

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
9 JUNE 2011
7.30 - 10.20 PM**



Present:

Councillors Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mrs Angell, Baily, Mrs Birch, Ms Brown, Finnie, Harrison, Heydon, McLean, Turrell, Virgo, and Ms Whitbread
Mr G S Anderson, Church Representative
Ms S Cauchi, Parent Governor Representative
Ms C Mitchell, Children's Social Care Representative

Executive Members:

Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Also Present:

Councillor Mrs McCracken
Chief Inspector Simon Bowden, Thames Valley Police
ACC John Campbell, Thames Valley Police
Khan Juna, Chairman, Thames Valley Police Authority

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Leake
Mr D Moss, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

In Attendance:

Richard Beaumont, Head of Overview & Scrutiny
Alex Jack, Borough Solicitor, Corporate Services
Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive
Alison Sanders, Director of Corporate Services
Timothy Wheadon, Chief Executive

Welcome

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting –

- New members on the Commission
- Khan Juna, Chairman, Thames Valley Police Authority
- Assistant Chief Constable John Campbell
- Chief Inspector Simon Bowden, Local Police Area Commander

4. Substitute Members

The Committee noted the attendance of the following Substitute Member:

Councillor Baily for Councillor Leake

5. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings of the Commission held on 27 January, 23 March and 25 May 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. Matters arising:-

27 January, Minute 47, The Council's Budget Consultation – late changes to the budget were considered by an Overview & Scrutiny Working Group which fed their views into the Executive.

23 March, Minute 63, Report of the Review of the Bracknell Healthspace – the addendum report adopted at the meeting would be sent to all new Commission members. The Commission noted that the full Bracknell Healthspace review report had been published on 10 May 2011 and the Section 106 agreement had not yet been signed.

6. **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

In accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct, Part 4, Section 12 of the Council's Constitution:

Councillor Mrs Birch declared a personal interest in items 7 and 8, as spouse of Councillor Birch, the Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing.

Councillor McCracken declared a personal interest in item 7, as spouse of Councillor Mrs McCracken, the lead member for the review.

MEETING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE

7. **Community Safety**

RESOLVED that the Chairman of the Thames Valley Police Authority, Mr Khan Juna, be co-opted onto membership for this meeting.

Tim Wheadon, Chief Executive and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, formerly the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), introduced Ian Boswell, Community Safety Manager, who gave a presentation on the Community Safety Partnership's performance in 2010/2011 and the Community Safety Plan for 2011/2014.

The Committee noted:

- the overall reduction in crime by 10% in Bracknell Forest over the last 12 months;
- the graphs plotting the reduction in crime during the life of the CDRP Plan, 2008/2011 and the various crime categories;
- the groups involved in delivering crime reduction;
- the growth of the CADIS database since its inception in 2003 and its contribution to the reduction in anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The Community Safety Plan for 2011/2014 would be launched next week. Its key objectives were:-

- to reduce crime - six priorities on domestic abuse, violent offences, serious sexual offences, serious acquisitive crime, damage to property and youth crime;

- to reduce ASB - three priorities on nuisance ASB, personal ASB and environmental ASB; and
- to reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour - three priorities on establishing the level of fear and setting a three year target for reduction, informing the community of the levels of crime and ASB, and supporting a process of communicating with neighbourhoods.

The following points arose in members' questions:

- There were statistics on detection rates, but the trend in reported crime figures were more significant in terms of the number of victims of crime..
- The effect of incidents in Broadmoor Hospital on the recorded crime statistics. CI Bowden referred to the difficulty of influencing what happened in Broadmoor.
- The behind-the-scenes investigation following a burglary. Cases were not closed until all avenues of investigation had been exhausted. ACC Campbell advised Councillor Finnie to contact CI Bowden outside of the meeting in relation to the incident he had referred to.
- One member referred to an incident of ASB in Bracknell Town centre, expressing disappointment with the Police response. CI Bowden explained the approach taken to such incidents and the possibility of considering the implementation of Designated Public Place Orders. Police strategy included the intention to re-invigorate the Bracknell Businesses against Crime and to ensure that response to incidents was fast and proportionate.
- ACC Campbell observed that perceptions of crime can differ from reality. Victims of crime had nevertheless reported a high rate of satisfaction with Thames Valley Police action against crime.
- Despite current economic restraints, CI Bowden had greater personnel resources.
- CCTV was being evaluated to determine the value of fixed and mobile cameras, also the impact of Automatic Number Plate Recording cameras.
- The need to reassure residents that resources would not be reduced. ACC Campbell said there were no plans to divert resources from Bracknell Forest as there was no wish to punish success. Work was being undertaken on developing the role of the Special Constable.
- Following some violent and tragic cases of ASB elsewhere in the UK, the police had introduced a robust risk assessment process for calls around ASB crime.
- The police were tasked with measures to target the priorities set by Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs).
- A member drew attention to the way in which percentages had been used throughout the Community Safety Plan but not always being backed by numbers, reducing their efficacy. Concern was expressed by the member that insufficient resources were available or being utilised towards the prevention of youth crime.
- The enhancement of the Youth Offending Service to focus on dealing with problems at a young age.
- The HMI Constabulary Inspection had revealed that 30% of Out of Court Disposals were inappropriate. CI Bowden stated that in he was careful to ensure that they were used correctly in Bracknell Forest.
- The popular use and huge benefit of using the portable speed indication devices. Following being caught speeding, it was the practice to send a letter to the offender but they were considered not always to have much impact. Now a personal visit would be made to the offender by a Special Constable.

ACC Campbell spoke to the Commission about the changes to policing in the Thames Valley in response to Government funding reductions. The changes had reduced costs generally but had ensured minimum effect on front line policing. A tier of management had been removed and there had been collaborative work with neighbouring forces. He stressed that the structural changes made should not be noticeable at local level.

Councillor McCracken, Vice Chairman of the Police Authority, and Executive Member for Public Protection, thanked Police partners for their work in continuing the drive to reduce crime in Bracknell Forest. He commented that within the borough there was an issue of perception that crime was higher than it actually was. Police visibility was an issue that came high on the list of priorities of NAGs.

The Chairman complimented the Partnership's success in reducing crime, and thanked the Police and Police Authority representatives for attending the meeting.

MEETING AS THE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMISSION

8. Report of the Review of Safeguarding Children and Young People

The Commission considered the responses of the Executive and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to the review of safeguarding children and young people and was pleased to note that some recommendations had been partially accepted but most had been fully accepted.

The LSCB had accepted all recommendations and the Commission noted the LSCB implementation plan in response to the review report.

Councillor Mrs McCracken, the review lead member, thanked everyone who contributed to the review.

9. Report of the Review of the Bracknell Healthspace

The Commission noted that responses were awaited from the Executive and NHS Berkshire East to the addendum report to the review of the Bracknell Healthspace.

Recently there had been a period of huge change in the NHS and NHS Berkshire East had combined for operational purposes with NHS Berkshire West. The Chief Executive was now Charles Waddicor and he would be submitting a response. The Executive would respond after NHS Berkshire's response had been received.

The Commission agreed to inform NHS Berkshire that it would like to receive a response by the end of July. The responses would come back to the Commission in September.

10. Executive Forward Plan

The Commission noted the Forward Plan relating to corporate issues. The following issues were raised:

1025655, Economic Development Strategy

The Assistant Chief Executive reported that the consultation was focussed on businesses but he would welcome any contributions to the consultation. Councillor Harrison expressed the view that the length of the consultation period was too short

and that the content of the strategy was too focussed on the recession and not forward thinking enough. A working group of Councillors Angell, Heydon and Virgo would meet next week to consider the strategy and prepare an O&S response to the consultation. The group would welcome the attendance of Councillor Harrison. The Head of Overview & Scrutiny could send the strategy paper to any member requesting it.

Councillor McLean expressed concerns about the level of information contained within the report and the Chairman indicated that he knew Councillor Leake had similar concerns about the timetable of when Executive items came before the Commission.

The Commission agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman would meet with officers to discuss these concerns and would report back to the Commission in September.

11. Performance Monitoring Reports (PMR)

The Commission considered and noted the Performance Monitoring Reports for the fourth quarter, January to September 2011 for the Chief Executive's Office and the Corporate Services Department. Officers had nothing to add to either report.

In response to a question about Corporate Services sickness absence rates, members noted that there were two members of Corporate Services on long term sickness.

Councillor McLean asked for further details to be provided of the Council's Community Safety Manager taking responsibility for managing some staff of Thames Valley Police.

12. Corporate Performance Overview Report

The Commission received and noted the Chief Executive's Corporate Performance Overview Report (CPOR) for the fourth quarter, January to March 2011

13. Work Programme 2011/12

Members were invited to consider the Overview & Scrutiny proposed work programme for 2011/2012. The proposed programme incorporated the views of the former Commission and Panels and was endorsed by the Council at their meeting in April.

Comments were made as follows:

- It was a huge work programme, all of which may not be achieved. It was for the Panels to prioritise and decide which reviews to undertake but the proposals were a good starting point.
- It was important to exercise pre-decision scrutiny.
- New members may have some fresh ideas.

Relating to point 6 of the Commission's proposals, Policy Development, members were advised that a working group would be established to review plans for neighbourhood engagement, in the light of the Localism Bill and local developments. This review would be of fairly short duration and had a small window of opportunity. Councillors Finnie and McLean expressed an interest in this working group. Councillor Heydon expressed an interest in sitting on the working group to review the 2012 refresh of the Information and Communications Technology Strategy. The

Head of Overview & Scrutiny would write to members inviting membership of the working groups.

Relating to point 7 of the Commission's proposals, Sustaining Economic Prosperity, this task was pressing and ongoing. A working group had already been established.

14. Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that pursuant to section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for consideration of item 13 which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information under category 3 of Schedule 12A of that Act:

- (3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

15. Office Accommodation Strategy Exempt Item

The Commission noted the Borough Solicitor's tabled paper, setting out his advice on the proposed exclusion of the public and press from the meeting during consideration of this item.

The Director of Corporate Services gave a presentation on the Office Accommodation Strategy and presented the Executive Summary of the Strategy, included in the agenda papers. Members of the Commission were asked to respect the confidentiality of the papers.

The Director and the Assistant Chief Executive responded to questions.

The strategy would be presented to the Executive on 5 July 2011. The Commission agreed that a working group be established to consider the draft strategy in more detail. Councillors Mrs Birch, Finnie, McLean and Virgo expressed a wish to sit on it. If anyone else wished to take part they were advised to contact the Head of Overview & Scrutiny on Friday 10 June.

CHAIRMAN