



# Minutes

## *ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE*

**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND LOCALITY SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY 13 MAY 2014, IN MEZZANINE ROOM 2, COUNTY HALL, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM AND CONCLUDING AT 12.15 PM.**

### **MEMBERS PRESENT**

Mr T Butcher, Mr W Chapple OBE, Mr D Dhillon, Mr P Gomm, Mr S Lambert and Mr W Whyte (Chairman)

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Mr N Gibson, Ms S Griffin (Secretary), Mr D Pickering, Ms A Poole, Mr S Ruddy, Mr J Sainsbury and Ms K Wager

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / CHANGES IN MEMBERSHIP**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Bendyshe Brown and Mr Carroll.

### **2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Mr Gomm declared an interest for the meeting of the Designated Crime and Disorder Committee as he is Chairman of Thames Valley Crime Stoppers.

### **3 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on the Tuesday 13 May 2014 were agreed as a correct record.

#### *Matters Arising*

#### *Page 2 – Chairman's Report*

A summary of the key points of the Centre for Public Scrutiny meeting which focused on work of the DCLG Select Committee is to be circulated to Committee Members.

**Action: Chairman**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



### *The Value for Money – TfB for Bucks Contract*

The review has been placed on hold whilst the Cabinet Member for Transport undertakes a strategic review (which will also take into account the findings of the Environment Select Committee).

### *Page 4 – Library Services in Buckinghamshire*

Data including key facts and trends for the library service for 2012/13 has been circulated to Committee Members. Details prior to 2012/2013 are to be requested.

**Action: Policy Officer/Clerk/David Jones**

The date of the countywide customer services survey is to be confirmed.

**Action: Clerk/Policy Officer/David Jones**

### *Page 11 - ETL Public Transport inquiry - Working Group evidence sessions*

Evidence sessions will take place on 10 June and 24/25 July 2014. The dates have been circulated to Committee Members.

## **4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

## **5 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman reported the following;

### *EU & External Funding for transport issues*

A meeting has taken place with Stephen Walford, Planning, Advisory & Compliance, Jim Simms, Thames Valley LEP and Richard Harrington, Communities & Built Environment. A further meeting has been arranged. The outcome will be reported back to the Committee.

**Action: Chairman**

### *Transport for Bucks*

The Committee was recently advised that one of the key recommendations from the inquiry by the Environment Select Committee was the strengthening of the client in terms of client inspection and quality insurance.

An update from the Cabinet Member for Transportation has been circulated to Committee Members. The update advises that the posts for an additional Quality Inspector and the Quality Assurance role have been recruited to and the recruitment into the remaining posts is on hold until the findings of the Strategic review by the Cabinet Member have been received. Mike Freestone has been appointed as a Senior Member of the team on an interim basis (6-12 months) to take strategic oversight of the performance and operation of the transport service.

The ETL Committee's element of the 2013/14 Annual Scrutiny report was presented to full Council on the 24 April. This was a useful collation of the scrutiny function and the work that takes place.

### *Public Transport Inquiry*

The Chairman and Working Group members have had several meetings with relevant officers to plan the Committee inquiry. Workshops and evidence sessions dates have been arranged for June and July. The initial scrutiny of current policy and budget will take place at Committee on the 17 June. The Working Group will update the Committee at the 2 September meeting.

## **6 TRADING STANDARDS**

Amanda Poole, Trading Standards Manager, David Pickering, Team Leader, Trading Standards and Steve Ruddy, Community Protection Manager, Surrey County Council were welcomed to the meeting.

Ms Poole began by explaining that David Pickering is the Team Leader within the service but has a particular responsibility around for food matters as well as having a national lead role for food for the Trading Standards profession. Steve Ruddy is the Head of Trading Standards in Surrey County Council.

Part of the reason for presenting the report to the Select Committee is to provide information about the recent work and approach of the Service as well as for consultation and to seek the views of the Committee prior to a decision that may be made to create a joint Trading Standards Service with Surrey County Council.

In the past year, the Service has developed three areas to maximise the impact of the Service;

- *A stronger intelligence-led approach*  
Mapping techniques have been used to target information and enforcement action to areas highlighted as potential crime hot-spots. The mapping technique has revealed that some areas of the county are more prone to doorstep crime. Trading Standards have adopted an intelligence led approach rather than the traditional 'testing the market' approach with the exception of food work which looks at food authenticity problems in the market.
- *A wider and therefore more effective approach to investigations*  
A Thames Valley Police Officer joined Trading Standards in July 2013 on secondment for a year. This arrangement has recently been extended for a further year (until July 2015). An Accredited Financial Investigator has also joined the Service on a permanent basis. The two additional capabilities have enabled the identification of some criminals causing significant detriment who previously were beyond the reach and capability of the Service i.e. the tracing of cheques or bank transfers in incidents of door step crime.
- *Developing a new 'volunteering arm'*  
The Service currently has 32 volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds who have contributed 394 hours of work in the last financial year.

The three developments enable the Service to maximise the impact of the resources it has.

One of the challenges Trading Standards is facing is around knowledge. As the Service becomes smaller, there is the need to retain knowledge to be able to respond to wider areas and issues of concern.

Talks have taken place with Surrey County Council about the development of the first 'strategic alliances' between Buckinghamshire County Council and Surrey County Council through the creation of a joint Trading Standards Service to be overseen by a Joint Committee. Previous discussions with Oxfordshire about the creation of a similar model did not progress.

In terms of timescales, the process is in the early stages of discussions and development. The Business Case for the joint service will go to Cabinet for Bucks County Council and Surrey County Council in October 2014 for approval. If the decision is approved, the aim would be for the joint Service to go live from 1 April 2015 which would tie in with the financial year.

The desired outcomes of the joint Service are;

- Sharing expertise and best practice and creating greater resilience and robustness to cope with unforeseen challenges such as animal disease outbreaks and large scale investigations
- Building on the successes and innovation within the current services to maximise the potential benefits (including income generation)
- Reducing costs through operating jointly, including sharing resources and eliminating duplication (though not co-locating)
- Creating a significantly larger profile collectively for BCC and SCC Trading Standards on the regional and national scene; having the potential to become the most influential Trading Standards service in the South east and indeed nationally; enabling Surrey and Buckinghamshire to have more impact on Government consumer and business regulation policy
- Creating a sustainable model that could be developed further to deliver service for other Local Authorities, or one in with which other services may seek to join

During discussion, the following questions were asked

**Trading Standards carry out a fantastic job for the remit they have to work within and under the constraints they have. What are the expected financial cuts, will there be a change in the remit of the Service and how will this affect Buckinghamshire?** Ms Poole explained that there is the pressure of £50,000 cuts from the Medium Term Plan in the next financial year. Part of the desire for the joint service is to try and retain the frontline service to ensure that delivery is as good if not better than it is now if at all possible. There is a service called Primary Authority whereby businesses effectively choose to contract with Trading Standards rather than go out to a consultant. Trading Standards are significantly cheaper than most consultants. We are looking to develop this as a joint service with Surrey County Council. Bucks County Council already has 6 Primary Authority agreements in place.

Mr Ruddy explained that Surrey County Council currently has 33 Primary Authority partnerships which is expanding quite quickly and increasing significantly in size (there were fewer than 20 at the beginning of 2013). One of the perceived benefits of taking this approach is working together to generate more income from the services provided to businesses as well as the pooling of a greater level of resources and expertise from across the two teams. There is also the potential to create National Centres of Excellence in some key areas.

**What services would be lost if Trading Standards in Buckinghamshire remain independent?** Ms Poole explained that if Buckinghamshire Trading Standards remains independent, the reduction of a post at the level of around £50,000 would have to be looked at. A joint service will give the expertise necessary to approach the development of the service.

**The report advises that in the past two years Buckinghamshire County Council has received £60K of resources to investigate trading standards practices that went beyond Buckinghamshire's borders. Was this as a joint operation or was it for Bucks County Council.** Ms Poole explained that external funding was received from the National Trading Standards Board (NTS) and the regional Scambusters Team. The funding was used for two investigations. Approximately £40,000 was used to test the safety fixtures of fire places and £20,000 was used to fund the post an officer who worked two days a week on a particular case with national impact.

**Do you feel that there could be other opportunities to find funding to support this member of staff without Surrey County Council?** Ms Poole said that there will be other opportunities but these will be maximised with the creation of a joint service. The opportunities seen would require Trading Standards to use joint resources. The reason this work is funded externally is that there is both local and national benefit.

**The understanding is a lot of the information required by Trading Standards was intelligence led. The report advises this is a new approach.** Ms Poole said that Trading Standards has always looked at intelligence. This year the focus has been on issues of the greatest detriment as opposed to the more traditional approach of the number of complaints received about a particular business. There is now a matrix that looks at the financial and wellbeing detriment of complaints. This is a more intelligent way of using the intelligence.

**If Trading Standards loses a member of staff, how would the service bring the intelligence approach into action?** Ms Poole explained that if a post were lost, the intelligence approach would still be used but the Service would be able to do less. The bar of what the Service was looking at would effectively be raised higher.

Mr Ruddy added that the intelligence led approach has been taken within Surrey for a number of years. There is a dedicated Intel Resource Unit to support a variety of investigations and work in partnership with various organisations such as the Police. One of the benefits of this is combined resources which can work more productively and innovatively.

**How does the role of the volunteers fall into the intelligence led approach and how do the volunteers link into the Trading Standards team?** Ms Poole explained in terms of being intelligence led, a particular role of the volunteers is to provide intelligence about their local community. Trading Standards would advise the volunteers about a particular problem i.e. counterfeit alcohol. The volunteers would then look to see if there are any local issues and feedback information to Trading Standards. This approach saves officer time in terms of officers being able to target areas where issues are known.

**Appendix A of the report refers to combatting food fraud and ensuring authenticity. What follow up does Trading Standards take when a breach is found, who takes enforcement action (the Police, the Local Authority, a National Body etc.), and how does this take place at local level? Will joint working arrangements with Surrey County Council improve the ability to test and manage these kinds of risks?** Mr Pickering said that evidence from surveys carried out by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) shows that people want to know what they are eating. Work takes place with traders afterwards to find out what the issue is. One finding is that traders are receiving information but they are not passing the information on. There have been issues around food labelling in catering establishments. The labelling doesn't have to be as detailed as it is in a shop but it shouldn't be misleading. The contents of the item need to be known on a number of levels as there could be religious, moral or allergen reasons why a person does not want to eat certain types of food. If a trader ignores the advice given, Trading Standards will look at what further action can be taken. Work also takes place around compliance as some traders are not aware of their obligations. Trading Standards would take enforcement action. If there is regional or national interest, the possibility of working with an organisation such as Scambusters could be considered if this is a bigger area than the Local Authority can handle. There is an increasing awareness nationally that there is the need to change the approach to food fraud. The FSA still fund sampling programmes and work. It carries more weight if there is a joint approach and a larger capacity to deliver services.

Mr Ruddy added that in terms of one of the potential benefits of working in partnership, the FSA has, in the past, offered specific grants to tackle food fraud which individual Local Authorities have put in a bid for. There is felt to be a better chance success and there is more ability to deliver as part of a coherent joint bid. As Primary Authority partners, BCC and Surrey County Council both have several businesses that are food businesses. In supporting these there is the opportunity to demonstrate joint national expertise. In terms of pursuing legal cases, one of the specialist functions they can share and work together on, is in relation to legal process.

**Areas of concern are sustainability as well as organic labelling. Is there the ability to test for authenticity items such as is the fish cod and is it sustainable?** Mr Pickering explained that there are tests for speciation. Ways of analysing the source of an item i.e. if it is organic are being looked into. There are no simple straightforward checks that can show the origin of a food item. The main method to find this is through the paperwork. Most of the organic food and authenticity food frauds are normally found out through paperwork. One example is Manuka honey from New Zealand as the statistics show that the quantity sold is more than is being produced.

**The general public are particularly keen to see enforced and believe is the primary function of Trading Standards is making sure that restaurants and food outlets are safe. Do Trading Standards carry out this function or is there reliance on members of the public to report any issues?** Mr Pickering explained that in Buckinghamshire historically food safety and food hygiene elements are dealt with by Environmental Health colleagues at District level. If a Trading Standards officer visited a restaurant that was felt to be below standard,

Environmental Health colleagues would be contacted. As there is an overlap of food safety and environment issues, Liaison Group meetings also take place on a regular basis.

**Is there the possibility of joint working around food safety and food hygiene?** Ms Poole explained that a few years ago in Buckinghamshire the possibility of closer working arrangements with the District Councils was looked into as part of the Pathfinder work. This didn't come to fruition.

Mr Ruddy added that part of his remit is to manage the Environmental Health team within Mole Valley. One of the benefits of this role is to be able to create a shared database. Each team working at different levels of Local Government has access to the live intelligence and information. Approaches are being piloted where the inspection process is streamlined. In terms of the way that the inspection cycles work, Environmental Health officers tend to focus more on the retail restaurant and takeaway side of things in terms of food hygiene whereas Trading Standards inspections tend to be on importers and producers. There are benefits of doing things in a co-ordinated way but in Mole Valley there are only 40 premises due for joint inspections in the course of a year.

**Buckinghamshire shares its borders with several counties. What is the rationale for choosing Surrey to create a joint Trading Standards service with, have other options/models been explored with neighbouring authorities, what does Surrey have to offer that other County Councils do not, what are the potential risks and benefits and how can assurance be given that the customer is not forgotten.** Ms Poole advised that the customer is the most important part in the process and has been key in the thought process and how it is hoped that the service will be developed. The idea is that Buckinghamshire Trading Standards will still deliver services locally and will be locally accountable to residents. There is no plan to co-locate the services between Buckinghamshire and Surrey. If the joint service goes ahead, there would probably be three brands; Buckinghamshire Trading Standards, Surrey Trading Standards and a joint service. If there is doorstep crime in Buckinghamshire, a response is needed there and then. There are more benefits to the business in terms of where business advice can be charged for and can be accessed at a national level. The joint brand would be charge for business advice and offer greater access to more expertise on a national level.

A variety of models have been looked at. The preferred model is the Joint Committee model which would have members from Buckinghamshire and Surrey working together to oversee and provide direction to the joint delivery of the service. This is partly to ensure that the views of local people in Buckinghamshire and Surrey are represented, they have a say in what happens and their views are taken into account.

In terms of 'why Surrey', talks have taken place with other Local Authorities that border Buckinghamshire. The responses received were not as positive as hoped for a variety of reasons. Surrey has been keen to go ahead with the joint arrangements. It has helped that there has been a joint Cabinet meeting between Surrey and Bucks. There seems to be a similarity at political level, a similar outlook and a stability of administrations.

**It is an antiquated system for Trading Standards not to have cross border working arrangements.** Ms Poole said it is known that rogues do not stick to one county or local area; therefore the more work that can be done cross border, the better this is for local people. Work currently takes place with approximately 19 Local Authorities in the South East area around trading standards issues. A joint service with Surrey would move this process on a step. In terms of the future, it is hoped that the joint service will demonstrate a model that works which other Local Authorities will commission the provision of services from, including those who share the borders of Buckinghamshire.

**How will the Joint Service be structured to ensure that it is accountable to their respective elected members, would this be 50/50 bearing in mind Surrey has a greater population than Buckinghamshire, and how will it be ensured that there is a robust governance process in place which provides accountability.** The structure of the governance process needs to be agreed over the next few months. The agreement would underpin the joint committee. Subject to negotiations, the expectation is there would be the same number of members from Surrey and Buckinghamshire sitting on the Joint Committee. The requirement to operate a Joint Committee is a minimum of three members; this means there would probably be four members which includes the Cabinet Member from each Authority who has the responsibility for Trading Standards which would give political accountability.

Mr Ruddy added that how the model will actually function is work in progress. Work has taken place to look at existing models and arrangements already in place in areas such as Woking, West Berkshire and Devon and Somerset. One option mentioned was the consideration of the creation of a Joint Board as an alternative. Discussions so far have been around a Joint Committee.

The Committee noted the report.

The Chairman proposed that the report should be presented to the ETL Committee prior to being submitted to Cabinet in October along with a draft Business Plan which includes how the Joint Committee might work as well as the financial implications and benefits of a Joint Service.

The Committee agreed with the proposal.

Ms Poole, Mr Pickering and Mr Ruddy were thanked for the report.

## **7 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Neil Gibson, Strategic Director for Communities and the Build Environment was welcomed to the meeting.

Members discussed the Committee's work programme and proposal for future items with the input of the Strategic Director.



The Chairman explained that the work programme is an evolving document. Members of the Committee were asked for comments on the proposed work plans and suggestions for additional topics/items

During discussion, the following comments were made:-

**The inclusion of the Flood Risk Strategy, the role of the County Council and how this role could be developed has been suggested**

Mr Gibson explained that the Government have given Local Authorities new responsibilities to take a strategy overview of the responsibilities linked to ground water flooding and river flooding in Buckinghamshire. The County Council has a new statutory duty to understand how the system works and to build partnerships and relationships and to provide plans to avoid flooding in the future. The County Council's role as the Transport Authority and the duty to keep gully and drains clear is only part of the Council's broader flooding responsibilities. The Planning, Advisory and Compliance team have the responsibility to take the overview. The team have been collecting data and knowledge around flood events in county and should be developing a good strategic picture of the issue and what the issues might be.

**Has there been any work undertaken from an officer point of view in bringing together the water companies, the internal drainage boards and other riparian owners?** Mr Gibson explained that Planning, Advisory and Compliance team have to do this to meet their new strategic responsibility. For example in the recent floods, there was a disagreement between TfB, Thames Water and a Housing Association as to why a car park at the back of a row of shops floods. Very often it is the private owner of the land who has the responsibility for the drainage systems not Thames Water or the Highway Agency.

**With regard to planning, last year the Committee received an update on S106, how the process is changing and how we can work with the changes in the landscape of the S106 and Community Levy Infrastructure (CIL). Is there scope for the Committee to do more work to understand the management of the contracts and CIL agreements etc.**

**There also needs to be an understanding of the strategic role of how different departments submit bids for S106 monies as well as how the process is co-ordinated and managed.** Mr Gibson said that the Committee could look at the process of S106; e.g. the negotiations, enforcement, management and the robustness of the administration of legal contracts as well as the role of local Member in the process.

The Committee could look at what the current and future funding process for CILs, and how influence can be exercised during the process to ensure maximum taxation and development.

**Strategic planning is no longer a statutory role for the Local Authority. How can we as a county, have an overview and bring the processes together. There is the need for a wider strategic look not just the District.** Mr Gibson explained that the County Council no longer has a Strategic Planning Function. As a strategic Transport, Education & Economic Development Authority, it can be quite challenging to map ambitions for the services we still

have a responsibility for onto a planning process that is done four different ways in the County. We need to work as closely as we can with the four District Councils to try and ensure that our needs and ambitions as a County Council are knitted into formal planning processes. CIL discussions are part of the relationship building.

The Committee agreed to consider proposals to review the following:-

- the scope of the flooding response in Buckinghamshire
- Devolution of parishes and the implications of the Future Shape programme
- S106 scope (including the strategic element)

## **8 DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is due to take place on Tuesday 17 June 2014 in Mezzanine 2, County Offices, Aylesbury. There will be a pre-meeting for Committee Members are 9.30am.

### **Future meeting dates for 2014**

Tuesday 2 September

Tuesday 14 October

Tuesday 18 November

## **9 OPENING COMMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman explained that in accordance with Buckinghamshire County Council's Constitution, the Environment, Transport and Locality Services Select Committee shall also sit as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee and will hold the countywide Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (known as the Safer Bucks Partnership) to account for the decisions it takes and to take part in joint reviews with District Councils of District Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

## **10 CRIME AND DISORDER ANNUAL UPDATE**

James Sainsbury, Acting Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Manager was welcomed to the meeting.

Members of the Committee were referred to the draft Safer Bucks Plan and the report detailing the progress against the Safer Bucks Plan 2013/14, priorities for 2014/15 and emergent priorities within the plan.

Mr Sainsbury highlighted the following salient points of the report:-

The Safer Bucks Plan forms the Community Safety Agreement and is a requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. As Buckinghamshire has a two tier Authority system, both the Districts and Bucks County Council are required to have such a plan in place.

The Safer Bucks Plan is designed to identify;

- How the partners can work together to address the most important community safety issues relevant to the county. These issues are based on analysis of crime and disorder data and on feedback from the community.
- The issues that will be fed into the work of the partnership across the county and will set out how the partners plan to deliver against these priorities.

Key highlights of the achievements are:-

- A substantial reduction (35%) in reported incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) across Buckinghamshire, equating to 4,372 fewer incidents than the previous year
- An increase in reporting of Domestic Violence (DV) which is considered as positive development as DV is traditionally a hidden and under reported crime.
- A decrease of 20% incidents of serious acquisitive crime (222 fewer reported incidents when compared to the same period last year).
- In line with the recommendations from the Macpherson report (70 recommendations for a series of measures that would subject the police to greater public control, enshrine rights for victims of crime and extend the number of offences classified as racist), the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership has commissioned Thames Valley Victim Support to be the lead agency, to provide support to victims of hate crime and provide case and risk management for hate crime incidents.
- There is a new emergent work stream in terms of the Community Safety Team working in partnership with Trading Standards and Thames Valley Police to analyse current and potential hot spots for door step crime to help with the strategies to protect vulnerable individuals and the community.
- Substance misuse in the community - there is greater emphasis on moving the cohort into recovery in line with the Government strategy. Funding has been sourced from the Police and Crime Panel for this area of work.

Key issues are:-

- Reducing violence, acquisitive crime, re-offending, anti-social behaviour
- Working with communities to address the negative impact of drug and alcohol misuse
- Working together to address emerging concerns
- Addressing concerns and issues relating to gangs
- Countywide priorities for supporting stronger communities
- Protecting the vulnerable

During discussion, the following questions were asked and points made:-

**The chart on page 26 of the agenda shows the current structure of the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership. Is it possible to have a brief summary of the governance**

**arrangements and the relationship between the Board and the Groups as the arrangements shown on the chart appear to be slightly complicated?** Mr Sainsbury explained that as Buckinghamshire has a two tier authority system, there is the requirement to have a Community Safety Plan for both the County Council and the Districts.

The Safer and Stronger Bucks Co-ordinating Group oversees the delivery of the priorities against the action plan. Each District is required to have its own Community Safety Partnership (Strategy Group). The District CSP's look to apply crime reduction initiatives relevant to the emergent issues in their district which could relate to a particular hot spot for a specific type of crime.

**The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 was introduced before the creation of the Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panel. What are the minimum legal requirements of the Community Safety teams on a District and County basis? There is concern about the large number of bodies shown in the partnership structure and the large number of meetings that take place. Is there proper delivery and is there a better way of doing this?** Mr Sainsbury said last year the Drug and Alcohol Action Team Board was merged with Safer and Stronger Board. The Governance structure is constantly being revisited to see how they can be made more efficient. Some of the sub structures such as the Thematic Groups have moved to a more Task and Finish basis.

Value for Money is very pertinent. The Community Safety team and the Drug and Alcohol Team have halved in the last seven years. There is the need to move to much more of a commissioning type model and for a strategic view to be taken. An example is the Drug and Alcohol Treatment programme – there is strong evidence to show there are significant savings to be made if there is investment in the programme.

A tool which has been agreed by the Home Office, the Treasury and Department of Health identified that in Bucks if you just look at the crime and Health elements alone, there is a saving of £4.79 for every £1 spent. This was one of the highest returns in the whole of the south east.

Community safety is a key area in which to deliver efficiencies. Community Safety interventions help to reduce demand on other services. The fear of crime has been a strong outcome from resident surveys.

**With the move of responsibility, is there scope to access some of the Public Health monies that have been awarded to the County Council?** There was a pooled budget from the Primary Care Trust and the Department of Health, the Home Office etc. to address substance misuse. The budgets are now all contained in the Public Health grant. As part of the MTP process, Public Health has taken over the responsibility of some of the commissioning around DV and Refuges. Public Health is moving more into the Community Safety arena. The Health and Care Act 2013 placed more of a responsibility on Public Health to take more of an active role in Community Safety issues.

**It would be helpful if the Committee had an understanding of the structure of the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership i.e. District and County level. It would be helpful to have a plan of the involvement of the District, who is involved at that level and how any issues are moved to County level. Could streamlining be improved by connecting areas**

**of the existing structure?** Mr Sainsbury explained that bodies are very well connected and there is joint representation in the structure. The Community Safety Team in the County Council is approximately 5.7FTE. The service is working towards much more of a commissioning agenda and how various elements can be outsourced. There is also the wider picture to take into account and how the service can be more commercially minded.

**There needs to be a wider understanding of how the system works and the clear distinction of the levels of the structure. Is there duplication of work, is the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board adding value to the Districts or are the Districts adding value to the countywide Board.**

**Is there a County and District as this is the structure that was advised? If there were refreshed statutory powers, what would be best for Bucks?**

Mr Sainsbury explained that at the moment there is the statutory responsibility is due to the make-up of Bucks.

**Under Section 17 there is the general duty. Is this duty discharged with 'light touch' at certain levels?**

**As the Council moves towards commissioning, to what extent could/or should the County's Community Safety function be that of a commissioner and governance and oversight of commissioned services?** Mr Sainsbury reported that further work needs to take place in the area of commissioning i.e. Domestic Violence is a good quality commissioned service that will delivery efficiencies for the County Council and their partners in Health and the Police. More community budgeting response needs to take place as well as the identification of where potential efficiencies can be made if smarter commissioning takes place. There needs to be the development of a partnership in the community arena in Community Safety and bringing partners on board.

**In terms of the Community Safety function, do you think that the NHS and the Police will see the benefit of the joint working and will take advantage of partnership working?** Mr Sainsbury explained that there are currently partners within the Board. A piece of commissioning has been undertaken whereby an early intervention has been put in place within the Chiltern and South Bucks Local Police Area which has worked very well. Thames Valley Police and the Bucks County Council are joint commissioning a joint post there. Discussions have taken with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office about expanding this model countywide.

**With the growth in the commissioning structure, what steps are being taken to ensure that value for money is being received when the services are commissioned?** Mr Sainsbury explained that the commissioning process should automatically develop a better understanding of the services and Value for Money should also be looked into. The possibility of joint commissioning around Domestic Violence services is being discussed within which Commercial Services will benchmark the County Council against other providers.

**Would BCC or the District Councils commission substance misuse services or would the Community Safety team be co-ordinating this to ensure that there is only one commissioning body.** Mr Sainsbury explained that the Community Safety Team commissions and co-ordinates all of the substance misuse treatment services in Buckinghamshire. If the commissioning of services was delegated to the Districts, there would be four separate substance misuse services and there would not be the efficiencies of scale.

**The fact that other bodies could commission services has been alluded to. Where would you say the commissioning of other services in Bucks doesn't happen?** Mr Sainsbury explained that Domestic Violence is currently one of the largest work-streams. Work is taking place to try to pool funding and joint commissioning arrangements. A Needs Assessment has just been undertaken. This will be taken to the Board with the aim of progressing to joint commissioning arrangements where all of the funding is brought together under one contracts to deliver these elements as well as delivering efficiencies from a simpler process.

**Could the Committee have sight of the Needs Assessment as it would provide a good insight of the work taking place?** Mr Sainsbury said that the expected publication date of the Needs Assessment is June. The Needs Assessment has been undertaken by Professor Neil McKeganey and is the first of its type. The concern underpinning this is a lot of evidence has been seen with Bucks about legal high use and the United Nations has also highlighted that the United Kingdom has the highest legal high use on Europe, second highest in the world bar America. There needs to be a better understanding of this issue.

**Action: Mr Sainsbury**

**What partners are involved with Community Safety Team to try and help solve doorstep crime?** Mr Sainsbury said that work takes place with partners in Trading Standards. The results of data analysis which has been undertaken by the Community Safety Team has been passed to Trading Standards. Police reports have been looked at to see if they have been coded correctly. In one quarter, 150 reports of doorstep crime were found of which only 12 considered a crime and were acted on. Work is going to take place with Trading Standards and Adults and Family Wellbeing to address this.

**With regard to the S17 requirements, what opportunities have been taken to educate and ensure other service areas are aware of their role and responsibility to consider the impact of crime and disorder within their services, working towards a council wide approach to meeting the legislative requirements rather than a separate function?** Mr Sainsbury said that work is ongoing to make sure that the partners understand the benefits that the Community Safety team (CST) can bring to them. We have been using the Adult Safeguarding Board to highlight the fact that half of adult safeguarding is due to an incident of domestic violence in the home. If the Community Safety team received more referrals, we could be a real resource and help in reducing costs. Work is taking place on the delivery of a Family Drug and Alcohol Court in Bucks, where in conjunction with Children and Young People and Safeguarding teams and counterparts in Milton Keynes, a core structure is being set up that that will look into areas where substance misuse is a primary factor behind safeguarding. It is hoped that the Court will have the specialist knowledge to move this into a position of

permanency quicker i.e. treatment for the families or move the child into care. It is an ongoing challenge for the partnership in how we sell the wider benefits to the Council as a whole and look at how we can reduce costs.

**There is concern about duplication of services but there are also areas that could fall through the gaps.** Mr Sainsbury reported that a three year audit of Child Protection Plans highlighted substance misuse and domestic violence as the highest referral factors. The same two issues also emerged from repeat Child Protection Plans. It is an ongoing challenge for all Councils to understand all of the dependencies, have good referrals structures in place and not to commission in isolation.

**Page 34 – item 4.1 – if one of the countywide priorities is achieving better cohesion in communities, how does that balance with the Medium Term Plan (MTP) and budget setting process. The Communities and Cohesion officers within the County Council are being de-funded, and the money is being converted to Citizens Advice Bureau staff, what evidence is there that this will deliver a better service and address the priorities in the report.** Mr Sainsbury said that he cannot comment on the cuts to funding around cohesion as this is not his service area. The Community Safety Team assists with the delivery of a number of events i.e. Cohesion Forums and has commissioned support around tackling hate crime via Victims Support.

**This would be a very different piece of work if a member from the Black and Minority Ethnic group (BME) contacts the Local Authority about a crime issue or a risk about cohesion. What happens when there is no longer the staff or resources in the Authority to manage this?** Mr Sainsbury explained that this technically qualifies as hate crime as so would be taken on by the Police or Victim Support. Services are commissioned from Victim Support to deal with hate crime.

**Section 4.2.1 of the report refers to Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC). The report says the MARAC figures for the BME, Lesbian, Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) groups and males residents show an increase in victims which in line with the rest of the Thames Valley. What is 'in line', what is acceptable to be 'in line' and why is the plan so vague about reducing these figures and the extra work that needs to take place. Can you expand on this please?** Mr Sainsbury explained that the figures coming through from LGBT figures, hard to reach groups and Domestic violence sub groups are constantly being reviewed. The report is highlighting that traditionally what is seen is that Domestic Violence in some ethnic communities is more hidden than in other communities and there is the need to tap into those areas more. MARAC is much more high risk. Works is continuing to get the message to into hard to reach communities to get try to get them into the right support.

**If MARAC is high level, how does the Local Authority address the needs and issues to come out of this as the report is vague?** Mr Sainsbury said that when services are jointly commissioned, there is the need to put in targets and encourage the provider to describe in the tender process how they are actually going to meet on these hard to reach groups. One area of interest which is a Thames Valley wide approach is the Community Champions model

i.e. having DV Champions and recruiting some of the champions from hard to reach communities to engage and help people access the right support services.

**It would have been useful for the Committee to have the in-line figures mentioned in the report to give an understanding of what this benchmark is across Buckinghamshire and where there are capacity issues.**

**Point 2.3.1 of the report is a laundry list of issues that could relate to the Welfare Reform Act - there is no action plan, details, risks or issues of what the County Council needs to do as an Authority.** Mr Sainsbury explained that the report is high level. The Community Safety team taps into all of the work undertaken by the County Council to try to understand the implications i.e. bedroom tax and multiple occupancy housing which could push people recovering from substance misuse etc into accommodation which is not suitable for them. The Welfare Benefits Reforms are a concern to the service. A piece of tenancy work has been commissioned from Connexions floating support to try to navigate some of the high risk people around the intricacies of the new legislation. The impact of the Benefits Welfare Reform is not fully understood at the moment.

**As the report is being signed off by the Cabinet Member, the lack of the level of detail in the report is surprising. This should be taken into account for next year's report.**

**Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) has been a priority for some time now. It is quite surprising to see in the appendix, the measures of success, that in 2014/15 the ASB systems still have to be analysed and evaluated.** Mr Sainsbury explained that new ASB legislation came into place in March 2014 which has resulted in a significant change in how ASB is dealt with relating to the community trigger. There is now a certain level of thresholds that have to be set i.e. how an incident is regarded as ASB. There is also a new piece of legislation – the Community Remedy, where the victims of ASB can play a part in the sentencing and the plan around the reduction of ASB. Work is taking place with Thames Valley Police colleagues to understand the implications of the new legislation.

**It is surprising that the new legislation is not mentioned in point 6.3 of the report as one of the priorities. ASB has a number of aspects; the main one is the perception people have of ASB and of safety i.e. the can sometimes be a disconnect of the night time economy versus crime against the person or property. There are two issues in the report; delivering diversionary activities to reduce the instance of ASB and reducing the impact of ASB, how does this feed into other areas of the County Council i.e. Local Area forums (LAFs) and how does this work as a joint approach.** Mr Sainsbury said that often ASB is normally substance misuse related. A local provider, Addaction Young People, deliver ASB diversionary activities for young people. Often the LAFs will advise they have any ASB issues which will be fed back to the Commissioner for Young People via the LAF officer and a bespoke piece of diversionary activity would be put in place. This would include analysing when the ASB is most likely to occur and putting a diversionary activity in place i.e. film clubs or a bike project whereby old bikes are purchased and young people work on them to make them fit for purpose. Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs) and LAFs form part of the whole tasking process.



## Summary of discussions

- One of the key areas is the structure of the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership. One of the potential outcomes for the Committee to consider is do they want to see further streamlines of structures and partnership arrangements. Mr Sainsbury advised the partnership structure is agreed by the partners. Partner views within the structures need to be considered.
- There needs to be an understanding of what is statutory and what is guidance?
- The strategic commissioning approach - more information is needed about how this takes place at County level and how partners can be encouraged to join take part.
- The joint commissioning arrangements and how efficiencies and value for money can be delivered.
  
- The Environment Select Committee is supposed to hold the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to account. Has this been achieved during this meeting? There is the need to look at how this particular objective can be better achieved.
- Should further work be undertaken to understand the Council wide approach and responsibilities and how this links in with the daily business.
- The impact to demand management on other services the County Council and District Council delivers i.e. young people
- The Chairman explained that this is the first time that the Environment Select Committee has met as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee. Some of the mechanics are understood and some issues and concerns of the Committee have been brought to light such as who signs off the draft plan. There is also the issue of value for money. Mr Sainsbury advised that the aim is for the report to be signed off by Cabinet in June.
- Are there similar Committees at District level doing the same process? Mr Sainsbury said that Districts have their own scrutiny mechanisms for their own partnerships.
- There is the need to demonstrate value for money to the taxpayer providing Community Safety
- If the ETL Committee were to lead by example i.e. joint scrutiny, our position would be to emphasise the need to work in partnership and provide value for money.

## The Committee agreed the following;

A Working Group is to be set up for later in the year to look at the points raised by Committee Members and how to best achieve the objective of holding the Safer and Stronger Bucks Partnership Board to account.

**Action: Policy Officer**

The Chairman thanked Mr Sainsbury for the very useful update.

## 11 CLOSE OF THE MEETING

**CHAIRMAN**