



Minutes

Name of meeting	FIRE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL
Date and time	WEDNESDAY, 3 MARCH 2010 COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs David Williams (Chairman) Heather Humby, Julie Jones-Evans, Jerry White
Officers Present	Steve Beynon, Marian Jones, Simon Wiggins

19. Minutes

RESOLVED:

THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on [20 January 2010](#) be confirmed.

20. Declarations of Interest

Cllr David Williams declared a personal interest in Minute 23, Role of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and Minute 24, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Annual Strategic Assessment, as he was a member of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Cllr David Williams declared a personal interest in Minute 25, as he was a member of the Hampshire Police Authority.

Cllr Heather Humby declared a personal interest in Minute 25, as she was a member of the Sandown Police Liaison Committee.

21. Forward Plan

Members noted that this would become a regular item on scrutiny panel agendas. This would allow members to consider whether there were any Forward Plan items due to be considered by the Cabinet, on which the Scrutiny Panel may wish to comment or assist, for example in the development of policy. The members were told that there were currently two issues on the plan which were within the realms of the remit of the panel namely, amendments to dog control orders and the fire service modernisation programme. Both of these issues had already been considered by the panel as agenda items.

22. Domestic abuse on the Island

The Chief Executive of the Hampton Trust, Kim Brown, gave the members a presentation on domestic abuse on the Island, which started with the definition of domestic abuse adopted by the Island domestic abuse forum. It was noted that domestic abuse included threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (which could be psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between adults who were or had been intimate partners or family members. Members further noted that domestic abuse frequently co-existed with child abuse.

There were various methods of power and control that could form abuse and, whilst the perpetrators of abuse were predominantly male, men could also be subject to domestic abuse from women. It was, however, sometimes a challenge to identify if the man was a victim or if they were making a counter claim as a perpetrator. There was a need to shift people's thinking to accept that there were male victims. An assessment tool was being trialled on the Island which had been developed by the national organisation Respect, which would improve identifying male victims.

In October 2009 a strategic review had been performed, which identified what processes and services were available of the Island in relation to domestic abuse. Processes included Multi Agency Risk Assessment Committee (MARAC), which looked at cases where there was a high risk of murder, and Multi Agency Public Protection Agency (MAPPA), which focussed on the perpetrator.

Services on the Island included accommodation for victims via the Woman's Refuge, support for victims through the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (IDVA), assistance with home security including provision of secure locks for entrances through the sanctuary project, and help through the courts, which could insist that a perpetrator take part in a domestic abuse program. It was further noted that there were services for children, including the LINX program which was aimed at children who showed an escalation of violent behaviour, with 80% of the children coming from homes where domestic abuse was present.

It was noted that domestic abuse could impact on half of the 15 priorities that had been identified within the Local Area Agreement and that over 350 children at risk forms were completed each month, with domestic abuse being a significant factor. Members were told, based on national statistics, each case of domestic abuse had an estimated cost of £13k to services such as the Police, Health and Social Services and that where domestic abuse lead to murder the police investigation could cost in excess of £1m.

Superintendent Mellors, of the Hampshire Police Authority stated that, whilst overall levels of violent crime on the Island had decreased, levels for domestic violence remained static and were the second biggest threat of death on the Island. Members were told that in regard to domestic abuse, the physical wounds could be quick to heal but the psychological affects were more difficult to recover from and were the most debilitating part of abuse.

Based on the analysis of services and processes on the Island compared with the demand for these services, members were told that a detailed gap analysis profile had been undertaken. This indicated a need for a coordinated inter agency approach to

risks and actions, improved work with abusive parents and ensuring that domestic abuse was considered a core issue across all services. The profile further highlighted the lack of a data collection framework, which left an over reliance on police data alone and sporadic and limited training and funding from central government.

Members noted that an action plan was in place to mitigate some of the gaps between the services available and the demand. The plan included a revamp of the domestic abuse strategic forum, introduction of a domestic abuse multi agency policy on Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults and use of the same risk assessment tools and the support of the existing services. The interim Head of Community Services stated that the post of a domestic abuse coordinator was currently being advertised internally and had attracted numerous enquiries/interest. It would be the coordinator's role to focus on the gap analysis and to pull together the different services. To assist with this they would be located within the Council's Adult Safeguarding team, which would enable a joined up approach to maximise their impact.

Island Schools were perfectly placed to detect domestic abuse as children who had been witness to domestic abuse could show clear signs/signals, including a drop in their academic ability. Once these signs had been detected it would be picked up through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) process. Furthermore, clear links had been established between bullying and domestic abuse. The Council's Chief Executive stated that all Island schools had anti-bullying policies and reporting mechanisms in place. However, as schools were autonomous bodies the authority had no powers to insist on the adoption of the Sentinel system.

Superintendent Mellors confirmed that the Island's police officers received substantial training on the signs of domestic abuse. The police were able to physically separate the perpetrator from the victim, which allowed time to reflect on their actions and to consider undertaking a domestic abuse programme. However where there was an identified crime the perpetrator would be arrested. The members were told that on average a victim would have been subject to 30 violent incidents before they contacted the authorities and that there was a clear need to increase the levels of confidence in contacting the authorities earlier.

RESOLVED :

THAT the gap analysis and action plan be noted and the increased multi agency work, including that of the domestic abuse coordinator to lower the Island levels of domestic abuse be supported.

23. Role of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

The Chief Executive of the Isle of Wight Council, Steve Beynon and Superintendent Mellors of the Hampshire Police Authority gave members an overview on the role of the Island's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) as co-chairs of the CDRP.

The CDRP had agreed a number of strategic priorities for 2008 – 11, including:

- Reducing crime – Although the Island had low levels of crime, it was important not to be complacent and to make efforts to drive the levels yet lower.
- Reducing the fear of crime – It was recognised that residents may feel that the situation was worse than it was in reality and this could be attributed to the Island's demographic and close community.
- Reducing substance abuse – This required a co-ordinated approach towards tackling alcohol and drug misuse, with one of the biggest challenges being young people on the Island.
- Enhancing how local areas looked and felt – The total emparishment of the Island had provided a focus for local communities to take some responsibility for their surroundings. It was stated that the approach was not always concentrated on resources and not solely down to the Isle of Wight Council or Police to encourage.

The Members were told that there were a number of risks against the achievement of the priorities. These included anti social behaviour (ASB), which included bullying, domestic abuse and violence, remaining a hidden problem and being a difficult subject for victims to talk about. Additional risks were under-achieving young people, with excluded children being more likely to move into petty crime, and the lack of a victim support service provision.

It was noted that opportunities for the CDRP included the remodelling of the fire service, which would allow firefighters to engage further in the community and in particular with the elderly and young people. The reorganisation of the Island's youth service, which was on the March Cabinet agenda, would review the expectation of young people having to visit a building. Instead, youth workers would go out into the community with partners to engage with young people. The Chief Executive stated that the Home Office was going to issue minimum standards for the management of anti social behaviour, which would be challenging. This was an area which would benefit from scrutiny by the panel.

RESOLVED:

THAT the presentation be noted and the minimum standards in regard to anti social behaviour be included on a future scrutiny panel agenda.

24. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership Annual Strategic Assessment

The Head of Community Safety Services, Zoryna O'Donnell, gave a summary of the 2008/09 annual strategic assessment of Community Safety, which had been completed in October 2009. The Members were told that it was a statutory requirement for strategic assessments to be undertaken and that it would assist the CDRP in developing and revising its partnership plan. The results of the assessment would provide the foundation for the future work of the CDRP and would assist with decisions on the targeting of resources to issues identified.

Amongst the key findings of the 2008/09 assessment, there was no evidence that the national economic downturn had impacted on the levels of crime. No changes had been recommended to the existing priorities and domestic abuse, actual bodily harm,

and anti social behaviour including bullying and alcohol related crime would be the areas of key focus.

An overview on progress against the strategic priorities was given to the members. In particular it was noted that 56% of dwelling burglaries had taken place through insecure doors and windows and the number of domestic abuse offences which were actual bodily harm offences had increased from 39% to 45%. There had been a rise in the number of arrests in relation to drugs, owing to the proactive work of partners including the police and a reduction of 18% of recorded anti social behaviour incidents.

The Panel were given a summary of the results of the Place Survey, which had been undertaken by independent researchers to capture what the public felt about living on the Island and in particular public services. It gauged views on the perceived levels of crime on the Island, how safe people felt in their neighbourhoods and how public services were working in improving public areas.

The strategic assessment had produced a number of recommendations which included targeting potential victims of burglary, highlighting the risks of poor security, introduction and prioritisation of a multi-agency Anti-Bullying Strategy and adoption of processes to accurately record whether alcohol was a contributory factor in violent offences. It was noted that following a gap the multi-agency Domestic Abuse Forum meetings had recently re-commenced. .

In regard to anti-social behaviour, a co-ordinated and targeted use of prevention tactics including high profile re-deployable CCTV in identified hotspot areas was recommended. In addition, consideration was to be given to the prevention of damage and levels of ASB when planning the refurbishment and redevelopment of the public realm. Members were told that consideration of crime and disorder issues was a statutory requirement for planning authorities to consider, ensuring that any plans combated the issues and did not create a further hot spot.

Drug and alcohol awareness/education programmes were to be co-ordinated, targeting schools and including a programme on 'legal highs'. It further recommended a review be conducted of the alcohol arrest pilot and the alcohol harm reduction strategy, both of which were underway with colleagues from the drug action team and the NHS.

RESOLVED:

THAT the strategic assessment and recommended actions be noted.

25. Hampshire Constabulary and Hampshire Police Authority Policing Plan 2009-2012

Superintendent Mellors of the Hampshire Police Authority briefed the members on the 2009 – 2012 policing plan for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Members were appraised of the performance of the police to date, which showed a distinct reduction in levels of crime compared to previous years. Crimes had been categorised over the three year period, in order to identify which types of crime required further targeting.

In particular, violence against a person had reduced from 2614 in 2007/8 to 1870 in 2009, and the number of sexual offences in 2009 had risen slightly, due to improvements in reporting mechanisms. Fraud and Forgery had reduced from 166 incidents in 2007/08 to 99 in 2009. This included identity and cyber fraud if it involved significant levels of money. Crimes relating to drugs had shown a year on year increase and members were told that this could be attributed to improved focussed work by police officers.

Superintendent Mellors stated that in regard to ASB on the Island, peaks had been identified in weeks leading up to the end of school and Halloween, which was useful for targeting resources. Building confidence in the public to report, and improving the reporting mechanism for vulnerable people who were victims of ASB, were a high priority following recent national high profile cases.

It was noted that a delivery plan was in place for 2010. This included a number of issues to be tackled such as reducing crime, which would be challenging based on the Islands existing low levels, reducing ASB, working more effectively with the CDRP and a review of police properties, some of which were not fit for purpose and required modernisation.

Messages to operational staff included looking after victims and providing reassurance to residents, putting good ideas into practise through collaborative working and changing young people's attitudes to life and putting prevention plans in place.

It was stated that budget constraints and fewer Inspectors, Chief Inspectors, Superintendents and Chief Superintendents were amongst a number of risks to achieving the goals of the delivery plan. Police recruitment and difficulties in receiving back up from neighbouring areas were also challenges.

RESOLVED:

THAT the presentation be noted.

26. Performance Management

Members reviewed the performance report for the CDRP for the quarter 1 October – 31 December 2009, noting the areas that had been highlighted as of concern or requiring action.

RESOLVED:

THAT members noted the performance management report.

CHAIRMAN