



Cabinet **25 March 2009**

Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 4 March 2009

1. Monitoring the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership

- 1.1 The Committee received its annual update on the progress of the West Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The introduction of Local Area Agreements (LAAs), changes in the criminal justice system and the delivery of the police reform agenda had all had an effect on the way that community safety partnerships worked, the overall aim being to strengthen their visibility, responsiveness, accountability, membership and role. CSPs work to deliver the LAA targets around community safety, in conjunction with meeting the local priorities identified by the local communities. The Committee's responsibility was to scrutinise the performance of the Partnership in achieving its priorities for 2008/2009, by looking at police statistics plus details of projects which the Partnership has been running to help address the priorities.
- 1.2 The Council's Community Safety Officer detailed the key findings of the strategic assessment of West Suffolk CSP, which took into account reported crime figures plus those areas of concern to our communities, seasonal trends, and environmental issues. The aim of the strategic assessment was to highlight key issues and trends in an area.
- 1.3 The Community Safety Officer also detailed for Members some of the initiatives and projects funded over the past year to address the Partnership's priorities, in particular the Anti-social Behaviour Dispersal Order in Haverhill, and the Substance Misuse Co-ordinator outlined how the work placement scheme had progressed. The work placement scheme was intended for people who had completed treatment for drug and alcohol issues, and the presentation was supported by a testimony by Neal Tarbet, who had been on such a work placement with the Council.
- 1.4 Overall the Borough was performing well this year, with total crime levels reduced by 9.6% compared to the same point last year. In particular, violence against the person offences were down 10%, and criminal damage offences down by almost a quarter. However, Class A drugs offences were up by 38% compared to this point last year (58 offences compared to 42), however this was taken as a sign of pro-activity in the Borough.

1.5 Members found the update very helpful, and requested that a letter of thanks be sent to those running the Town Pastors Scheme. The Committee will continue to monitor the work of the Partnership under its next Work Programme, and in particular requested that it receive an update on the Haverhill Anti-social Behaviour Dispersal Order, and also asked that a review be put forward for consideration under the Committee's next work programme, concerning the work of Suffolk Drug and Alcohol Advice Team and Focus 12.

2. Update Report on the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy

2.1 the Committee received its 6-month progress report on the work of the West Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership (WSLSP), following the consideration of the Annual Report in September 2008. When considering the Annual Report Members had asked for details on the financial aspects of the LSP to be included in the 6-monthly update.

2.2 The Partnership Manager attended the meeting and updated the Committee on all aspects of the Partnership's funding, including management income and expenditure, funding allocations, Community Chest funding and the partnership fund. Lists of recipients of Community Chest grants and the most recent partnership fund allocations were provided, together with a spreadsheet detailing all income and expenditure of the Partnership.

2.3 Members discussed a number of the grants, and asked that an update on how the Citizens' Advice Bureaux were coping with the increasing demand on their services be included in the September Annual Report on the WSLSP.

3. Cabinet Forward Plan: March to June 2009 and Work Programme

3.1 The Committee examined the Cabinet's Forward Plan of key decisions for the period March to June 2009 but did not ask for any additional information on this occasion.

3.2 Turning to its own work programme, the Committee noted the current position of this year's programme, and carried out a short scoping exercise on the topics expected at the Committee's next meeting in April. Members also took the opportunity to suggest items for the Committee's next Work Programme from June 2009. These suggestions will be put forward for analysis under the work programme setting meeting which will take place some time in April.

4. A Carbon Neutral Hospital for West Suffolk

4.1 Following the addition of the above item to the Committee's Work Programme at the November 2008 meeting, the sub-group of two members appointed by the Committee had met with officers to produce a draft scope for this piece of scrutiny, which was presented to the Committee. The Committee approved the scope, and also appointed Councillors Oliver and Buckle to the Working Group, plus Councillor Rushbrook, dependent on timings of meetings.

5. Councillor Call for Action

- 5.1 The Committee was advised that the Councillor Call for Action (CCfA) introduced under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 was to come into force from 1 April 2009, and that, due to the short timescale available to make the necessary amendments to the Constitution and to produce a protocol for use of CCfA, this work would need to be progressed through the Democratic Renewal Panel on 19 March 2009. All members of the Committee were, however, invited to make comments on the protocol to the Democratic Renewal Panel, or to attend the Panel meeting. A full briefing on how CCfA will work will be given at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 22 April 2009, and all members of the Council will be invited to attend.

6. Protocol for the addition of new reviews to the scrutiny work programmes

- 6.1 Whilst the Constitution provided for any member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Policy Development Committee to place an item relevant to the functions of their Committee on an agenda, there is no protocol for Members or the Committees to follow when doing so. The Committee was therefore asked whether it would like to develop such a protocol, and a number of suggestions were made as to what provisions that might include, such as the amount of detail required by the suggesting Member, and whether previously rejected additions to the Work Programme should be re-visited at that point.
- 6.2 The Committee did not feel that a detailed protocol was necessary, but asked that as much detail as possible about potential new reviews be provided for the Committee's consideration before it decides whether to add a new review, ideally along the lines of a scoping document.

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