Wilson (Community Safety) |

By Invitation

- | | |
|----|--|
| 6. | A. Foulkes (Barton Community Centre), P. Chirgwin (Volunteer Linkup), J. Edge (Sunshine Centre), C. Collett MBE (Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Plan/Oxfordshire Rural Community Council) |
|----|--|

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with the following documents:

- a report on the progression of the Resident Research and Community Development Project Participants and a report on the progress of community development in Barton, Wood Farm and Northway in relation to Agenda Item 6

and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and additional documents are attached to the signed Minutes.

66/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies were received from Councillor Sajjad Hussain Malik.

67/10 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2010 were approved and signed.

Matters arising from the Minutes

57/10 – Fear of Crime in Oxfordshire – the Chief Fire Officer undertook to report back to Councillor Pressel and the rest of the Committee on her query in relation to funding for youth clubs and other school holiday activities (now actioned).

68/10 DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

(Agenda No. 5)

The Chief Fire Officer reported orally on new appointments and key issues as summarised below:

- Eric Pickles MP is now Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. He previously joined the Shadow Cabinet as Communities and Local Government Secretary in July 2007. His ethos is devolving power to local people.
- Bob Neill MP is the new Fire Minister. In 2007 he was appointed as Shadow London Minister, joining the Shadow Communities & Local Government Team. In 2008 he was made Shadow Local Government Minister and Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party. Mr Neill has had some fire and rescue experience and recognises the value of the Fire & Rescue Service (F&RS) as “an exemplar of what public service is all about”. His priorities are “localism, localism and localism”. He is not looking to go back to nationally prescribed response standards and believes that local resources should meet local risk. This reflects the situation in Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service (OFRS).
- There will be a fundamental review of the Fire Sector. The Chief Fire Officers' Association will lead on this and it is due to report in time for the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn. Specific areas that are of relevance to OFRS include:

- Increased partnership working is considered as the way forward and was recognised as a strength in OFRS in the Comprehensive Area Assessment;
 - The main risks for OFRS in the next 10 – 20 years are the effects of climate change and OFRS being an integral part of national civil resilience (eg responding to the Carlisle floods).
 - OFRS has a unique brand and is one of the few services that is universally welcomed on people’s doorsteps. The Service could do more work in relation to alcohol and drugs, healthy eating, citizenship and educational attainment, as fire fighters are role models and could deliver a broader agenda than road safety and community safety.
 - There is an opportunity for OFRS to lead on the localism agenda by virtue of the makeup of the service - 24 fire stations all with their own station and watch managers comprising local people who know their communities. For example, they could deliver a different community safety package for each area to meet local community concerns.
- Mr Neill recognises that operational resilience nationally is dependent on inter-operability between Fire and Rescue Authorities. Therefore the business case for the Regional Fire and Rescue Authority Control Centre is sound, but it is one of the projects that will be reviewed by the government. There is no additional money for this project and the project may be delayed by another six months. A report is anticipated during the Summer parliamentary recess.
 - In year cuts to the Area Based Grant will impact on community safety and the officer group are assessing the impact of this.
 - Operation Reckless in Trading Standards has considerably reduced doorstep crime. There has also been an expansion of No Cold Calling Zones.

69/10 COMMUNITY PRIDE AND SELF HELP SELECT COMMITTEE
(Agenda No. 6)

“How can Oxfordshire County Council facilitate members of the community to act to benefit the wider community and what are the current barriers that prevent them from doing this?”

The Council wishes to develop a strategy and framework by September 2010 which promotes and encourages community pride and self-help. The aim is to significantly reduce barriers so that individuals and communities are more able to help themselves.

This Scrutiny Committee was invited to contribute to the development of the strategy and framework by examining some of the barriers that people may be experiencing which act as a disincentive and by proposing some areas for improvement.

The Committee had before it:

- a briefing paper which set out the scope for the session
- a programme

- a summary of assistance already available to individuals and communities.

The following panellists attended before the Committee:

- Mr Alan Foulkes (Community Development Co-ordinator - Barton Community Centre) (Representative of a successful local Community Centre);
- Ms Patricia Chirgwin (Manager of Volunteer Linkup – Volunteer Centre West Oxfordshire) (Representative of a successful local Good Neighbour Scheme);
- Ms Jill Edge (Centre Manager - Sunshine Centre - Children’s Centre on the Brecht Hill Estate, Banbury) (Representative of a successful local Children’s Centre);
- Ms Celia Collett MBE (Chair of Steering Committee of Brightwell-cum-Sotwell Parish Plan and Trustee of Oxfordshire Rural Community Council) (Representative of a Parish that has a successful Parish Plan).

The Panellists were accompanied by Mr Paul James, Head of Partnership Working.

The following questions were put to each panellist in turn:

- *Give an example of successful delivery of community pride and the ingredients that led to it being a success.*
- *In your view what are the top 3 barriers that prevent individuals getting involved to deliver community solutions to local problems?*
- *What role would you like organisations such as the council to play? How should we be helping?*
- *If you were responsible for delivering community pride across Oxfordshire, what would be the first thing you would do?*

Following its select committee investigation, the Committee thanked all panellists for attending, **AGREED** to forward its recommendations to the Head of Partnership Working and requested sight of the Council’s strategy and framework to promote and encourage community pride and self help (including the review of existing county council activity) once available.

Following this meeting, this Committee’s recommendations were included in the paper to the County Council Management Team (Self Help Communities), a copy of which would be appended to the agenda for this Committee’s September meeting.

These recommendations included a number of points made by Ms Lisa Fisher (participant on the V Talent Programme), which gave a young person’s response to the select committee questions.

Councillor Pressel requested a report for herself on how many Community Development Workers are currently employed by the County Council - both in Social & Community Services and other Directorates - their roles and their geographical locations, together with any available information on the [estimated] numbers of

Community Development Workers employed by other organisations how they are funded (eg by a Housing Association), and where they are located.

70/10 CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY DISCUSSION (Agenda No. 7)

A report on the Oxfordshire Safer Communities Partnership (OSCP) was before the Committee (SSC7) which included the following information:

- an outline of the role of the OSCP
- achieving positive outcomes through a partnership approach
- examples of the work of OSCP in the last year
- the latest performance information
- details of district council scrutiny arrangements.

The Committee was invited to:

- hold an in depth discussion in relation to this new duty and how to take it forward, to include confirmation of who to invite to future meetings (e.g. who from the partnership will come, does the Committee want to invite district councillors?);
- formulate a future work programme to detail the areas which the Committee wishes to scrutinise in respect to how the different partners are working together to deliver positive outcomes.

The Committee thanked Ms Whyte for her report and **AGREED** to:

- request reports to this Committee on a quarterly basis on how district council arrangements for scrutinising crime and disorder are working;
- monitor the outcomes of the Oxfordshire Safe & Confident Communities Project* that would be implemented during the next six months at its February or May 2011 meeting dependent on when the results become available.

(*communications campaign to increase public confidence in Oxfordshire in relation to NI21 – “The police and local council are dealing with the antisocial behaviour and crime issues that matter in this area”).

The reports on how the district council arrangements for scrutinising crime and disorder were working would be flagged up bi-monthly as a standing item on the officer group agenda and would then be fed through to the thematic partnerships.

Ms Whyte undertook to provide all members of the Committee with a copy of the current Oxfordshire Alcohol Strategy, together with information on the consultation events that would be taking place across the county (actioned).

71/10 FIRE SERVICE COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM - THE FIRECONTROL AND FIRELINK PROJECTS
(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee noted the update (Refer SSC8).

72/10 DRAFT ACTION PLAN ARISING FROM THE HEALTH AND SAFETY EXECUTIVE INSPECTION OF OXFORDSHIRE FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE
(Agenda No. 9)

The Chief Fire Officer, together with Mr Colin Thomas (Temporary Deputy Chief Fire Officer), Mr David Heycock (Technical Services Manager) and the Cabinet Member for Safer & Stronger Communities attended before the Committee for this item.

The Committee received a report back on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Inspection, together with the Service's draft action/implementation plan (SSC9(a)). A GANNT chart showing the likely timescales for implementing the actions was also before the Committee (SSC9(b)).

This further short report provided detail on the action plan on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspection of Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service and the subsequent report received in March 2010. The action plan had not yet been formally approved by the HSE but would be subject to further discussion over the next 2 - 3 months.

In relation to **R3 – Organisational arrangements need to be put in place to deliver operational training policy in a co-ordinated and consistent way** – the Committee noted that this recommendation's current status was amber and that it was currently proving challenging to move forward due to several changes in personnel. Additional activities had been planned which should allow adequate progress, but the current target time was under threat.

Councillor Goddard asked for additional information in relation to the above action point in terms of the range of costs it might involve, when the time issue would be resolved and if it would have been actioned before general budgetary decisions had to be made.

The Committee noted that OFRS had an overall estimate of a typical price range for this type of activity and that there had been a roll over of funds from last year's budget (Refer report). The cost would be constrained within £200k and half of that cost had already been met. It wasn't known at this stage whether the gap of approximately £50,000 would be a one off cost or a year on year cost.

The Deputy Chief Fire Officer undertook to provide further financial details to Councillor Goddard and to the rest of the Committee.

The Committee thanked all concerned for the detailed and informative report.

Mr Thomas undertook to inform the Committee when the Health and Safety Executive had given Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service some indication of whether

or not they accepted the progress that was being made since the Inspection. It was expected that the response would be available in time for consideration at the Committee's 8 November meeting.

73/10 DEBT ADVICE SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRESS UPDATE
(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee noted the update.

74/10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME
(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee had before it:

- a list of key areas already investigated by this Committee
- Items logged for future meetings

The Committee noted that the implications of the current financial situation may highlight suitable issues for scrutiny consideration in due course and **AGREED**:

- to accept the invitation from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee to participate in its proposed review of the county's youth centres and to request sight of the scoping template once available, to enable Members of the Committee to decide whether they would wish to put themselves forward;
- to request a report from the Head of Adult Learning on the latest position in relation to adult learning, in so far as it relates to the remit of this Committee (oversight of the adult learning service in provider mode);
- to request the Chief Fire Officer to provide a short paper in relation to progress made in order to increase the county's resilience to flooding in so far as it relates to the remit of this Committee (in relation to emergency planning and fire and rescue);
- to request to be updated on progress in relation to the Libraries Transformation Programme at the appropriate time;
- (in light of the current and anticipated further reduction in funding to the Thames Valley Road Safety Partnership) to consider the business plan for the integrated road safety approach within the Council once available and to monitor this area in 6 month's time from the date of this meeting.

Ms Coldwell undertook to:

- work with Councillor Stratford to timetable the above items to Scrutiny;
- send the outcomes of the most recent tracking session in relation to the Neighbourhood Action Groups select committee recommendations and a link to past scrutiny reviews to Councillor Pressel.

75/10 INFORMATION SHARE

(Agenda No. 12)

Report on the arrangements for meeting the requirements of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 ('the Act') regulates the use of covert activities by Local Authorities. It creates the statutory framework by which covert surveillance activities may be lawfully undertaken. Special authorisation arrangements need to be put in place whenever a Local Authority considers commencing covert surveillance or considers obtaining information by the use of informants or officers acting in an undercover capacity.

Codes of Practice issued under the Act provide guidance to authorities on the use of the Act. A revised Code of Practice came into force in April 2010. This new Code of Practice specifies that elected members should review the authority's use of the Act and set the policy at least once a year. They should also consider internal reports on the use of the Act on at least a quarterly basis.

An overview of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and associated Codes of Practice and the arrangements in place in Oxfordshire County Council was before the Committee (SSC12).

The Committee was invited to receive an overview of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and associated Codes of Practice and the arrangements in place in Oxfordshire County Council, in advance of future reports providing information on the use of this Act by Oxfordshire County Council.

Mr Richard Webb (Acting Head of Trading Standards) attended before the Committee to answer any questions which the Committee may have wished to ask.

A member of the Committee asked if the powers under the Act were under review in light of the new government.

Mr Webb stated that the Act had been reviewed a number of times over the years. The new government had proposed that local authorities should retain these powers and therefore the Act would still apply, but officers may need to obtain permission from magistrates prior to conducting any future activities.

Following a brief question and answer session the Committee thanked Mr Webb for his paper and **AGREED**:

- to request that the mandatory quarterly reports reviewing the Authority's use of the Act and the annual report to Scrutiny reviewing the Authority's policy (July 2011):
 - continue to include generalised information on the types of activities carried out and the purpose of the operations or investigations;
 - also include:
 - the number of requests for directed surveillance authorisations or covert use of a human intelligence source which had been refused;

- outcomes in relation to agreed requests; and
- categories of activities for both agreed and refused requests

(as the Committee wished to come to a view as to whether the requests had been justified); and

- include the outcomes of the Office of Surveillance Commissioners Inspections [which monitor the Council's arrangements for authorising RIPA including a review of all authorisations], how often cases had been reviewed [currently monthly], and whether a decision had been made to stop or continue the surveillance for each case.

76/10 TRACKING SCRUTINY ITEMS (Agenda No. 13)

Mr Nigel Wilson (Assistant Chief Fire Officer) reported on the Recruitment and Retention of Retained Firefighters Scrutiny Review. Key points were as follows:

- Currently OFRS has a retained complement of 388 personnel and officers anticipate that they need an additional 17 personnel (dependent on cover offered) across the county to fill both current and expected vacancies on stations (through retirement/personnel moving out of the area etc).
- Officers are making effective use of whole time (WT) personnel to support the availability of retained fire appliances and the new WT Watch Managers (WMs) supported by Oxfordshire County Council are already having an impact.
- The churn rate of retained firefighters continues to be an issue, particularly in the current economic climate, as:
 - employers are less likely to release personnel
 - individuals are travelling longer distances to find primary employment and as a result are not in the vicinity of their local station
 - some staff change jobs following redundancy, leading to them moving away or not being released for retained duties.

The full update was emailed to all members of the Committee after the meeting.

The Committee noted that this Scrutiny Review was now closed down as all of the recommendations that OFRS could action had been actioned.

The Chief Fire Officer then reported on the Road Safety Partnership as follows:

The Thames Valley Road Safety Partnership receives financial contributions from all of the Thames Valley district and county councils and Thames Valley Police. The in-year cuts to the Area Based Grant mean that the Partnership will receive a 27% reduction with immediate effect. The Road Safety Partnership Management Committee is looking at the implications of this whilst accepting that there may be further cuts following the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in November. Internally, following my appointment as Chief Fire Officer, I am examining opportunities to create a single integrated approach to road safety as we currently

have several strands of activity within Environment & Economy, Trading Standards and Fire & Rescue.

77/10 FORWARD PLAN
(Agenda No. 14)

The Committee noted the following changes to the scheduling of reports to Cabinet:

- the report on Cogges Trust (to seek approval to complete the legal details, agreements and lease of the new Trust) would now be considered by the Cabinet on 21 September;
- the report on future use of legacy equipment from the OFRS Control Room would now be considered on 15 March.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 SEPTEMBER 2010

FIRE SERVICE COMMAND AND CONTROL ROOM – THE FiReControl AND FireLink PROJECTS

Report by Acting Deputy Chief Officer Colin Thomas (Oxfordshire's Senior User for the FiReControl and FireLink Projects and Joint Regional Project Board Member)

Project Summary

- **Project Review** The outcome of the CLG review of the FiReControl project remains unclear. The Fire Minister has stated that FRAs will no longer have to work through Regional Management Boards and that the Coalition Government will allow greater flexibility over the Fire Service National Framework. Both of these are part of the current Governance structure for FiReControl but we cannot yet assess the impact of these changes. In the meantime, the government has stated it expects EADS (the prime contractor) to meet contract milestones and therefore we continue to work to meet our obligations. The Regional Management Board is continuing to meet until any successor arrangements for ongoing governance are made.
- **Current Resilience** We have let a contract to Sungard to upgrade our existing call concentrator system (the software and hardware that “presents” and integrates incoming telephone and radio calls to the Fire Control Operator). The company has carried out an initial site visit and the planning for the necessary upgrade of the Control Room wiring in October is moving forward. Our aim is to have the replacement system in operation by the end of the year.
- **Consultation** The consultation rounds continue with the DCO actively engaging with Control personnel to ensure their views are represented. We have also completed a series of roll matching questionnaires to allow current Control Room posts to be equated to roles within the RCC. Reasonableness interviews are planned to start in January 2011.
- **Data Migration** The planned User Acceptance Test for the Data Conversion and Migration Toolkit 2 (DCMT2) which is essential to allow both the migration of the bulk of our data into RCC compatible formats expected in the first week of August has been postponed by CLG. The extent of any further delay is unknown but continues to pose a risk to data migration. Despite considerable pressure being exerted locally and regionally this issue is not being resolved adequately and Oxfordshire have formally asked for this item to be addressed by CLG.

- **Ways of Working (WoW)** The South East workshops to review documentation for the Combined Control Centre Operations (COPS - the new CLG process for Ways of Working) have continued with our support. The SE Policies and Procedures group (SEOPAP) which is working to harmonise Pre-determined Attendance and Standard Operating Procedures across the 9 South East FRSs is now aiming to complete its work by March 2011. The results will form an important element of the data migration work, establishing coherent cross region responses.
- **Early Deployment of Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs)** OFRS have completed phase 1 of the roll-out of Mobile Data Terminals in our appliances. Our detailed planning paid off and the programme went very smoothly finishing a week ahead of schedule. We are now working on phase 2 which will add risk and standard operating procedures to the MDTs. Our current aim is to complete this work by December but is dependent on the DCMT2 data migration toolkit.
- **South East Joint Project Board** Information from the last meeting confirms that the new Fire Minister is focussing on holding the prime contractor to the current contract and schedule. This is expressed as time, cost and quality. The Treasury review of significant government projects includes FiReControl. It is expected that this review will report during the summer recess.
- **South East Fire and Rescue Control Centre LTD** The last meeting recognised that the situation is unclear but accepted that continued progress was necessary. As a result the consultation forum process continues with a range of issues being consulted upon. One significant aspect of these is the overarching Health and Safety Management System and its underpinning procedures. This area is being supported by Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service resources under the oversight of Cllr Rodney Rose who has board level lead responsibility for this area.

COLIN THOMAS

Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer - FiReControl & Firelink Senior User
Tel: (01865) 55296)

September 2010

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 SEPTEMBER 2010

FLOODING RESILIENCE

Dealing with resilience arrangements following lessons learnt from the 2007 floods.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this briefing is to:

- (i) Inform the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee of progress by local resilience partners to increase resilience to flooding following the 2007 floods;
- (ii) Outline action taken to improve plans and processes to improve the local response to extreme weather incidents;
- (iii) Appraise the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee of “Exercise Watermark” and the local activities planned to take place in relation to this national exercise.

2. Background

- 2.1 It is 3 years since the 2007 flood which affected many properties in Oxfordshire. The issue of Flooding is an ongoing concern, which was emphasised with the recent flooding events in Cumbria and in Merseyside in July.
- 2.2 In the aftermath of the 2007 floods, there were national and local lessons identified to direct activity in order to improve both resilience and response to flooding. The Pitt Inquiry directed by Sir Michael Pitt made 92 separate recommendations relating to six broad areas which included structural issues such as improved planning and reducing the risk of flooding and its impact, as well as those on flood rescue and recovery. Monitoring of progress in these areas has been undertaken by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The following background information covers the action being taken locally to implement learning from lessons and thereby increase resilience to flooding.

3. Structural issues

- 3.1 The Oxfordshire Strategic Flooding Group (OSFG) was established following the 2007 flooding and is an officer led partnership group made up of the County Council, City and District Councils, the Environment Agency and Thames Water.
- 3.2 The OSFG’s Terms of Reference have developed to include the aim of ‘Ensuring a long term approach to flood risk management in Oxfordshire ensuring clear accountability and coordination between all relevant parties as appropriate’. This group is the overarching strategic group in respect of flood risk management in the county. In addition to this group, district and city

council based groups have been established to discuss and address operational issues at a local level with the same partner organisations participating.

- 3.3 The group maintains an important role in reviewing new legislation or guidance and those of particular interest are the EU Floods Directive which came into force in December 2009 and of most note, the Flood and Water Management Act gained Royal assent in April of this year and is expected to become law in April 2011. The Act states that Unitary Authorities or County Councils are required to take on the role of Lead Local Flooding Authority in their given areas for all aspects of flooding with the exception of main rivers. The Group will therefore work on the elements required to conform to this new legislative framework.

4. Multi Agency response planning

- 4.1 Activities undertaken to improve the emergency response to flooding incidents have been taking place on several different levels to recognise the respective response levels of agencies.
- 4.2 Issues relating to multi-agency response and recovery from flooding have been actioned by the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum's (TVLRF) Flooding Sub Group. This was tasked with preparing a Multi Agency Flood Response Plan to provide an overarching strategic framework for a multi-agency response to a flood event within Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire. It sets out relevant issues and priorities and outlines procedures to help ensure that any multi-agency response is effective. This plan also identifies a number of operational details such as infrastructure considered to be at risk from flooding.
- 4.3 It is important to be aware that the plan is intended to only provide guidance. The nature of flood events is such that each one is different and the character of the multi agency response will depend on circumstances at the time of the incident.
- 4.4 Individual agency flood plans have been developed to complement the Thames Valley plan and ensure that there is increased co-ordination and streamlining of effort during periods of flood risk; one of the key lessons from the 2007 floods.

5. Local flood response plans

- 5.1 A local review of learning from flooding events and the recent snow in January 2010 identified the need to review actions in response to Met Office or Environment Agency alerts. The provision of alerts containing weather, river level and other technical forecasting information has developed since 2007 as a result of the Pitt recommendations and this provides responders with more timely information with supporting analysis. This provided a good opportunity to look at plans relating to extreme weather as a whole and therefore to review existing arrangements.

- 5.2 The result of this work is the development of a joint extreme weather response plan shared between the County, District and City Councils to make the activation and coordination of a response more streamlined. The Emergency Planning Unit currently has a member of staff working full-time on this project, liaising closely with partner agencies to ensure that the plan meets the requirements of all partners. With a common plan the partners will also be able to coordinate information to the community in the planning, response and recovery stages, thus improving the service offered to residents.
- 5.3 It is hoped that the joint plan will be prepared by November 2010 in order for training to be provided to staff by January and testing in March 2011.
- 5.4 Meanwhile, the Fire and Rescue Service has reviewed both local and national lessons learnt. With financial support from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), the Service has provided further training and equipment to all operational staff to enable them to create a safe system of work to evacuate the public both before and after the onset of flooding events. All front line fire appliances are equipped and have this capability. This is supplemented by revised preparatory and command and control procedures. Access to national resilience resources has also been revised.

6. Parish / Community Flood Plans

- 6.1 Following the 2007 floods, the Environment Agency (EA) has led on a project to increase community resilience to flooding by working with communities to develop their own local flood plans. Using the communities most affected by flooding as a basis for the work, EA officers have rolled out a template plan to interested community groups, building local resilience to flooding, increasing take-up of the EA flood warning service and encouraging those with the best knowledge of water courses to monitor water levels and conditions.
- 6.2 There are currently 67 such community flood plans completed or underway in Oxfordshire, concentrating on areas at most risk from flooding. Many of these plans were developed in 2008/09 and now require review and updating. An opportunity to do this in a supporting large-scale event will be provided to communities in March 2011 as part of Exercise Watermark, which is described later in this report.

7. Community Emergency Plans

- 7.1 Since 2009 the government has promoted increased activity in the areas of community and individual resilience. The purpose is to educate and support people to prepare themselves, their families and homes for emergencies and to promote community resilience and community self-reliance.
- 7.2 The government's project complements work already underway in Oxfordshire to promote general community emergency plans, which was a result of learning from the 2007 floods. It was recognised at the time that in

widespread incidents (such as flooding), that emergency services, local authority and other resources would be stretched and therefore prioritised to the most vulnerable.

- 7.3 The Emergency Planning Unit developed a generic Community Emergency Plan template and supporting guidance for local communities in early 2009 in order to increase household and community resilience and thereby reduce the demand for external support or rescue and to extend the period that residents could be self-sufficient. These plans encourage communities to consider what risks (including flooding) exist in their areas and to make simple provisions accordingly. In the past year the emergency planning unit has promoted the template and guidance to communities through the County Council's quarterly publication and to Parish/Town councils directly through e-mails and attendance at individual Parish meetings.
- 7.4 These efforts have met with some success; there are a number of very good local plans in existence and in July 2010, 4 events were held for Parish/Town Councils to promote the development of community emergency plans with more than 50 councils attending. The 2 hour sessions had a mixed agenda with speakers from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Highways, Social & Community Services and Emergency Planning as well as the Environment Agency. All were supported and hosted by the District Councils who also support the development of the plans. These events have been so successful that they will be repeated in October 2010 to increase take-up of community emergency plans and to provide information on changes to the EA Flood Codes which will also launch from October 2010.

8. Individual Resilience

- 8.1 The most basic building-block for community resilience is to encourage individuals and families to prepare for emergencies so that they become more able to manage in emergency scenarios. The 2007 floods indicated that many people did not have a basic knowledge of whether their properties or businesses were at risk of flooding or the steps to take to prepare for such incidents. Subsequent events including the 2009 swine flu and 2010 snow have indicated that more effort is required to raise awareness of potential risks and to provide advice on how to prepare.
- 8.2 A range of initiatives are underway to promote individual resilience which include:
- A joint resilience website at www.thamesvalleylrf.org.uk to provide a range of information about risks, current emergencies and resilience information to residents of the Thames Valley;
 - A single publication in printed, electronic and audio versions: in 2009 the Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum recognised that more basic information on risks and what preparations to make was required and has commissioned the publication of a comprehensive publication for residents. The "Are you ready?" booklet is being placed in public information points (libraries, GP surgeries, community buildings) for collection and where possible, is being delivered to households;

- Increased cooperation between partner agencies to join-up information relevant to particular risks such as flooding. In Oxfordshire this has resulted in the EA speaking at the Parish/Town Council events to promote joint community emergency and flooding plans so that communities prepare a single document that covers all risks.
- The revision of a joint communication strategy to streamline the provision of information to the public in advance of and during an emergency;
- Investment in an “Exercise Watermark” community-based event in March 2011.

9. Testing the learning from 2007 flooding / Exercise Watermark

- 9.1 Exercise Watermark is a National Exercise, lead by the Department for Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), managed by the Environment Agency and supported by the Civil Contingencies Secretariat, designed to test national, regional and local flood plans. In essence, Exercise Watermark is aimed at consolidating and testing the learning from the 2007 floods.
- 9.2 The exercise is designed to take place over seven days from the 4th to the 11th March 2011 and the core part of the exercise will be split into 5 sections as follows:

| Day/date | Core Focus | Core LRF's involved |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Day 1 Mon 7/3/11 | Surface Water Focus | London, West Yorkshire & Devon & Cornwall |
| Day 2 Tue 8/3/11 | Fluvial Flooding Focus | Thames Valley, Surrey & London |
| Day 3 Weds 9/3/11 | Reservoir Breach Focus | Derbyshire |
| Day 4 Thu 10/3/11 | East Coast Tidal Flooding Focus | East Coast LA's |
| Day 5 Fri 11/3/11 | Conference and workshops | Local Communities with support from LA's. |

- 9.3 There are 3 parts of Exercise Watermark that the Thames Valley LRF has agreed to participate in to test plans and develop community engagement. This includes:
- Fluvial Flooding (Tues 8 March 2011)
 - Reservoir Flooding (Wed 9 March 2011)
 - Community Engagement (Sat 12 March 2011)
- 9.4 For the fluvial (river) scenario, DEFRA has confirmed that along with Surrey and London, the Thames Valley will be a core player for the testing of the response to fluvial flooding. This reflects the impact of the 2007 flooding on the area. Core LRF Planning Groups will lead the development and delivery of the local elements that make up the full core scenario of the exercise.

- 9.5 As a core player the LRF will have the support of a contractor in the planning process. The contractors will work closely with both the LRF Planning Groups and EA Regional Planning Groups. They will be involved in developing the scenario and can also support modelling work as well as producing flood extent and impact maps. They will also be heavily involved in running the exercise week in March next year.
- 9.6 As a core element of the exercise on Day 2, responding agencies will test:
- command and coordination (Strategic, tactical and operational tiers)
 - emergency operation centres
 - handovers and standing down procedures
 - reports and returns including the use of on-line reporting
 - out of hours arrangements
 - other plans where there is a direct link to the TV LRF Multi-Agency Flood Plan including:
 - Mutual Aid arrangements
 - Communications and media
 - Vulnerable people
 - STAC (Scientific and Technical Advice in the event of an Emergency)
 - Recovery Working Group
- 9.7 For the Reservoir scenario, a tabletop style exercise will be run as a “bolt-on” exercise which is not central to the national activity but will use the national support materials to assist local agencies to work through the issues of a reservoir breach on responder agencies and the communities in the vicinity. This exercise will use a newly developed generic template for reservoir breaches and therefore will not be specifically based on any one reservoir. However, as a newly emerging area of work for emergency planning units, Exercise Watermark provides a valuable opportunity to test this subject with nationally provided support.
- 9.8 The Community Engagement event is aimed at community groups across Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Milton Keynes and Oxfordshire that are currently engaged in flooding or community emergency planning activities. The event will be an opportunity to engage with the Exercise Watermark scenarios and to test local plans.
- 9.9 The event will take place on the weekend following the main Watermark exercise on Saturday 12 March 2011 at the Kings Centre which is a central Oxford location. The format of the day will be an exciting mix of briefings, tabletop exercises, video footage, exhibitions and practical displays with a high profile keynote speaker expected to attend.
- 9.10 The event will give each community group the opportunity to test their own community flood plan or community emergency plan against a challenging flooding scenario based on the Watermark exercise content. Local support will be provided by local councils, emergency services and the Environment Agency to provide information on how these agencies respond to a flooding event. The event also gives an opportunity for outdoor displays, with

attendees able to watch demonstrations of practical flood management techniques and equipment by the Environment Agency at their Osney Island depot site which is next door to the event venue.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Oxfordshire County Council has been working with partners since 2007 to address the lessons identified in that response. This work is being carried out at all levels of the responder community; across the County with the development of a joint extreme weather response plan shared with the District Councils; locally with individuals and Parish/Town Councils and on a sub-regional basis through the production of a Thames Valley Multi-Agency Flood Plan.
- 10.2 Progress is being made in educating residents and communities as to the risk of flooding and how to prepare for flooding as well as encouraging the production of simple plans to increase resilience during periods when external assistance might be prioritised to the most vulnerable first.
- 10.3 Exercise Watermark and the national publicity which accompanies the exercise will provide responders with the opportunity to remind people/repeat information about flood preparations and re-engage with communities at risk of flooding with a high profile local event.

Contact Officer: Bethan Morgan, County Emergency Planning Officer
Tel: (018675) 323760

August 2010

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Existing items logged for future consideration (September 2010)

| | 6 Sep 2010 | 8 Nov 2010 | 13 Dec 2010 | 14 Feb 2011 | 10 May 2011 | 5 Jul 2011 | 6 Sep 2011 | 8 Nov 2011 | 13 Dec 2011 | 14 Feb 2012 |
|---|-----------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Crime & Disorder Scrutiny (OSCP) (annually) | | | | Q&A | | | | | | Q&A |
| TVPA 3 Year Strategic Plan 09-12 (annually) | | | | | Q&A | | | | | |
| Draft IRMP* (annually) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Operation of Birmingham City Council's Illegal Money Lending Team in Oxfordshire (ongoing) | Progress Update | | | | | | | | | |
| Budget (annually) | Presentation | | | | | | | | | |
| Debt Advice Scrutiny Review | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plans for Banbury Library/The Mill Arts Centre** | | | | | | | | | | |
| OFRS Response Standards (annually) | | Q&A | | | | | | Q&A | | |
| Fire Control & Fire Link | Update | Update | Update | Update | Update | Update | Update | Update | Update | Update |

SSC

| | 6 Sep 2010 | 8 Nov 2010 | 13 Dec 2010 | 14 Feb 2011 | 10 May 2011 | 5 Jul 2011 | 6 Sep 2011 | 8 Nov 2011 | 13 Dec 2011 | 14 Feb 2012 |
|---|------------|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|---------------------------------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Quarterly internal report on use of the RIP Act | | Q&A | | Q&A | | | | Q&A | | Q&A |
| Authority's use of RIP Act (annually) | | | | | | Review authority's use and set policy | | | | |
| Museums Service | | | | | | | | | | |
| Road Safety including considering business plan for road safety approach once available | | | | Review situation | | | | | | |
| Libraries Transformation Programme | | | | | | | | | | |
| Provision of Adult Learning | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cogges Manor Farm Museum | | If considered at Cabinet on 21 Sep | | | | | | | | |
| Reports on how district council arrangements for scrutinising crime and disorder are working | | | | | | | | | | |

SSC

| | 6 Sep 2010 | 8 Nov 2010 | 13 Dec 2010 | 14 Feb 2011 | 10 May 2011 | 5 Jul 2011 | 6 Sep 2011 | 8 Nov 2011 | 13 Dec 2011 | 14 Feb 2012 |
|---|------------|-------------------------------|-------------|--|-------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|---|
| Monitor outcomes of Oxfordshire Safe & Confident Communities Project | | | | | | | | | | Monitor results at this or May meeting if results available |
| Proposed review of Health and Safety in County's Youth Centres (with Children's Services Scrutiny) | | Final report? | | | | | | | | |
| OFRS Operational Assurance Assessment | | Update under Info Share | | | | | | | | |
| Oxfordshire's Draft Alcohol Strategy | | Comment on | | | | | | | | |
| Self Help Communities | Update | Comment on framework/strategy | | Track progress in relation to framework/strategy | | | | | | |

***Project 1 of the IRMP 2010/11** – OFRS to report to the Cabinet Member for Safer and Stronger Communities and the Scrutiny Committee on a four monthly basis in the first twelve months after implementation. This report to also include details of the beneficial elements to RDS stations from the staff redeployment of the four Watch Managers. OFRS to flag up when they are ready for the reporting to start.

****A detailed written report will come to scrutiny** (including information on governance, the facilities to be provided and a serious assessment of the flooding risk and mitigation for this) at the appropriate time, possibly when consultation takes place with Banbury residents. Currently on hold pending the Cabinet's consideration of capital priorities in September or October.

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Division(s): All

SAFER & STRONGER COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 6 SEPTEMBER 2010

TACKLING ILLEGAL MONEY LENDING PROGRESS REPORT

Report by Deputy Head of Trading Standards & Community Safety

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 (loan sharks), 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. However, 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 loan sharks. In doing so they are able to ensure that communities have access to legitimate lending opportunities and financial support when loan shark 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.

Progress to Date

4. The initial focus of the Illegal Money Lending Team has been to raise awareness of the problems associated with Illegal Money Lending 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.
5. 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 offers 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.

6. A summary of the Team's awareness raising activities for January to July 2010 follows:

Presentations and Events

| Date | Group/Meeting | Activity |
|-------------|--|--|
| 29-01-10 | Oxford Launch event | Approximately 50 people attended the launch event from public, private and 3 rd sector organisations. |
| 24-02-10 | Oxfordshire County Council | Presentation to Trading Standards Team. |
| 25-02-10 | GOSE (Government Office South East) presentation | Presentation for staff members covering South East region. |
| 26-02-10 | Cottsway Housing, Oxfordshire | In-depth Training Session for staff members. |
| 02-03-10 | Thames Valley Probation Services | Presentation to Directors, Senior Offender Managers, Managers and other staff – approx 120 attendees. |
| 15-03-10 | Oxfordshire County Council Shared Services – Debt Team | Staff training for debt advice staff. |
| 31-03-10 | Charter Community Housing | Presentation delivered for staff members. |
| 01-04-10 | Oxford Citizen's Housing Association | Presentation delivered to 40 attendees. |
| 22-04-10 | Community event – Charter Housing, Oxfordshire | Estate day at Banbury, stall manned with Oxfordshire CC Trading Standards team. |
| 27-04-10 | Oxfordshire County Council/ Citizen's Advice Bureaux | Presentation for Trading Standards Advice Officers and two different CABx. |
| 14-07-10 | Presentation for Cherwell District Council | Multi-agency event with approx 60 attendees. Delivered presentation and then took questions. |

Other promotional actions

| Medium (e.g. mail merge, rent statements, newsletter article) | Organisation | Number Reached |
|--|--|--|
| Newsletter Article (for tenants magazine) | SOHA Housing - Oxfordshire | 5,200 properties |
| Training pack | Thames Valley Probation | Sent out to all departments - 100 managers |
| Project brief, posters etc | Thames Valley Probation | Sent out to all departments across region |
| Project brief, posters | Oxfordshire County Council Money Management Team | 20 people |
| Newsletter article | South Oxford Housing Association | 3,500 households |
| Newsletter article | Oxford Citizens Housing Association | 1,500 properties |
| Newsletter article for MOD clients | Oxford CAB | 200+ |
| Box A5 flyers sent for inclusion with rent statements | Charter Community Housing, Oxfordshire | 1,800 |
| Leaflets – OFT, traffic light posters and shark posters | Cherwell District Council – general meeting | 200 |
| Leaflets – OFT, traffic light posters and shark posters | Cherwell District Council – Customer services | 300 |

7. 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.
8. Clearly, promotional work is on-going and the Team would welcome invitations to present to further community groups.
9. The Team do not make available any detail on any on-going investigations, including whether there have been any reports of loansharks operating in Oxfordshire. This protects the integrity of the investigations they conduct as well as ensuring the safety of victims and the team's enforcement staff.
10. 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).

11. At this time there is no indication that funding for the project will cease. Clearly, given the review of all Government spending that is on-going it is possible that changes will be made that affect the operation of the team.

RICHARD WEBB

Deputy Head of Trading Standards & Community Safety

Background papers: Nil

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August 2010