

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Thursday, 7 September 2017, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am

Minutes

Present:

Mr C J Bloore (Chairman), Mrs E A Eyre (Vice Chairman), Mrs J A Brunner, Mr P Middlebrough, Mrs F M Oborski, Mr C B Taylor and Mr P A Tuthill

Also attended:

Alan Barber, ICT Infrastructure and Security Architect
John Campion, West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner
Sue Hanley, North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership
Dr Frances Howie, Director of Public Health
Paul Kinsella, Public Health Practitioner
Martin Lakeman, Advanced Public Health Practitioner
Cllr S M Mackay, Worcestershire County Council Representative on West Mercia Police and Crime Panel
Mr P M McDonald, Labour Group Leader
Tim Rice, Senior Public Health Practitioner
Chief Supt. M Travis, West Mercia Police
Mrs E B Tucker, Group Leader 2017 Group

Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager) and Alyson Grice (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. Presentation handout for Annual Worcestershire County Council Community Safety Report (circulated at the Meeting)
- C. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 July 2017 (previously circulated).

(Copies of documents A and B will be attached to the signed Minutes).

990 Apologies and Welcome

Apologies were received from Mr A A J Adams.

991 Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip

Mrs F M Oborski declared an interest in item 5 as a Prevent trainer.

992 Public Participation

None.

993 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 July 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A Member was concerned that, when minutes were circulated by email, readers were required to click on an additional link in order to access the full minutes. It was confirmed that the views of the OSPB on the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposals for joint governance of Police and Fire & Rescue Services were included in the agenda for the full Council meeting on 14 September 2017.

994 Annual Worcestershire County Council Community Safety Report

The Board was asked to:

- Consider the Annual Update on developments in relation to Community Safety in Worcestershire
- Consider the County Council's role, with partners, in relation to:
 - Prevent/Cohesion
 - Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking
 - Cyber Crime
 - Sexual Violence

The Chairman invited Cllr Middlebrough to introduce the item, in his role as Lead Member for Crime and Disorder.

The Lead Member welcomed everyone to the meeting. He reminded members that the discussion would be split into 5 parts: a general overview of community safety activities undertaken over the past year (as outlined in appendix 1), followed by more in-depth discussions on Prevent/Cohesion, Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking, Cyber Crime, and Sexual Violence.

He went on to express disappointment that the Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-Being had not been able to attend the meeting. He suggested that a summary of the Board's discussions should be sent to the CMR following the meeting, and he should be invited to attend a further meeting in due course.

The Director of Public Health thanked OSPB for considering the issues and thanked partners for attending the meeting. She confirmed that she would ensure that the Board's views were fed back to the CMR and informed Members that the Cabinet Member had been fully involved in the preparation of the agenda papers.

Members were asked to consider the summary of community safety activities outlined in appendix 1 of the agenda report. During the discussion, the following main points were made:

Domestic abuse

- Members were reminded that Worcestershire had recently taken the lead on a number of national projects, including acting as a pilot area for domestic violence disclosure. It was confirmed that a newsletter outlining all recent activity would be circulated to Members of the OSPB. Sentencing guidelines for offences on domestic abuse were currently being reviewed and Worcestershire would be a pilot site for this national work. Although training all those involved was a challenge, there were definite green shoots of progress in this area.
- A question was asked about the impact of reductions in funding on the provision of helplines for victims of domestic abuse. In response, Members were informed that the Women's Aid helpline was accessible 24/7 to both men and women. Recent analysis had shown a 54% increase in the number of calls received. This was seen as a positive development as it indicated that more people were reaching out for support. Although only 0.03% of calls were from men, this was increasing. The ongoing perception was that the helpline was for women only but attitudes were gradually changing. Funding reductions were not without challenges but the service was trying to be smarter with the money available through better partnership working.
- Since 2013 1400 professionals had undertaken the Council's 2 day course on domestic abuse. Work was under way to create a profile of these professionals to identify their sectors of work. However, it was confirmed that education professionals were key partners with a pivotal role to play in teaching young people about healthy relationships, as a way of avoiding the generational nature of some domestic abuse. This was part of a range of training undertaken including work with perpetrators.
- It was suggested that the 16% increase in recording of incidents of domestic abuse between January 2016 and January 2017 was quite damning of the service. In response, the Board

was reminded that this was a reflection of the challenging and complex nature of the crime. Only 30% of domestic abuse was reported and a yearly increase in reporting should be seen as an indication of enhanced trust and confidence in the police and other support services. Overall, at a national level, the services provided in Worcestershire were looked at with admiration. Open and transparent recording of data was key.

- Members recognised that the crime of domestic abuse happened behind closed doors and the fact that levels of reporting were increasing was a positive development.
- It was confirmed that joint work was being undertaken in the County with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance set to pilot Domestic Violence Protection Orders, which required the perpetrator to leave the home and provided intensive support for the victim, family and perpetrator. This was leading to fantastic outcomes and the link with housing colleagues was very positive. The Chair of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership informed the Board about the sanctuary scheme which provided funding for security arrangements and allowed families to remain in their homes and feel secure.
- In response to a question about whether multiple reports of domestic abuse involving the same individuals would be connected by the police, Members were informed about the triage process involving the multi-agency safeguarding hub. Data was automatically exchanged across partners, including police, and adult and children's services. In addition, there had been significant investment by the police in mobile working, with police officers using handheld devices to access information while in a victim's home. Finally, a new command and control system would be in use next summer which would automatically flag up previous related calls when an incident was reported.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner reminded the Board that there was a need to challenge stereotypes and provide support when people – whether men or women - were brave enough to disclose. Work with Women's Aid was well regarded but there was perhaps a need to find a more gender neutral title. He welcomed co-commissioning work and informed Members that he had confidence in the work being undertaken in

Worcestershire.

- It was suggested that often the first time that professionals hear about domestic abuse was when a child discloses something to a teacher at school. The Director of Public Health reminded Members that, following the Ofsted inspection, work was ongoing to examine the effectiveness of the Family Front Door. Activity included strengthening policies and practice to ensure that child protection was everyone's business.
- A question was asked about whether there was a method of tracking people who attended hospitals in different counties as a way of avoiding detection by the authorities. Although a red flag system operated within the County, it was confirmed that there was currently no system of data sharing across county boundaries.
- Although the Women's Aid helpline operated 24/7 and a full record was kept of each call and follow up action taken, it was not clear whether a record of abandoned calls (ie those that were ended before they were answered) was available.

Police and Crime Panel

- The WCC representative on the Police and Crime Panel confirmed that he would feed back the views of the OSPB to the PCP.
- In response to a question about how independent members of the PCP were chosen and whether any work was done to ensure that they were representative of the wider community, Members were reminded that the appointments were made through an independent process and not by the PCP itself. This was a fully open process with a wide range of advertising across the West Mercia area, including via social media. Selection was based on the applications that were received. Whether these were representative of society was a matter of judgement. It was suggested that Members could be asked to publicise the process when applications were next requested.
- The Chairman of OSPB suggested that whether independent members were representative of the public they served and the process of appointments may be something the Board could look at in more depth in the future.
- A question was asked about PACT meetings and how decisions were made about local policing numbers. Superintendent Travis informed Members that the local policing model was based

on harm and need. The introduction of mobile working provision had increased available officer time by 10%. He acknowledged that the police could never satisfy everyone with regard to requests for neighbourhood policing. The PACT process was not always felt to be the best way of engaging with the public as the same people were often seen at every meeting. Work was ongoing to reach a wider section of the public with a focus on young people and multi-lingual engagement.

Child Sexual Exploitation

- Members were reminded that the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board had responsibility for work in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation. The Board had produced a strategy and action plan which was fully supported by all partners. Ongoing work included liaison with taxi drivers via Worcestershire Regulatory Services and working with B&B and hotel owners. Concern was expressed about the capacity of Regulatory Services to contribute to this work, given the reduction in its budget in recent years.
- Members were informed that West Mercia Police were undertaking a series of assessments as part of a review of major threats and CSE was part of this. Work was driven by actual intelligence and there were monthly task meetings in relation to ongoing activity. It was not possible to say that CSE would never happen in Worcestershire, but effective monitoring processes were in place to ensure work was informed by national best practice. This issue was absolutely at the top of the priority list.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner reminded Members that, although work to support victims once an offence had taken place was important, prevention work was also vital, including working with potential perpetrators and vulnerable children, and educating parents and carers about the early signs that abuse may be happening.
- It was confirmed that work on tackling CSE offenders was being undertaken at a national level by the Serious Organised Crime Agency and representatives from Worcestershire were involved in this work. It was suggested that there was an opportunity for the Cabinet Member to get involved in national work via the LGA.

Drugs and Alcohol

- The Chairman asked for further information about the merger of Swanswell (the Council's provider of services in relation to drugs and alcohol) and Cranstoun. Although it was suggested that there had been a degree of progress since Swanswell had been providing services, concern was expressed that too often addicts were still getting caught in the criminal justice system.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner acknowledged that there remained a cycle of offending whereby offenders who were serving short-term prison sentences often came out of prison to find they had lost their job and accommodation and their offending behaviour did not change. There was no quick answer to this and Worcestershire could not solve the problem alone. There was a need for the Government to take national action on this with all elements of the criminal justice system working together.
- Superintendent Travis reminded Members that everyone who came into police cells was offered access to support in relation to drugs and alcohol rehabilitation, regardless of the crime they had committed. Although the uptake of this offer was low, Officers were aware that they had to keep trying.
- The Director of Public Health confirmed that the merger between Swanswell and Cranstoun aimed to strengthen rather than diminish the service provided. Analysis of recent outcomes showed an improving picture.
- A Member referred to the reduction in the number of outreach workers in Kidderminster and questioned whether this indicated the best value for money from the contract. The Director of Public Health reminded Members that this work had been affected by the reduction in the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant in 2015. Everything had been done to mitigate the effects of the budget reduction and money had to be targeted at the areas where it was most needed.

Prevent/Cohesion

- Members were informed that the 'Contest' strategy was made up of four elements: Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare. An important part of the Prevent element was integration – ensuring that people felt a part of the broader community. It was confirmed that the County Council was a

partner in local counter terrorism work.

- Members were reminded that 'Channel' was a multi-agency approach to identify and provide support to individuals who were at risk of being drawn into terrorism. The local Channel Panel was chaired by the Strategic Co-ordinator, Community Safety. The process was voluntary and aimed to put services in place to support individuals.
- Although there was a degree of sensitivity with regard to the numbers involved, Members were informed that 38% of cases were in relation to right wing activities and 62% were Islamist or similar. 66% of cases were in relation to children, with referrals coming via the Family Front Door and cases being managed within the existing infrastructure. 55% of individuals involved suffered from mental health difficulties. Similar issues were experienced across the country and data was fed back to the Home Office.
- A programme of training and awareness was in place, including an e-learning package which would be made available to partners across Worcestershire, including schools.
- A question was asked about the role of neighbourhood policing in the Prevent programme and the effect of budget reductions. It was suggested that PCSOs were able to get to the heart of the local community, connect with vulnerable families and provide local intelligence. There was a need to develop a system for exchanging information and intelligence in a timely manner, leading to a rapid exchange between the police and partners.
- Although there may have been attempts to discredit the Prevent programme, it was suggested that in Worcestershire it did not have the 'toxic' brand that it may have elsewhere in the country. The local community was felt to be moderate and supportive of the counter-radicalisation work being undertaken.
- It was suggested that teenagers entering Higher Education were particularly vulnerable as they were looking to experiment with new experiences. It was confirmed that the service had good relations with Worcester University who had made referrals and was represented on relevant panels. Two PCSOs were based at the University and were involved in a pastoral role.

- Members were informed that the police and partners used a broad definition of cyber crime – if an incident happened on a device then it would be included. The area was the subject of national intervention and a national marketing campaign, as well as commercial campaigns by, for example, the banking sector. 50% of cyber crimes relating to cyber bullying and harassment. Advice for parents and schools was available on the West Mercia Police website.
- Evidence suggested that young people wanted to deal with the issue digitally and work was now being undertaken jointly with a counselling charity to produce an interactive resource for young people. The aim was to bring together the police, the health service and the education sector to promote a proactive message.
- It was confirmed that social media platforms were under significant pressure to take greater measures themselves, with some platforms looking at the possibility of adding a button to allow immediate reporting of posts.
- Members were informed that the Digital Inclusion Partnership included colleagues from Age UK. As well as encouraging more people to get online, the group advised on the dangers of the online world.
- The ICT Infrastructure and Security Architect updated Members on the Council's internal cyber security strategy. There had been 2 ransom ware attacks in the last 2 years and, although there had been some disruption to business, no ransoms had been paid. The Council received 5 million emails a month and over 4 million of these were spam or malicious. There was a responsibility to residents and partners to ensure Council data was safe. Health checks and audits showed that, although there were areas of strength and weakness, the overwhelming message was positive.

Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery

- Although the number of incidents of human trafficking and modern slavery in Worcestershire was low, there was no room for complacency and multi-agency work in this area was vital. It was confirmed that the police and partners would be aware of large numbers of seasonal workers in the County (for example in the agricultural sector).
- A significant amount of material had been

produced by the Home Office and was cascaded to relevant County Council staff to raise awareness of the issues involved and provide support in how to identify cases. It was suggested that it would be helpful for Members to have a contact within the Council who they could pass on any concerns they had about activity within their local community.

- In response to a question about the responsibility of landowners, it was confirmed that this would depend on how workers were employed, ie either direct or through an agency.
- Although it was acknowledged that modern slavery occurred more often in big cities, it was important to raise awareness of the subject in Worcestershire. A decision on marketing priorities would be made strategically, based on a corporate threat analysis.
- It was confirmed that this issue would be added to the agenda for the next meeting of the Safer Communities Board.

Sexual Violence

- It was confirmed that the figures given in the report included offences committed against both male and female victims, both current and historic.

The Lead Member for Crime and Disorder thanked Members and visitors for their contributions. Although historically the OSPB had looked at community safety annually, he suggested that the Board may wish to pick up some issues during the year and he would welcome views from Members on which areas to look at further. He also suggested that the Board may wish to invite the Chair of the LGA's Safer and Stronger Communities Board to attend a future meeting.

The Vice Chairman of the OSPB noted the following main points from the discussion:

- The OSPB should receive feedback from the Police and Crime Panel on a regular basis, preferably following each PCP meeting.
- The Board should receive a written answer in relation to the 16% increase in recorded incidents of domestic abuse between January 2016 and January 2017.
- OSPB would wish to receive feedback on the Safer Communities Board's discussion on Human Trafficking/Modern Slavery.

- The Board would welcome feedback on the capacity of Regulatory Services to contribute to CSE work.

The Chairman of the OSPB thanked everyone for attending. He agreed that more regular discussions on crime and disorder topics would be welcome and asked the Lead Member for Crime and Disorder to suggest some issues to cover, in consultation with other Board Members. These areas would then be incorporated into the Scrutiny Work Programme. It was acknowledged that some issues might be best considered by one of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels rather than the OSPB itself.

995 Member Update and Cabinet Forward Plan

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel reminded Members that discussions with the Department for Education about the role of the Service Improvement Board (in the light of the Ofsted inspection) were ongoing and would have an inevitable impact on the Panel's Work Programme. The Panel would now work with the Corporate Parenting Board and the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board to take forward monitoring of the implementation of Ofsted's recommendations.

A workshop, facilitated by the LGA, was being planned to support this work and colleagues from CPB and WSCB would be invited to attend. Costings were being prepared to allow some additional scrutiny support to be provided. The Chairman may also be asked to attend regional and national conferences in support of this additional work.

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Panel's next meeting would include a discussion on Place Partnership Ltd and its fitness for purpose. Future agendas would cover IT and the possibility of bringing together district council and county council IT systems.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Representatives of the Acute Trust were attending HOSC's next meeting to discuss their plans for the additional £29 million investment. The agenda would also include an update on cancer services.

Adult Care and Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Panel's next meeting would include a discussion on the Worcestershire Safeguarding Adults Board's annual report. Although the Panel had agreed a full work programme, Members were also ready to react to any other issues that may arise.

Quality Assurance

The Vice Chairman reminded Members that she was available to provide support to Panel Chairmen in carrying out their quality assurance role. Panel Chairmen should contact the Vice Chairman to arrangement a meeting.

Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Although the Chairman of the Panel had given apologies for the meeting, he had provided the Chairman of the OSPB with a written update. He reassured the Board that the Panel had taken steps to put in place learning from the scrutiny training session, including holding pre-meetings. The Panel was also planning to carry out some in-depth work in relation to scrutiny of the budget. The Chairman was working with the Vice Chairman to ensure Member input.

Forward Plan

No comments were made.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm

Chairman