



Minutes

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| Name of meeting | FIRE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL |
| Date and time | WEDNESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 2010 COMMENCING AT 5.00 PM |
| Venue | COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT |
| Present | Cllrs Julie Jones-Evans (Chairman), Arthur Taylor, Jerry White |
| Co-Opted (non-voting) | Cllr David Williams (Hampshire Police Authority) |
| Officers Present | Ian Anderson, Amanda Gregory, Alex Hicks, Marian Jones, Stuart Love, Teresa Mitchell |
| Apologies | Cllr Heather Humby |

13. [Minutes](#)

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [18 October 2010](#) be confirmed subject to amendment of the fourth line of the "Recent Trends" paragraph of minute 12 to read "...The Partnership Support Manager stated this could be linked to the impact of managing pressured budgets but also improved reporting and *increased activity*".

14. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were declared at this stage

15. [Implications of the Comprehensive Spending Review](#)

The panel considered the reports being submitted to the cabinet meeting of 7 December 2010 regarding the future shape and direction of the council and the medium term budget strategy.

a) Fire & Rescue Service

The Strategic Director of Economy and Environment outlined the national context of budget reductions. Unlike other authorities, the reduction in the formula grant for the Island's fire and rescue service was being front-loaded as the service formed part of the local authority. The government had suggested areas for savings within the service but the Island's Fire and Rescue Service was already implementing many of these. It was now proposed to delay the first phase rebuild

of Newport and Ventnor fire stations and fire service modernisation would cease to be a corporate priority. The improvement of Ryde Fire Station was still proceeding. Phase 1 of the modernisation programme was due to be completed in July 2011.

The Strategic Director believed migration to full-time firefighters was still appropriate and savings would exceed the initial investment made to modernise the service. He advised that the Island was working with Surrey in connection with a joint fire control centre. The government's delay in making a decision regarding a regional control centre was a cost in terms of the authority's officers' and members' time, but in the meantime the link with Surrey should save money and place the Island in a strong position.

The chairman congratulated the Fire and Rescue Service on the modernisation and cost-cutting work undertaken over the past two years.

b) Community safety services

The Strategic Director of Community Services gave a powerpoint presentation on the impact of the comprehensive spending review (CSR) on community safety services. Budget reductions would inevitably lead to a diminution of service.

Officers confirmed that fees for some licences were set by statute and any income received from licensing had to be used in connection with licensing activities.

The Strategic Director stated that discussions were being held with Portsmouth and Southampton Unitary Authorities regarding possible collaborative opportunities.

c) Police

Superintendent Mellors highlighted the key points of the recent Police White Paper and outlined the Isle of Wight policing priorities. The Isle of Wight element of the police budget was around £14m and the government was shortly expected to announce efficiency savings in the region of 23%. Once the CSR details were available decisions would be made on where budget reductions could be made. The Chief Constable had pledged to do all he could to protect front-line staff for as long as possible up to 2012 when the cuts would take effect. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) had been of the view that 12-15% cuts might be achievable through collaboration etc, but cuts exceeding 15% were likely to impact upon front line services. If back office staff were lost the workload may well remain, taking up valuable police time.

The panel asked whether there was a risk that the Island's budget may be reduced disproportionately as the level of crime was lower than on the mainland, Superintendent Mellors believed this was unlikely, as considerations had to take account of the fact that it was not possible to obtain reinforcements from the mainland at short notice.

Superintendent Mellors confirmed that volunteers and special constables received honoraria for travel expenses. With regard to the vetting of police volunteers, ACPO was considering a paper suggesting that volunteers with no access to confidential information should be vetted at a lower level. The Chief Constable had

made it clear that volunteers would not be used to replace officers who were made redundant.

RESOLVED:

THAT an update report be submitted to the panel once the police budget decisions had been made and the implications of the Police White Paper were clearer.

16. Domestic Abuse

A powerpoint presentation was given in support of the Head of Community Safety Services' report on domestic abuse. The panel noted that domestic abuse offences had increased by 12% in 2009/10 in comparison to 2008/09 and it was acknowledged that the offence was under-reported for a variety of reasons. Domestic abuse was one of the top three priorities for the Island Strategic Partnership.

It was noted that part of the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator's role was to improve publicity about domestic abuse and where help could be obtained. The Council's website would be used for this and other methods of communication, such as Bluetooth messaging, were also being considered. The Strategic Director of Community Services now chaired the Domestic Abuse Forum and an operational group would be undertaking publicity campaigns.

The sustainability of the Women's Refuge was an issue and further information about this would be circulated to the panel.

Superintendent Mellors advised that Island police had a high arrest rate for domestic abuse offences. Staff dealing with offenders and victims were resourced with additional Police staff at present as there were insufficient advisers on the Island to deal with the need. Prevention and deterrence were within the remit of other agencies but joined up working was key. Superintendent Mellors stated that funding towards initiatives to reduce and deal with domestic abuse had hitherto been largely temporary and that sustainable funding was now needed in order to be successful.

The panel was advised that the midwifery team had received training about domestic abuse and there was a need to raise the awareness of some GPs further. The chairman advised that Bristol Council was undertaking some work with GPs on this issue and she agreed to pass on the details to the relevant officers.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

17. Environmental Crime

The panel considered the report of the Head of Community safety Services which was supported by a powerpoint presentation.

The panel was advised that the Council had no statutory obligation to deal with fly tipping on private land and, in view of the need to reduce costs, would not be in a position to do this in future. New legislation meant that local authorities could now

recover some confiscated assets and the council's legal team were currently looking into this opportunity. Most offences were criminal in nature and were consequently costly to investigate and prosecute via the criminal courts. Although the council had a good conviction rate, often the fines imposed by the courts did not always act as a deterrent and frequently no costs were awarded. The government had recently introduced more civil sanctions for use by the Environment Agency and it was hoped that this might be rolled out to local authorities in due course.

In respect of shared working opportunities officers stated that these were more appropriate with other agencies on the Island rather than on the mainland.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

18. **Forward Plan**

The panel was advised that there were currently no items on the Forward Plan that specifically came within the panel's remit.

19. **Performance Management**

The panel considered the performance management report being submitted to the cabinet meeting on 7 December 2010 in so far as it related to its remit.

With regard to the figure for "Assault with less injury crime rate" Superintendent Mellors stated that the Newport dispersal order had resulted in a reduction in violent crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly in the area around the bus station. However, the concentration of officers in Newport had led to an increase in offences in Ryde. He was of the view that, although dispersal orders worked, the causes needed to be dealt with. The proliferation of licensed premises in Ryde had created problems with people clustering outside, which some people found threatening. Members were advised that it was within the Licensing Committee's power to impose conditions to try and address such issues when approving licences. The Strategic Director stated that, although the performance regarding sales to underage people was currently shown as red, this was actually a success as it was the result of an intelligence led approach.

RESOLVED:

THAT the report be noted.

CHAIRMAN