

Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 15 September 2014

Time: 7.00 - 9.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Gaffney (in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, D H G Barnes, I Bates, A E Hill, M E Knight, Mrs W J Mallen, J L Richards OBE, J A Savage, T Snaith, R Wilson and Ms K S Wood.

Standing Deputies present: D A Anson MBE and R Farmer

Guests: Superintendent Ed McLean & Chief Inspector Colin Seaton (Thames Valley Police) and Councillor A Green (Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D J Carroll, A Hussain, Mrs J D Langley and A Slater.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

11. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 18 June 2014, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

12. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REPORT

The meeting was given a comprehensive and informative presentation on the achievements of the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership by Sarah Hazel (Wycombe District Council Community Services Team Leader) aided by Chairman of the Partnership Karen Satterford, Superintendent Ed McLean and Chief Inspector Colin Seaton.

Karen Satterford, as Chairman of the Partnership, explained that the Community Safety Partnership was obliged to publish a 3 year plan to be updated annually, the current 2014-15 plan being appended to the agenda. The Partnership by statute was obliged to refer the plan annually to the appropriate scrutiny body of the Council. Referring to a power point presentation Sarah Hazel outlined the

impressive reductions in crime in respect of 8 of the 9 featured categories of crime in comparing figures for 2013/14 with those of 2011/12:

| Crime type | % changes -2011/12 to 13/14 |
|--|--|
| Burglary Dwelling | -64% |
| Theft of motor vehicle | -44% |
| Theft from motor vehicle | -33.5% |
| Violence against the person with injury | -11% |
| Violence against the person without injury | -22.5% |
| Serious Sexual Offences | +58% note 57% increase was in just last year |
| Criminal Damage | -20% |
| Public Order | -32% |
| Drug Offences | -29% |
| All Crime | -21.5 |

Between 1st April 2013 and 31 March 2014 there had been:

- Reduction of 46% in burglary dwelling (236 fewer victims)
- Reduction of over 35% of theft of motor vehicle (51 fewer victims)
- Reduction of almost 16% of theft from motor vehicle (130 fewer victims)
- 5% fewer violence against the person offences which have resulted in an injury (29 fewer victims)
- 6% fewer violence against the person not resulting in injury offences – e.g. harassment, possession of weapons etc. (44 fewer victims)
- Increase of serious sexual offences by 57% (77 more victims)
- Reduction of 6% in criminal damage (79 fewer victims)
- Reduction of 15% in Public Disorder offences
- Reduction of 15% of drug offences

The one exception to the decreases being; a 58% increase in serious sexual offences. This was probably due to the national increase in the reporting of historical sexual offences in the light of the Jimmy Saville revelations, Operation Yew Tree etc., along with one local perpetrator responsible for some 60 offences involving inappropriate internet grooming / photo postings which though alarming, had involved no physical contact with victims.

Sarah outlined the attached Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2014-15 which featured four priorities, these having been based on both previous year's results and issues identified in public consultation:

- Developing the Night-safe Partnership
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and gang activity
- Tackling property related crime
- Protecting our communities from violence and abuse

Work carried out in respect of High Wycombe's Purple Flag award, alcohol awareness week, BNU (Buckinghamshire New University) Freshers' Week and the intention to roll out Night-safe to Marlow and the other parts of High Wycombe not just the town centre, was explained.

The success of GMAP (Gangs Multi Agency Panel) and the extent of work carried out by the specialist Thames Valley Police and Wycombe District Council Anti-Social Behaviour Officers was outlined.

Other new and key areas of work around Prevent (part of the Government's Counter Terrorism Strategy), Child Sexual Exploitation, and the re-categorisation of powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 (which was to come into effect 20th October 2014) were discussed.

Members made a number of points and received clarification on a number of queries as follows:

- Pub-watch and Shop-watch schemes within the towns of the District worked well, and more work was being undertaken to engage some of the bigger retailers in Marlow. The intervention involving not just young gang members but also their families under the GMAP scheme was explained, the 'nipping in the bud' preventing Anti-Social Behaviour escalating to burglary and more serious offences had been very successful and was being shared with other areas .
- The new legislation to require hotels to record names of people booking rooms would be an aid to the Police in respect of the use of such hotels by perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.
- The Police Officers present agreed to obtain data for a Commission Information Sheet making a comparison of District Statistics on Crime with National Averages.
- An emphasis on combating burglary by the Force had made criminals feel that burglary was not worth the risk, but of course a base line had been arrived at, further reduction in future years was therefore unlikely.
- The mixed success of NAG's (Neighbourhood Action Groups) was discussed along with the lack of liability insurance for Community Payback initiatives where no parish councils existed. The Police confirmed they were looking to reinvigorate NAGs and have an arrangement whereby stronger ones could assist other NAGs to develop.
- Comparison with Police.UK data was discussed, Thames Valley Police Officers present agreed to try to clarify this by means on the aforesaid Information Sheet.

The Chairman commended the Partnership on their work and thanked them for their informative and comprehensive presentation.

The meeting then:

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the report of the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership be noted and the achievements contained therein be commended; and
- (ii) the priorities of the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership for 2014-15 be noted and supported.

13. CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration outlined the work currently being carried out under the Portfolio, which was extensive. Charles Meakings (Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy) headed the team supporting him in Economic Development (encouraging inward investment, tackling the skills agenda and retaining and developing new business) whilst Charles Brocklehurst (Major Projects and Estates Executive) and his team managed the Council's property portfolio.

Where possible the Council's assets were used to regenerate the District, as in the Handy Cross development with the relocation of the running track and all weather pitches freeing up the area for development of offices, retail and the Coach-way etc. Alongside this the extensive Hughenden Quarter development was referenced.

The relatively higher unemployment figures for the District of 4 or 5 years ago had reduced significantly, and so the Council's approach had changed and evolved accordingly. The work on the BID (Business Improvement District) at Globe Park, Marlow was specifically highlighted along with liaison with the Bucks (Thames Valley) Local Enterprise Partnership, the County Council and other partners to seek to improve the surrounding road infrastructure at Westhorpe and Bisham roundabouts.

On the small business side the success of the Council's business breakfast initiative was highlighted, along with the proposal to use Grange Farm for small business start-ups, which was a good example of utilising the Council's property portfolio to initiate economic growth, these the Cabinet Member had seen as key to his role.

Members commended the Cabinet Member and his officers on the work undertaken to date in promoting economic development and regeneration and made a number of points, and received clarification on a number of queries as follows:

- BBF (Bucks Business First) were a key partner where we had common objectives and shared priorities. However, if one of their initiatives had no

tangible benefit to the District it was unlikely Wycombe District Council would support it. BBF was the County Council's delivery arm for economic development for which the County Council had a statutory obligation; whereas the District Council was not statutorily obliged to carry out economic development.

- The current profusion of retail jobs was merely a reflection of the demand from retailers; the District had many engineering posts (particularly on the Cressex Industrial Estate). Wycombe District had a wide range of jobs of varying skills.
- Though 245 new businesses was a very encouraging number, it must be remembered that many would be one person businesses which were not necessarily ever likely to take on another employee, so a continuing focus on micro businesses would be important.
- In terms of the next big development after Handy Cross Hub and the Hughenden Quarter, the Cabinet Member highlighted the potential for the redevelopment of the ex-industrial mixed use areas of Desborough.
- The set-up of large distribution warehouses in the District, though well served with transport links, was problematic given green belt restrictions and topographical limitations (few large flat sites).
- It was remarked that Wycombe District had always had an about equal influx and outflux of commuters each day, this continued to be broadly the case. Jobs in the District were encouraged whether filled by residents or not, they would be open, or if not currently open would in the future be, to all residents.
- The Cabinet Member agreed to update Members on the reasons behind the slightly better employment figures re Aylesbury Vale after consultation with Bucks Business First.
- The balance between striking the right balance between jobs, homes (including affordable homes) and the environment was highlighted, and the Cabinet member drew attention to the current local plan review, which was seeking to protect and deliver additional employment land.

The Cabinet Member was thanked for his comprehensive presentation on the work of the Economic Development & Regeneration Portfolio; the Chairman remarked that Wycombe District was lucky to have such an enthusiastic and capable economic advocate.

RESOLVED: That the report of the
Cabinet Member for Economic

Development and Regeneration be noted.

14. REVIEW INTO URGENT HEALTH CARE IN WYCOMBE DISTRICT

The Meeting considered the extensive report contained in the agenda outlining the scope and approach to the review into Urgent Health Care referred to the Commission by Full Council 28 July 2014 in response to the following unanimously supported motion:

- To hold a public listening event in Wycombe District to hear from the general public, stakeholders and users of the A&E and Minor Injuries and Illness Unit and;
- To obtain more evidence on the emergency medical centre at High Wycombe, transportation between Wycombe District and Stoke Mandeville and the situation of the frail, elderly and hard to reach groups.

The Terms of Reference of the review were considered, which proposed a primary focus on how well current arrangements for Urgent Care in Wycombe District work as seen through the eyes of the public, as well as the providers of the service. The proposal of a public listening event on Wednesday 15 October 2014 with a view to bringing a report to the Commission's next scheduled meeting (12 November 2014) at which service providers would be invited was discussed.

The approaches to and responses of the following stakeholders in respect of the proposed listening event on 15 October 2014 and consideration of the resultant report to the Commission on 12 November 2014 were discussed.

- Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group
- Chiltern Clinical Commissioning Group
- Bucks Healthcare NHS Trust
- Healthwatch Bucks
- South Central Ambulance Service
- Bucks Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee
- Dr Jane O'Grady, Director of Public Health
- Bucks Health and Wellbeing Board
- Mr Steve Baker, MP

It was reported that Bucks Urgent Care had also approached officers and indicated that they would be attending the planned events. Health-watch Bucks had indicated that their current urgent care survey of users across all of Buckinghamshire would not be available until the end of November. They welcomed the input from members of public at the Commission's Wednesday 15 October 2014 meeting and asked that this be collated and fed into their survey. Health-watch Bucks would in turn be able to share their results for the entirety of Buckinghamshire, although this would require a separate special Commission meeting to hear the Health-watch Bucks input in December. The Commission considered that this was an important part of the review and a special meeting of the Commission should therefore be held to meet with Healthwatch Bucks to discuss their results.

As a result, the Commission's overall recommendations to Full Council would be submitted to Full Council on 26 February 2015.

Members received clarification that the event was to collate patients' / residents' experiences of the urgent health care provision in the District with a view to identifying recommendations for improvements to be made to the current arrangements, not a re-configuration of health services in Buckinghamshire.

RESOLVED: That

(i) the scope of this review and the arrangements for the Commission's review into urgent health care, including the public listening event at Buckinghamshire New University on Wednesday 15 October 2014 be agreed as set out, with reports back to the Commission's meeting of 12 November 2014 (with service providers input) and a specially convened Commission meeting in December 2014 to consider the Health-watch Bucks survey; and

(ii) the draft final report be submitted to the Commission's meeting on 14 January 2015, with a view to making recommendations to the Council meeting on 26 February 2015.

15. COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

The Commission had before it their current work programme and the Cabinet Forward Plan along with full details of the current and planned Task and Finish Groups.

In respect of the **Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Task and Finish Group**, visits by the Group to Slough, Aylesbury Vale and Milton Keynes Councils had occurred, whilst delegates from the National Landlords Forum and Buckinghamshire

New University and Private Sector Housing Officers here at Wycombe District Council (WDC) had been interviewed. A future meeting at which Oxford City Council HMO officers and WDC's Legal and Planning Officers were to be interviewed was scheduled for the next week. Recommendations of the Group would be brought to the Commission's 12 November 2014 meeting.

The **Local Plan Task and Finish Group** was to be reconvened shortly to consider the draft report to Cabinet (due at Cabinet 20 October 2014) regards reserve sites. The Commission agreed that the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group regards this report would be referred directly to the 20 October 2014 Cabinet meeting.

The **Sports and Leisure Centre Task and Finish Group** was also shortly to reconvene on Wednesday 8 October 2014 at 7pm to consider its one outstanding piece of business, where officers from Buckinghamshire County Council were to give a detailed presentation on the traffic modelling for Handy Cross and in particular the Sports and Leisure Centre. Councillors Hill and Richards agreed to attend this meeting to substitute for the two Members unable to attend. The Chairman advised that Councillor John Richards had indicated his willingness to chair the forthcoming **Budget Task and Finish Group**; the Chairman welcomed any other volunteers for this interesting and challenging annual Task and Finish Group. A series of say, half a dozen meetings in as many weeks, starting mid to late November was envisaged.

The Meeting did not identify any additional issues from the Cabinet Forward Plan for specific scrutiny and noted the work programme of the Commission as appended.

RESOLVED: That:

- (i) No topics from the Cabinet Forward Plan currently require review by the Commission; and
- (ii) The Scrutiny Work Programme and Task and Finish Group updates be noted and agreed as above.

16. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

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|----------------------|---|
| Charles Brocklehurst | - Major Projects and Property Executive |
| Peter Druce | - Democratic Services |
| Jacqueline Ford | - Corporate Policy Team Leader |
| Sarah Hazel | - Community Services Team Leader |
| Charles Meakings | - Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services |
| Karen Satterford | - Chief Executive (present as Chair of the Local Community Safety Partnership). |