

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 30 July 2015 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Raymond Bartley, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), Meirick Davies, Martyn Holland, Pat Jones, Dewi Owens, Merfyn Parry and Pete Prendergast

Lead Members Councillors David Smith and Hugh Irving attended at the Committee's request.

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Communities (NS), Corporate Director: Economic & Community Ambition (RM), Public Protection Manager (EJ), Community Safety Partnership Manager (ST), Strategic Planning Team Manager (LG), Scrutiny Co-Ordinator (RE) and Committee Administrator (SLW)

Also in attendance from Communities First, Co-operative Group: Programme Manager, Rhys Burton; Prosperous Lead Officer, Angela Watt; Learning Communities Lead Officer, Gavin Roberts.

Civil Contingencies Manager, Conwy County Borough Council, Jonathan Williams.

Attending as Observer – Democratic Services Administration Officer (RTJ)

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Arwel Roberts and Bill Tasker

2 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

In accordance with the Council's constitution, nominations were requested for the office of Vice-Chair of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Pat Jones nominated Councillor Raymond Bartley, seconded by Councillor Pete Prendergast.

RESOLVED that Councillor Raymond Bartley be appointed Vice-Chair of Partnerships Scrutiny Committee for the ensuing year.

3 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Lead Member for Public Realm, Councillor David Smith declared a personal interest in Item 9 – Regional Emergency Planning Service, as his son was employed by the Regional Emergency Planning Team and was based in Flintshire.

4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No urgent matters.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 14 May, 2015, were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on 14 May, 2015 be received and approved as a correct record.

6 CCTV SAVINGS REPORT

The Lead Member for Public Realm, Councillor David Smith, introduced the report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on the Council's CCTV exit strategy including working with Partners to secure an alternative CCTV delivery model for the future.

Members had decided as part of the Council's Freedoms and Flexibilities process that the Council should no longer be funding or managing the CCTV service from the 1 April 2016. This would deliver savings of £200k for 2016/17.

Whilst the proposal to cease delivering the service had been approved, Members had acknowledged the benefits of the non-statutory service and had, therefore, requested that a Working Group be established. The Working Group would work with partners to explore and secure a possible alternative model for delivering a CCTV service for the future.

The Lead Member and Public Protection Manager informed the Committee that:

- A broad agreement had been reached with the partners listed in the report on a model that would deliver an acceptable level of CCTV from April 2016 onwards. No legal agreement had yet been signed. The Working Group comprised of representatives from each of the partner organisations was scheduled to hold another meeting on 17 August, 2015 with a view to formalising an agreement at that meeting.
- An agreement would be required in the near future to enable the statutory redundancy process for the cessation of the present service to commence during October 2015.
- Details of each partner organisation's proposed financial contribution towards a new service were included in the report. If agreed, this would provide almost sufficient income to offset the costs of the new model of service being the provision of a recorded CCTV service.

Discussion took place and the following advice was given by officers and the Lead Member:

- North Wales Police contributed £16.5k towards the provision of a CCTV service to each Local Authority across North Wales. This amount had been an historic agreement based on the salary of a CCTV operator some years ago. The Police service was not willing to increase its contribution at this

time due to the cuts faced to its budget, similar to those faced by Local Authorities. The Police service's contribution did not reflect the level of crime or anti-social behaviour in any of the local authority areas.

- Proposed future contributions from the three town councils, which currently benefitted from the county CCTV system, had been calculated by the Working Group on an approximate maximum maintenance and operational cost of £850 per camera, subject to each Town Council's financial means.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner grant funding for the prevention of anti-social behaviour, could only be utilised for redeployable/mobile CCTV equipment, not static cameras.
- If, in the future, any Town Councils required additional cameras to be installed in their areas, they would need to secure funding to purchase, operate and maintain any additional equipment. These matters would eventually be covered in the legal agreement.
- The initial contract would be for 12 months, thereafter, it would be reviewed on an annual basis by a CCTV Board. It had been anticipated that the present Working Group would be re-established as a Board to oversee and monitor the new service provision once the legal agreement had been finalised and signed by all parties.
- The Committee were informed of details of an agreement which had been in place between the Council and businesses on the Colomendy Industrial Estate in Denbigh, with regards to the operation of a CCTV system installed there some years ago. The agreement was no longer in place due to changes to a business on the estate who had hosted the receiver.
- Rhyl Town Council had discussed the possibility of rationalising the CCTV coverage in the town. The proposal would be fed back to the Working Group, as would a proposal of using redundant equipment to replace broken equipment or to be used as additional cameras.
- Discussions were currently underway with the current service's eight members of staff (both full-time and part-time) and their trade union representatives with respect to potential redundancies.
- A number of alternative options had been discussed by the Working Group prior to the proposal contained in the report being put forward as the preferred way forward.
- The proposed model under consideration would provide a manageable service, be it a reduced service, which had the potential to evolve and grow in the future i.e. by working with private businesses to secure funding for a service and possibly utilising businesses and private individuals' own CCTV footage for the benefit of the entire community.

Following the discussion, Officers agreed to provide Members with:

- Details of the insurance cover for CCTV cameras (what costs are and are not covered by the insurance).
- The actual formula for calculating the town councils' contribution for the proposed new model of service.
- To ask the CCTV Board in due course to explore options for growing the service utilising private funding and co-ordinating the use of the public CCTV system with privately owned CCTV systems for the benefit of the County's residents in order to keep everyone safe and with a view to reducing crime.

- Copies of the minutes of the Working Group's meeting being held on 17 August, to be circulated to the Partnership Scrutiny Committee Members and each Member Area Group (MAG) for information, and
- That information on the alternative Council Out of Hours Service, following the cessation of the CCTV service, to be provided for Members.

Members emphasised the importance of notes/minutes being kept of all meeting, including Boards and MAGs, for the purpose of providing a detailed audit trail and sufficient information to enable Members to take informed decisions.

RESOLVED that subject to the above and the provision of the requested information:

- Support the work done by Officers to date in progressing the decision to close down the Council's CCTV function, while exploring possible alternative delivery models, and*
- That a further report be presented to the Committee in January 2016, outlining the progress made with respect to exiting the current CCTV service, the conclusion of the work undertaken by the CCTV Working Group to develop a new minimal CCTV model (funded by partners) from April 2016, and if successful the Board's proposals with respect to developing the service in future.*

7 NORTH DENBIGHSHIRE COMMUNITIES FIRST

The Lead Member for Customers and Libraries, Councillor Hugh Irving, introduced the report (previously circulated) to provide information regarding the progress made within Communities First – to include the work also taking place within the Pupil Deprivation Grant that had also been secured for 2015/16. The report also outlined a further request made by the Welsh Government to the Co-operative to participate in the “Communities for Work” project that had recently been awarded European funding.

Rhys Burton, Programme Manager from the Co-operative Group, the Lead Delivery Body, detailed the three delivery themes under the current programme, outlined projects underway or in the pipeline in the area and advised that:

- The Communities First work was being delivered to a smaller number of clusters across Wales. There were now approximately 52 in total, of these 52 areas, the majority were in south Wales.
- The rationale for the work would be much clearer and focussed on the delivery of outcomes.
- As the Lead Delivery Body, the Co-operative Group would be required to report on the progress made to the Welsh Government (WG) on a quarterly basis.
- As the programme of work focussed on working with hard to reach groups, it was anticipated that it would take some time before outcomes were realised. There would be a protracted period of intensive relationship building work required in order to gain the trust and respect of the people they were attempting to reach.

- Whilst Communities First work had been ongoing for a number of years, the organisation had not been very effective in highlighting the good work and outcomes it had achieved in the past.
- The outcomes framework, included as an appendix to the report, would be added to as additional funding streams and grants became available.

Discussion took place, and the following responses to Members' questions were given by Mr Burton, Angela Watt and Gavin Roberts of the Co-operative Group together with Council Officers:

- The various central and European Government funding streams the Lead Delivery Body and the Council could apply to for funding for Communities First associated projects were detailed.
- Advised that the short notice or lateness of central Government/European Government notification of available funding and its tendency to be for a 12 month period created problems for them in terms of medium to long-term project planning.
- Specific projects in Rhyl were outlined, which were currently underway with respect to the three delivery streams.
- Examples were given of youth work underway with a view to addressing drugs and alcohol misuse problems.
- Confirmation had been given to Members that the Pupil Deprivation Grant funding would be used to support seven schools via the Council's two Emotional Resilience Officers.
- The Council's proposals to establish an Anti-Poverty Working Group with a view to tackling all aspects of poverty across the County, had been outlined for both urban and rural Communities First and non-Communities First areas.

The Programme Manager, Rhys Burton advised Members that the Communities First offices were situated on Marsh Road in Rhyl and invited Members to visit them at their base.

The Chair offered to assist the Co-operative Group to access facilities and resources at the Community Centre on the Bruton Park Estate in Rhyl.

Although Members wished officers well for their work in the Communities First areas and, supported their endeavours to engage with hard to reach groups, some Members did register concerns. The concerns were despite funding from various local, regional, national and European organisations having been invested in the same communities over an extended period of time, very little progress seemed to have been achieved in the delivery of better outcomes for the residents or the communities.

Following the in-depth discussion, the Committee:

RESOLVED that subject to the above observations:

- (a) To receive the report, and
- (b) That, in the future, Members should provide assistance to the Communities First Programme and Communities for Work project in identifying further

links with Council programmes where routes into employment may be provided for residents not presently in employment.

At this juncture (11.30 a.m.) there was a 15 minute break

Meeting reconvened at 11.45 a.m.

The Committee discussed the following item of business in its capacity as the Council's designated Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Police & Justice Act 2006 ss. 19 and 20.

8 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2014 - 2015

The Lead Member for Public Realm, Councillor David Smith, introduced the report (previously circulated) to inform Partnerships Scrutiny Committee of the performance and activity of the Joint Community Safety Partnership in 2014/15.

The Community Safety Partnership Manager (CSPM) detailed the report's contents and drew Members' attention to the main highlights, detailed in the report and its appendices, under each of the four priority areas that had been chosen for 2014/15.

The priorities being:

- Reducing crime and the impact of crime
- Reducing reoffending
- Effectively tackling anti-social behaviour, and
- Effectively tackling domestic abuse.

The CSPM advised that:

- Whilst there had been an increase in violent crime, the numbers were quite low.
- The increase in sexual offences registered during this year were "new" offences rather than historical offences. A number of the offences related to matters which had been posted on social media sites and rape allegations. As a result, the North Wales Safer Communities Board had identified this as one of its priority areas. The Cat's Paw Theatre Project had also been extremely successful in highlighting inappropriate behaviour to children and young people.
- Youth crime prevention had been an extremely positive area during 2014/15, particularly the Prevent and Deter (PAD) initiative.
- Another area paying dividends was the rehabilitation of offenders through work, particularly where young offenders were deployed to do restorative work where they had committed their offence(s). This type of rehabilitation required one supervisor to oversee two offenders at a time. There were now strict procedures in place to ensure that the terms and conditions of any rehabilitation/community orders were complied with.

Discussion took place and the following responses to Members' questions were given by the CSPM who advised that:

- The North Wales Safer Communities Board had just started measuring incidents of telephone scams etc., and North Wales Police had established a team to deal with this type of crime.
- Environmental crime, which was within the Council's control through the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had also been a successful area in the past year.
- Incidents of alcohol related criminal damage had reduced. It was thought that the fact that a number of licensed premises had now installed their own CCTV system had contributed to this reduction. Also the Pubwatch scheme and the fact that there were fewer pubs and that more people now consumed alcohol at home had also contributed to the reduced number of incidents. However, there was some concern with respect to the number of yellow cards and alcohol confiscations in the County.
- A decision had been taken recently to appoint the Chair of the Council's Licensing Committee on to the Conwy and Denbighshire CSP Strategic Steering Group as it was felt that the remit and work of the Licensing Committee related very closely to that of the CSP.
- Nightclubs in Denbighshire would soon be adopting the approach which had been taken in Conwy for some time, of breathalysing people on their way into nightclubs and refusing entry to individuals which they were of the view were intoxicated.
- They were aware of the increased problems caused by the illegal use of drugs in licensed premises and in rural areas.
- The number of deliberate fires recorded by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service had decreased, although the number of arson incidents recorded by North Wales Police had increased. This was probably the result of the convergence of recording supported by partnership working.
- With respect to domestic abuse, whilst the number of incidents reported had reduced, the number of actual incidents were low, and
- In recent years, the number of domestic violence cases which had been dealt with by the independent Domestic Violence Advisor (IDVA) had been affected due to staffing shortages or absences. In 2014/15, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) funding had been secured to ensure no breaks in service due to staffing problems as the Commissioner had concerns with respect to cases of domestic violence across the North Wales region.

Committee Members expressed their gratitude to the CSPM for her diligent work and commended her enthusiasm for the work of the Partnership.

RESOLVED that, subject to the above observations, to receive and endorse the Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report for 2014/15 and its associated performance and activities.

9 REGIONAL EMERGENCY PLANNING SERVICE UPDATE

The Lead Member for Public Realm, Councillor David Smith, introduced the report (previously circulated) to provide Partnerships Scrutiny Committee with an update on the transition to regional Emergency Planning arrangements across North Wales, the creation of the North Wales Councils' Regional Emergency Planning Service (NWC-REPS) and to outline the work programme currently being followed.

The Lead Member advised the Committee he had requested that they scrutinise the new regional service's progress 12 months after it commenced its work, to enable the Council to gain assurances that the new structure was fit for purpose and delivering its expected outcomes for the Council and for the residents of Denbighshire. Members were advised that the aim of the new regional service was not only to be more cost effective, but also to improve and increase resilience to emergency situations across North Wales. The availability of a wider pool of experts and the establishment of a single set of procedures under the regional service meant that officers from all partner organisations could step in to support colleagues across the region in the event of an emergency without any delay as was previously caused due to varying working practices or procedures. Prior to the establishment of the regional service, Denbighshire had, for some time, been part of a shared Emergency Planning Service with Flintshire County Council. That service had been hosted by Flintshire and it was that model that was used as the basis for developing the North Wales Regional Emergency Planning Service. The appointment of a dedicated Emergency Planning Liaison Officer for each local authority had proved successful as that Officer provided a clear link between the regional service and the Council and could assist with identifying any training needs within his/her local authority. The regional Service's work was overseen by an Executive Board which met periodically. That Board was expected to publish its Annual Report on the Service in the near future and the Lead Member and Officers offered to share that report with Committee Members.

RESOLVED:

- (a) To receive the report and endorse the work and achievements realised to date in establishing and delivering the service on a regional basis, and*
- (b) That a copy of the North Wales Regional Emergency Service Annual Report be circulated to Committee Members for information when available.*

10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced a report (previously circulated) regarding the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee Forward Work Programme and highlighted where decisions were required from the Group.

Confirmation of the two items for the meeting taking place on 17 September 2015:

- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's Three Year Plan 2015/18
- BCUHB in Conwy and Denbighshire.

Members also agreed that a pre-meeting should be held immediately prior to the above meeting at 8:45am.

8 October, 2015 – the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting would now take place in Llangollen Town Hall.

14 January, 2015 – CCTV Progress Report.

Partnerships Scrutiny representatives on remaining Service Challenge Groups 2015/2016:

- Economic & Business Development – Councillor Martyn Holland
- Community Support Services – Councillor Raymond Bartley
- Business Improvement & Modernisation – Councillor Pete Prendergast
- Education Services – Councillor Merfyn Parry

RESOLVED that the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee's Forward Work Programme be approved.

11 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

None.

The meeting concluded at 12:40 p.m.