

PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in Conference Room 1a, County Hall, Ruthin on Thursday, 6 October 2016 at 9.30 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Raymond Bartley (Vice-Chair), Pat Jones, Gwyneth Kensler, Pete Prendergast, Bill Tasker and Huw Williams

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Meirick Lloyd Davies, Councillor Hugh Evans (Leader and Lead Member for the Economy) and Councillor David Smith (Lead member Public Realm).

Nicola Stubbins (Corporate Director: Communities), Phil Gilroy (Head of Community Support Services), Emma Horan (Planning and Performance Officer), Vicki Roberts (Strategic Planning Team Manager), Sian Taylor (Community Safety Partnership Manager), Rhian Evans (Scrutiny Coordinator) and Karen A Evans (Democratic Services Officer).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Arwel Roberts and Julian Thompson-Hill Lead Member for Finance, Corporate Plan and Performance.

Councillor Ray Bartley chaired the meeting.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None were declared.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of a Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 7 July, 2016 were submitted.

Matters arising:-

The Committee had asked for an information report on North Wales Safeguarding Boards. A brief had been circulated the previous day - 5th October - which contained many links to further information. The Scrutiny Coordinator reminded the Committee that Board Members would be attending the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee in January 2017.

RESOLVED that subject to the above, the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

5 DENBIGHSHIRE WELL-BEING PLAN

The Leader introduced the Performance Report for 2014 – 2016 (previously circulated) on Denbighshire's Well-being Plan - 'Supporting Independence and Resilience'. He explained that the Plan was the former Conwy and Denbighshire Local Services Board (LSB) now Joint Public Service Board's (PSB) plan. They had collectively agreed its contents and were also responsible for monitoring its implementation.

During the establishment of the PSB it had been agreed that the new Board should be chaired by a non-local authority Board member. Consequently, with a view to extend the Board's influence across both county areas the Area Director (Central) of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) had been appointed as the Chair of the new PSB.

The Leader outlined the 'Five Ways to Well-being', which were the Plan's strategic objectives, advising that they were closely linked to the aims of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WBoFG Act), which was to support long-term resilience.

The Planning and Performance Officer detailed the Plan's contents and partners' performance to date in delivering the aims, explaining that the Plan had been drawn up prior to the introduction of the provisions of the WBoFG Act. She emphasised that more progress had been made with the delivery of some of the 'ways to well-being' in comparison to others i.e. 'take notice' in comparison to 'be active'. However, the latter was a long-term aim which would require some time before improvements could be evidenced.

The Planning and Performance Officer explained:

- the process undertaken to determine the priorities for the Well-being Plan;
- how gaps in services across the board had been identified and plans had been drawn up to fill the gaps with a view to supporting prevention services and improving the resilience of individuals;
- that the Joint LSB/PSB's approach had been innovative and sector leading. Both the Welsh Government (WG) and the Future Generations Commissioner had shown a keen interest in the approach taken;
- in deciding on the projects to be undertaken to deliver the priorities the LSB/PSB had been innovative and progressive whilst not being risk averse;
- different projects were led by different partners, they were not all led by a local authority e.g. 'Denbighshire 20' was initiated by Denbighshire Strategic

Partnership Board and was led by North Wales Police. The project targeted high demand/low priority individuals through a process of nomination to:

- Reduce unplanned access to services
- Improve effectiveness of collaboration between services
- Improve the lives of individuals/communities

- that whilst not all the projects had been delivered, or some had not been as successful as others, a lot had been learned from the work entailed with them that would benefit all partners when undertaking future projects. All partners had also learnt a lot about each other's ways of working, something that would be extremely useful to them all in future when deciding on potential intervention projects. The learning from the Well-being Plan work would be invaluable to the PSB in its planning work for the new Wellbeing Plan, in particular in relation to the needs assessment work ;
- that the 'Denbighshire 20' project had generated a large amount of interest across Wales;
- that no additional resources had been set-aside for delivering the Well-being Plan, each partner had delivered their work within current resources e.g. by redeploying or diverting existing resources, use of volunteers etc.
- the project relating to 'Timebanking' had been withdrawn in favour of concentrating the LSB's efforts on developing volunteering opportunities;
- that obesity and smoking continued to be a problem across Denbighshire, with statistics on adult smokers indicating an increase on previous years' figures and registering above the Wales average. Both of these areas would feature in the forthcoming needs assessment for the Joint Conwy and Denbighshire Well-being Plan for 2017 and onwards;
- that another element that would feature in that Plan and the associated needs assessment would be Community Transport, as this had a vital role to play in reducing social isolation. Increasing the use of the Welsh language in the community would also feature in the new Plan, as the Council was extremely concerned that only approximately 13% of the county's population used the language on a daily basis. Welsh language is definitely a significant issue but we are not sure if it will be prioritised in the new plan yet – the Public Service Board had yet to discuss the well-being assessment (needs assessment);
- use of the Welsh language in the community was an area of concern for both the Council and the PSB, based on recent statistics that only approximately 13% of the county's population use the language on a daily basis;
- that due to the introduction of the provision of the WBoFG Act and the statutory obligation to undertake an assessment of local needs as part of the preparatory work for the new Well-being Plan, the lifespan of the current

Plan would be shortened to accommodate the work involved with planning its successor Plan; and

- that the first draft of the new Well-being assessment was expected to be completed by the end of October 2016, to enable the PSB to consider feedback from engagement and consultation and the findings of the well-being assessment. During early 2017 the PSB would be consulting on draft priorities, scrutiny was one of the statutory consultees for the assessment. The final Well-being Plan was expected to be approved by the end of October 2017, around the same time as the Council's new Corporate Plan. Both Plans would be expected to complement each other.

Responding to members' questions the Leader and officers advised that:

- whilst there had not been a sharp increase in the number of adult smokers in Denbighshire (up from 23% in 2013/14 to 24% in 2014/15), the national average for Wales stood at 20%, the trend was going in the wrong direction and with a view to addressing the problem the Health Board would be undertaking some targeted work to try and get the message across and reverse the trend i.e. they would be targeting expectant mothers to emphasise the consequences of smoking on unborn babies and families in general;
- whilst there had been changes in personnel within Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) recently, the aim of the staffing restructure had been to aid more effective delivery of its services and to work more effectively with PSB partner organisations;
- the 'Denbighshire 20' project had now ceased and two existing groups have taken over its remit; and
- that North Wales Police had consistently been an active partner in delivering the current Well-being Plan.

Members were of the view that:

- whilst the aspirations associated with the Five Ways to Well-being were commendable it would remain to be seen whether they would or could be achieved as they would require a concerted effort on behalf of residents as well as PSB partners
- the cessation of the 'Denbighshire 20' project would be a great loss to the county. They felt that alcohol related problems were a contributory factor to a number of social problems across Denbighshire;
- another factor which exacerbated the escalation of social problems in the county was the lack of continuity of Police service personnel across the

county and the loss of the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in a number of areas. It was felt that not having a Police presence or a recognisable/well-known Police service member of staff 'on the beat' in communities led to an increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) or a feeling of fear and isolation in communities.

In relation to the latter point members asked that their concerns be forwarded to the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel for him to raise the matter with the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Prior the conclusion of the discussion the Committee requested that on the 'Take Notice' section reference be included that the number of Home Fire Safety Checks (HFSCs) undertaken by North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWRS) had been subject to budgetary cuts by the Fire and Rescue Authority, as part of public services austerity measures. It was also requested that sub-headings be included in this particular section in order to easily differentiate between elements delivered by different partners.

Following a detailed discussion it was:

RESOLVED: *subject to the above comments and observations, to receive the report on the Local Service Board/Public Service Board's performance in delivering its Well-being Plan 2014-16.*

All present were advised by the Chair that for the next item of business the Committee would be acting in its capacity as the Council's designated Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Police & Justice Act 2006 ss. 19 and 20.

6 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - 2015/16 ANNUAL UPDATE

Introducing the Conwy and Denbighshire Joint Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) Annual Update report for 2015/16 (previously circulated) the Lead Member for Public Realm advised that the Partnership, including all its resident partners, worked towards delivering the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) objectives. The CSP Manager for Conwy and Denbighshire detailed the contents of the report and its associated appendices emphasising that:

- improvements had been achieved during 2015/16 which included a reduction in youth offending;
- following a Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police (HMIP) review, the Police had amended the method by which they recorded incidents and this had resulted in 'spikes' in certain categories;

- there had been an increase in the number of domestic violence incidents reported. The CSP was actively encouraging individuals to report these types of incidents;
- there had also been an increase in the number of incidents of violence and sexual crime reported;
- Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) was more prone in certain parts of the county i.e. on-street drinking and begging seemed to be prevalent in certain areas of Rhyl. In these areas the CSP assisted in facilitating 'softer' solutions to try to reduce the impact of the problem e.g. by funding street lighting etc. individuals who were the cause of the nuisance, and who generally were not breaking any laws, were very reluctant to accept the offer of intervention services to address their anti-social behaviour e.g. counselling for alcohol/drug abuse etc. Quite often they wanted to live their lives in this particular manner;
- there had been incidents of 'professional begging' reported in the Rhyl area; and
- a number of very successful targeted community safety initiatives which had taken place during the year i.e. introduction of 'no cold calling areas'; spot checks undertaken with regulatory personnel on taxis to ensure they were road worthy and complying with their licensing specifications, enforcement action against illicit tobacco sellers; funding secured to deploy taxi marshals/Red Cross volunteers with a view to mitigating anti-social behaviour at taxi ranks and its consequential implications on hospital accident and emergency departments; dog fouling and litter enforcement work; child exploitation training for taxi drivers; work with the Landlords' Forum to reduce ASB; awareness raising messages via social media and the production of a regular newsletter.

In response to members' questions the Lead Member and CSP Manager:

- agreed that enforcement work in relation to dog fouling and littering had been particularly successful;
- confirmed that discussions were currently underway with respect of rural crime and how the CSP's work could support and complement the Police's work in rural areas e.g. exploring the potential of having a 'Rural Watch' type of scheme in some areas;
- advised that a new 'Neighbourhood Watch' type of scheme was currently in the process of being rolled-out in some areas. Whilst main Neighbourhood Watch scheme co-ordinators would be subject to criminal record checks, not all contacts would be subject to them. Members felt that this therefore posed a risk;

- advised that as yet it was too early to determine whether the recent storyline on 'The Archers' relating to domestic abuse would generate an increase in the number of reported incidents. However officers, via the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), would be closely monitoring the statistics;
- explained the reasons behind the different methods for recording ASB incidents in Conwy and Denbighshire. This was because reports of ASB in Conwy's county area were dealt with by a dedicated ASB Unit whilst in Denbighshire all calls were handled by the Council's Customer Call Centre;
- acknowledged that individuals who consumed alcohol on the streets were a persistent problem, particularly in Rhyl. This was having a negative impact on the Council's ambition of developing the local economy and attracting businesses to the area. Discussions had taken place recently in relation to this matter between the Council's Corporate Director: Economy and Public Realm and the Police's Chief Inspector for Denbighshire. In some cases the only solution was for the Police to use enforcement actions, which was a route that they were more often than not reluctant to follow. In a bid to address the problem of on-street drinking and begging a Lead Member Delegated Decision on the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) banning such practices in specific areas of Rhyl, was currently out for consultation;
- confirmed that officers were aware of the problems caused by homelessness in certain areas. Whilst they were regularly monitoring the situation, if individuals wanted to live their lives in a certain way and refused all offers of help and support, they could not be forced to accept the help if they were not breaking any laws;
- advised that whilst the 'Vagrancy Act' did give Police the powers to deal with people begging on the streets, the Service did not have sufficient resources at its disposal to enforce the Act's provisions;
- confirmed that a robust licensing regime was vital in order to mitigate the risk of ASB in and around licensed premises; and
- confirmed that guarantees had been given by all parties that the 'future projects listed in Appendix 4 of the report would be delivered by the end of the current financial year. In addition if other areas were identified as urgent ones to be addressed applications could be made to relevant sources for funding.

Members again referred to the lack of communication between the Police and community representatives within their areas which impacted adversely on residents. They also emphasised the need for the members to be fully informed of incidents of ASB in their areas as they were an important link into the local business community. Effective communication between all parties could then assist to reduce ASB and help ensure that the new CCTV Partnership located its cameras in the known hot-spots and move them to other areas as and when required. The

CSP Manager agreed to raise the impact of the reduction in PSCOs, the lack of continuity and visibility of Police Service personnel in local communities, as well as the need for effective communication and intelligence sharing with community representatives with the Police Service.

Assurances were given by the Corporate Director: Communities that help and support would be available to all individuals at risk of becoming homeless if they requested it, regardless of the fact that they may have declined support in the past. She advised that the Council was at present in the process of remodelling its homelessness services offer for young people.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Committee thanked the Lead Member and officers for the report, for answering their questions and for the CSP Team's enthusiasm in driving the work forward. Members:

RESOLVED - *subject to the above comments and observations, to receive the Joint Community Safety Partnership's report on its activities during 2015/16 and its proposed projects for 2016/17.*

7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A copy of a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (SC), which requested the Committee to review and agree its Forward Work Programme and provided an update on relevant issues, had been circulated with the papers for the meeting.

A copy of the 'Member's proposal form' template had been included at Appendix 2, Cabinet's Forward Work Programme had been included as Appendix 3, and a table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising on progress with their implementation had been attached at Appendix 4.

The four items on the forward work programme for November were agreed as was the invitation to attend extended to all item's Lead Members associated with each business agenda item listed.

The Committee confirmed its draft Forward Work Programme for future meetings and the following amendments and additions were agreed:-

- to seek clarification from the next SC&VCG on issues to be addressed on the Allocation of Social Workers to Community Hospitals and in the Community item in January 2017 and
- to enquire on the prospect of visiting the new offices of the Commercial Partnerships for the Revenues and Benefits Service following their agenda item at the January 2017 Committee.

The Scrutiny Coordinator highlighted a number of vacancies for representatives on a number of Service Challenge Groups and sought nominations to fill those

vacancies. It was agreed that the following representatives be appointed on behalf of the Partnership Scrutiny Committee:

- Councillor Pete Prendegast – Facilities, Assets and Housing
- Councillor Gwyneth Kensler – Finance
- Councillor Bill Tasker – Legal, HR and Democratic Services.

RESOLVED - that subject to the above, the report and Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

No members of the Committee had attended meetings to report back on since the previous Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting.

Meeting closed at 11:30am