

# Minutes

## *CRIME & DISORDER JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW*

**MINUTES OF THE CRIME & DISORDER JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH GROUP HELD ON FRIDAY 14 MAY 2010, IN ROOM 22, GROUND FLOOR, OLD COUNTY OFFICES, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.45 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Ms J Burton (Chiltern District Council), Mr T Egleton (Buckinghamshire County Council) (C), Mr A Oxley (South Bucks District Council), Mr B Roberts (Buckinghamshire County Council) and Mr P Rogerson (Wycombe District Council)

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

Ms N Ahmad, Mrs C Street and Ms S Yapp

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Arif Hussain  
Bill Bendyshe-Brown  
John Wertheim

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3 JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE FOR THE REVIEW**

The Chairman, Trevor Egleton welcomed members and explained the structure of the meeting:

- Two representatives have been invited from each council - there is currently only one representative from South Bucks.
- Members are allowed to send substitutes, however if the representative and substitute are both present, the substitute will not be able to contribute.

Julie Burton said that a substitute may need to be put in place for John Wertheim due to illness. The Chairman said it could be a full member if John Wertheim was ill.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



- Each representative should keep their own council informed of the progress of the review and minutes will also be distributed to each council.
- The next two meetings are for evidence gathering meetings. Members may need to do some work outside of these and report back at the full task and finish group meetings

A Member asked if this duty could be delegated out. The Chairman advised this had to be carried out by the task and finish group to keep the focus on the review.

- During the second half of the meeting, there would be an opportunity to decide which witnesses should attend the evidence gathering meetings.
- The scope for the review was agreed at the Joint Chairman's Network. The Task and Finish Group could tweak the scope but not change the main purpose.

The Chairman gave an overview of what order the meeting would follow:

- Establish how the Crime & Disorder Joint Review will work
- Planning: agree which areas will be looked at throughout the review
- In addition, the Chairman stressed the importance of keeping within the timelines/meeting dates for the review.

#### **4 SAFER AND STRONGER PARTNERSHIP BOARD - OVERVIEW**

Susie Yapp, Acting Head of Localities and Safer Communities gave a presentation on Crime and Disorder Management in Buckinghamshire. The presentation covered the following areas:

##### Structure

- The county wide Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board (SSBPB) is chaired by Paul Emmings (BCU Commander TVP). This board is supported by the county wide Safer Bucks Co-ordinating Group. Both work in partnership with the District Level Community Safer Partnerships, (previous known as Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships CDRPs) which express local pressures and allow the SSBPB to look at wider strategic issues.
- The membership of the boards is explained in the 'Safer Bucks Plan,' (BSP) which members requested be circulated. (Action: Susie Yapp / Claire Street)

##### Key Partnership Achievements

- A key priority was addressing serious acquisitive crime and the high level of burglaries in the community, which causes considerable concern amongst local residents. The partnerships looked at how this had had an impact and what could be done.
- This was tackled by implementing a number of strategies including property marking and signage throughout the community. By the end of the year there was a reduction of 15.8% in burglaries.

##### Strategic Planning

- The annual joint partnership strategic assessment focuses on each district as well as taking an overarching countywide view. There is a central information data hub which can analyse partnership data and establish trends and patterns; this allows the partnerships to better understand why there is crime in certain areas.

- There is an annual review of Neighbourhood Action Group (NAG) priorities, which takes into account community views, not just data. This is produced by Thames Valley Police (TVP)

The following question was raised:

- **How are issues identified by the NAG progressed?**
- Issues which affect that area are identified and the NAG looks at whether the area has resources to resolve these. If necessary issues can be escalated to the Local Area Forum (LAF).

### Membership of the SSBPB

Susie explained the membership of the board.

The following questions were raised:

- **How does the membership feed into the Bucks Strategic Partnership (BSP)?**  
The BSP is overarching and is supported by the Bucks Strategic Partnership Implementation Group (BSPIG). The SSBPB feeds into the BSP and links to each of the districts through their local Community Safety Partnerships. All of these then tie together.
- **If there was a problem with crime, would the SSBPB look at this and decide what to do?**

Yes. The Safer Bucks Co-ordinating Group Action group would work together with partners if the problem is wider to raise awareness. If it is a local problem then the district community safety partnership would look into it.

### Safer Bucks Partnership Plan 2010

- There is a statutory requirement to produce this. Before the end of each year the county strategy group will prepare a community safety agreement for that year.

### Key Partnership Priorities

- Reducing serious acquisitive crime. Significant progress has been made in this area. Thames Valley Police (TVP) update data on a daily basis and a close eye is kept on this. Information sharing is very good across Partnerships.
- Reducing community violence. There has been a lot of activity to provide services for domestic violence and the ultimate aim is to stop domestic violence at all levels. High Wycombe in particular has some innovative good ways of dealing with night time economy crime issues.
- Reducing the harms associated with drug use. Bucks has a successful model of the national Drugs Intervention Programme.

The following question was raised.

- **What percentages of drug users are picked up through the cells?**

Can't give a percentage but it is high.

## Increasing public confidence

- Reducing re-offending in adults and young people.
- Reducing those killed and seriously injured. This is a challenging area and a gap which is currently being worked on.

Members then asked questions. The questions and answers are summarised below:

### **You say crime is reducing in Bucks and the police have had an impact; but there is still the problem of fear of crime from the public.**

The fear of crime is a real challenge and a huge amount of work has been done to try to alleviate this. Some areas do not have good newspaper coverage, for instance some people are receiving London news and not Bucks news. Recently the High Wycombe Community Partnership won a national award but was unable to get this significant achievement reported except for a brief one line side column entry in the paper.

“I: on Bucks” is a web based facility which allows individuals to enter a postcode that generates trend data for the area over a set time period. Providing this kind of information is an example of how we are trying to reassure people.

The use of ACORN (demographic and lifestyle information) data is allowing us to understand what the best way is to get information across to people in particular areas.

People are concerned about reporting crime to the police, because if they do they will have to put this in the ‘Home Information Packs’ when they sell their homes, which they feel could affect the value of the property and their ability to sell.

The crime rate in Slough is high and may be the equivalent to inner London areas.

The greatest change that needs to be made is raising public confidence. ‘Have Your Say’ is an initiative that is being taken forward by the Police. It involves public engagement events and the Police make themselves available to hear the concerns of the public.

### **The report from Chiltern District Council ‘Chiltern Community Safety Partnership – briefing for Bucks Joint Scrutiny Committee April 2010’ is very good. How are the ‘Have Your Say’ events being forward in other parts of Buckinghamshire?**

There is a framework for how the Have Your Say events should be pursued at a local level, but it does vary across the different areas. The confidence levels in Aylesbury were the highest. The recent English Defence League (EDL) demonstration was managed very well in Aylesbury but we do not know yet if this has increased confidence.

All communities are different and different methods and techniques have to be used, for example, High Wycombe does not have a local radio.

The Chairman discussed the work the Partnerships do to increase public confidence and if this is even across the County. He said it was important to find out to see how well it is working in each district and whether it is making a difference. This will provide information for the overarching review work that needs to be done

Members discussed the use of Parish magazines in getting positive messages across to residents. Questions arose in relation to what information goes into them, whether they are professional enough and how they could be improved to increase readership.

## **The Chairman asked what the representation was on the Safer Bucks Board and if there were any gaps in the membership?**

Susie advised that all the Board members are active and there is good attendance with no continually absent people. Areas needing further work at Board level were the 'Prevent Agenda' focusing on terrorism, extremism and cohesion, and the Youth Service.

## **5 PLANNING SESSION FOR MEMBERS**

Members had a discussion about the focus of the review. The following points were made:

- One of the targets of the Bucks Safer and Stronger Partnership is the fear of crime and reducing it.
- The work done towards reducing the fear of crime needs to be consistent so that it can be overarching.
- We do not seem to be reducing the fear of crime to an extent that reflects the reduction in crime figures.

Another Member said that there needs to be consistency with how the NAGS operate in Buckinghamshire.

Following discussion it was agreed that the broad focus of the review would be;

- **'How are we working with partners to reduce the fear of crime and improve how we communicate messages about crime levels to residents?'**

The Chairman said that it would also be useful if the Task and Finish Group could come up with ideas for how the annual review of crime and disorder matters could be carried out in future.

Claire Street, Policy Officer, circulated a questionnaire produced by Bracknell Forest Borough Council to the Members. The questionnaire contained a number of probing questions which she suggested could be used to find out more about the governance of the SSBPB, and how it fulfils its crime and disorder functions.

Following this there was a discussion regarding the work that could be carried out outside of the formal Task and Finish meetings. Members agreed the following:

- That they would meet with their District Basic Command Unit (BCU) representatives and possibly the Community Safety Partnership Managers to find out what was being done to reduce the fear of crime in each area, and report back to the Task and Finish Group
- Although they had been invited, Aylesbury Vale District Council was not currently taking part in the review, but Members agreed that they should be kept informed of progress throughout.
- It was also agreed that the questionnaire produced by Bracknell Forest Borough Council should be amended and sent to the Chief Executives of the District Councils who sat on the SSBPB.

Members discussed who should attend the evidence gathering meetings for the review. The discussion is summarised below.

- The Policy Officer advised that the following individuals had been provisionally invited to attend the meetings: Paul Emmings (TVP), Stephen Czajewski (Probation service), Brian Dugdale (Bucks Fire Authority) and David Carroll.
- Members agreed that Pierre Doubois (Communications TVP) should also be invited.
- Members agreed that some of the evidence gathering should focus on communication and so those involved in this role at TVP, Bucks Fire Service and the County should be invited to contribute.
- The Policy Officer said that she would make initial contact with the relevant people and explain why Members would be arranging to meet with them. She would attend these meetings with the Members wherever possible.
- Members agreed on the need to find out more about local communication routes and establish how these could be best used to get messages about crime across to residents.

## **6 FUTURE MEETING DATES**

29 June 2010, 10.00am – 5.00pm, Mezzanine Room 1 (morning) and Mezzanine Room 2 (afternoon) County Hall, Aylesbury - Evidence Gathering

6 July 2010, 3.00pm – 5.30pm, Committee Room 1, Wycombe District Council - Evidence Gathering

24 August 2010, 2.00pm – 5.00pm, Mezzanine Room 3, County Hall, Aylesbury – Findings

**CHAIRMAN**