

West Wiltshire District Council

Minutes

Minutes of the: Scrutiny Committee

Held on: Wednesday 19 March 2008

Held at: Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge

Present:

Councillors: Brown, Bryant, Chivers, Fuller, Hedley, Humphries, Jenkins, J Osborn (Chairman), Parks, Ridout and Walker

Also in attendance: Cllrs Carbin (part), Clarke and Mounde

Officers: Policy Officer (DJ), Performance and Scrutiny Officer (ML), Community Development Officer (JN), Regeneration Project Manager (AN) and Democratic Support Officer (AM)

25. Apologies and Membership of the Committee

Apologies were received from Cllr Blakemore.

Cllr Brown substituted for Cllr Blakemore.

26. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

27. Announcements from the Chairman

- The Chairman referred the Committee to the paper circulated answering the questions raised at the February 13 meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.
- The Chairman referred the Committee to the paper circulated updating Members on the Post Office Closures.
- Members were informed that the Trowbridge Police Station enquiry office would be open from 08.00 until 20.00 as from April 2008.
- The Chairman informed Members that former Councillor Donald McDonald had passed away.

28. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 13 February 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. Update on Issues and Challenges - Economy

Cllr Mounde presented a report that addressed both the Performance Plan aspects of the Economy portfolio and also how the Regeneration Service can most productively use the remaining time and other resources available to it for the long-term benefit of the five towns.

Resolved

That the Scrutiny Committee fully endorses the work of the Regeneration team and notes the future need for the five Town Councils to work together to develop coherent plans for the future.

30. Neighbourhood Policing Teams – update

The Community Development Officer updated Members on the work undertaken to establish a procedure for Neighbourhood Policing Teams in the running of their Tasking Groups.

Resolved

That the Scrutiny Committee recognises and welcomes the encouraging start made by Neighbourhood Policing Teams in West Wiltshire, especially in the partnership work entailed. It wishes to see this further extended and more support afforded to the Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs).

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that co-ordinated activity is initiated, with the relevant parties, to develop CCTV in a coherent fashion throughout the County.

31. Final report of the task and finish group on Partnership Working in the field of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Cllr Humphries presented a report outlining the findings of the task and finish group which had reviewed the effectiveness of partnership working in dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB). In particular the report focused on how the recently-established Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) Tasking Groups are addressing ASB issues.

Resolved

That Scrutiny Committee:-

Recommends to the Cabinet:

- **The boundaries of police NPTs, community areas and council wards should correspond as closely as possible.**
- **Resources should be committed to creating a central on-line 'calendar' of meetings which could avert clashes, as these reduce attendance at partnership meetings. An on-line diary covering Town/Parish, district and county council meetings (and Community Board meetings once these bodies have been set up as part of the move towards a unitary authority), NPT Tasking Groups and other partnership groups, would prove highly useful, particularly once the unitary authority comes into being. NPT Tasking Group organisers would be able to consult this before arranging meetings, as could all partnerships.**

Recommends to the police:

- **Reduced abstraction rate: The high abstraction rate diverts NPT officers from preventive neighbourhood work into reactive policing. Wiltshire Constabulary's plan to reduce this by making significant changes to their business procedure is welcomed. The agreement to monitor the abstraction rate and to present this information to Scrutiny is also welcome.**
- **Allow all partners access to the police NPT database, with appropriate safeguards. If this does not prove possible, investment in a county-wide ASB database and co-ordinating officer, recording all ASB incidents, should be considered. This would be available to practitioners to minimise duplication and maximise the benefits of liaison and co-operation.**
- **Wiltshire Constabulary's ongoing reviews into the effectiveness of partnership working in the NPT Tasking Groups are appreciated. In particular, the development of a suite of partnership working indicators by the police is welcomed**

Recommends to the Safer Wiltshire Executive Board:

- **There should be a single, easy-to-remember telephone number/e-mail address to report all ASB, which needs to be actively promoted through a professional publicity campaign. Use of a non-police number should be considered.**
- **Partnership bodies need to be streamlined, to reduce the burden on partners to a realistic one. In this way 'meeting fatigue' and**

‘partnership fatigue’ could be lessened, and a wider range of stakeholders could become involved as the time commitment would be less. In particular, a Home Office review may allow the number of Tasking Groups which need to be held, to be reduced.

- Continued training is required for those sitting on partnership groups in the skills of partnership working, including the need to be flexible and to understand each other’s organisations’ strengths and constraints, and the need for genuine power-sharing and transparent decision-making so that all partners feel the process is fair. Partners need to appreciate the value of partnership working in the field of ASB, its effectiveness in preventing ASB, the role of Tasking Groups, and their need to include a wide range of stakeholders. In addition, examples of good practice should be circulated.**
- Positive professional publicity is needed for NPTs, PCSOs and what NPT Tasking Groups can and have achieved. In particular, a regular publication listing ASB statistics for an area, the problems that have been raised and what is being and has been done about them – by Tasking Groups and other bodies - would provide accountability and feedback to the public.**

Scrutiny also requests that the implementation of these recommendations should be monitored and reported on in September 2008.

32. Joint Overview and Scrutiny Transition update

Cllr Humphries presented a report to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the latest position on the joint overview and scrutiny transition board (JOSTB) and arrangements for Wiltshire.

RESOLVED:

Scrutiny Committee noted the report and thanked Cllr Humphries for his work.

33. “Councillor call for action” – Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Policy Officer updated Members on the new power of “Councillor call for action” Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, whose implementation date has been delayed until this autumn.

Resolved

Scrutiny Committee noted the report

34. Review of Member Support Services.

The Policy Officer presented a verbal report that provided answers to Cllr Mudge's questions.

Resolved

Scrutiny Committee noted the report and requested that:

- **the new Staff directory be made available on disc to enable it to be incorporated into Members' address books**
- **copies of the leaflet 'Customer Response Standards – Information for Staff' be sent to all Members.**
- **further diary pages be made available to all Members as soon as possible.**

35. Scrutiny Committee forward work plan

The Policy Officer presented Members with the Scrutiny Committee's forward workplan and asked if there were any further items they would like added to the workplan.

Resolved

That the following items be added to the work plan:

- **Further update on improvements to the telephone system be added to April's agenda.**
- **Update on review of call-handling by CSU of waste bin enquiries be added to July's agenda.**

That Scrutiny Committee Members should inform either the Chairman or the Policy Officer if they have items they would like added to the work plan.

36. Cabinet Forward Work Plan March – July 2008

Members were presented with a report that considered Cabinets future work plan.

Resolved

Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

37. Date of next meeting

The next ordinary meeting of the Scrutiny Committee would be held on Wednesday **16 April 2008** in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices, Bradley Road, Trowbridge at **7pm**.

(7.00pm –9.15pm)

These minutes were prepared by Andrew Mitchell, Democratic Support Officer who can be contacted on 01225 776655 ext 115