

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COMMUNITY & REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

THE EARL BALDWIN SUITE, DUKE HOUSE, CLENSMORE STREET,
KIDDERMINSTER

THURSDAY, 2ND DECEMBER 2010 (6.00PM)

Present

Councillors: H E Dyke (Chairman), J Phillips (Vice-Chairman), J Baker, R Bishop, B T Glass, J Greener, I Hardiman, M A Hazlewood, J Holden, D J Millis, M Price, K H Prosser, J A Shaw and S J Williams.

Observers: Councillor J-P Campion.

C&R.59 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor D R Sheppard.

C&R.60 Appointment of Substitutes

Councillor B T Glass was appointed as a substitute for Councillor D R Sheppard.

C&R.61 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

C&R.62 Minutes

Decision: The minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to an amendment to C&R.54, 2nd paragraph, 2nd sentence, which should read: The changes included in the inspector's report will be incorporated into the Development Plan for the District.

C&R.63 Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2010/2011

The Chairman informed Members that as last year, this meeting would be devoted to community safety partnership and crime and disorder matters. She commented that under the Labour Government Councils were either required to have a dedicated scrutiny committee which considered crime and disorder matters or if this was not the case, to hold a meeting where solely crime and disorder matters were considered. She welcomed Kathryn Hebbert, Community Safety and Partnerships Officer, Andrew Heeley, Community Safety Project Analyst and Justin Briant, Community Development Manager of the Vestia Community Trust to the meeting.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer introduced the presentation and informed Members how the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership had evolved. She also outlined to Members the priorities the Partnership had for 2010/2001 which included:

- Acquisitive crime

Agenda Item No. 4

- Young People
- Violent Crime
- Environmental quality.

Members were informed that the priorities were decided upon by conducting an annual strategic assessment. The assessment was statutory and identified current and potential crime, disorder and community safety issues.

Members were advised of the performance management of the Partnership and were informed that the following National Indicators had been monitored:

- Perceptions of Wyre Forest District
- Reoffending
- Environmental Cleanliness
- Violent Crime
- Acquisitive Crime

During the presentation, Members learnt that there were to be future changes to performance management as National Indicators and Local Area Agreements had now been abolished. Details as to how performance management would be monitored in the future were awaited.

Members were informed of some of the key issues that had been tackled by the Partnership and these included:

- Home Security Scheme
- Targeted Home Security Scheme
- No Rogue Trader Scheme
- Christmas Campaign
- Engagement with communities via newsletter, events and press articles
- Reducing reoffending

Members were also advised that a Kidderminster Town Centre Group had been established in September 2010 which focussed on the day and night time economy.

A Partnership Plan for 2011 – 2014 had been developed and initiatives to be tackled were outlined which included:

- Setting key priorities for 2011/12 through the Strategic Assessment
- Encouraging partner 'buy in' and consultation
- Reflecting partner priorities to produce a set of genuine common goals
- Town Centre issues
- Reducing reoffending
- Common goals to allow partners to work effectively together in achieving pre-determined outcomes

The challenges for the future were also discussed. In particular it was envisaged that there would be financial constraints and there was also uncertainty about what the Government's priorities would be.

Members raised a number of queries as follows:

Agenda Item No. 4

- It was queried whether the perception of crime had reduced. In response, the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer stated that this depended on the area and to whom one talked to. She commented that sometimes the perception of crime was disproportionate to the type of crime. Further, she commented that perception indicators were hard to measure and to address.
- A member queried whether in statistics on non-domestic burglary whether the theft of lead and drain covers was included. In response, the Community Safety Project Analyst stated that the Police recorded crime figures. Unless thefts were reported it was difficult to address. Business crime had increased slightly during the recession but had not increased as much as had been anticipated. With regard to milk being stolen from doorsteps, members of the public were encouraged to report this so that areas where this was high could be targeted. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer commented that with regard to the theft of lead, the Partnership had a monthly tasking group which tried to be reactive to such crimes. It would be possible to investigate such crimes and analyse them. Work was being done with scrap dealers to stop the theft of lead.
- It was recognised that it was necessary to report crime in order for problems to be addressed. If crimes were reported they would be included in statistics.
- There was an application process which set out the priorities of the Partnership and how the application would affect the national indicators. All applications that were submitted were looked at with the Chairman of the Partnership. It was considered that more work had been commissioned than ever before. An approximate figure of the money spent was given as £100,000. Applications could be submitted by anyone and each application was judged on its merits. As there was limited funding the money was targeted at areas of greatest need in order to meet the partnerships concerns and priorities.
- In response to a Member's query regarding business thefts, it was noted that business thefts were not currently one of the priorities of the Partnership.
- It was noted that there had been a year on year reduction in crime and what baseline had been used to determine this. In response the Member was advised that that way the figure was worked out was by comparisons of each year and then the percentage reduction was worked out. Further they considered seasonal crime and made comparisons with the previous month and then compared that month to the previous year. A comprehensive report was then produced to consider the overall picture. If there was a spike in the figures it was looked into.
- Shop crimes fell into the category of burglary other than domestic.
- The Partnership was particularly interested in figures relating to reoffending. Statistics were prepared that looked at offenders in a period and then comparisons were made to see if the same offenders reoffended in the next period. It was noted that prevention of reoffending was high on the Government's list of priorities.
- With regard to the perception of crime a Member commented that there had been a regular decrease in most categories.
- With regard to a query relating to violent crime it was noted that a Violent Crime Task and Finish Group had been set up with key partners. At the moment this group focussed on Kidderminster as this was where most of violent crime occurred and was alcohol related. The group was being broadened to encompass the day time economy.
- Members discussed town centre policing. It was noted that there used to be a visible police present in the town centre but it appeared now that there was

Agenda Item No. 4

a heavy reliance on CCTV. In response Members were advised that police officers had not been withdrawn wholly but policing had changed. There used to be two dedicated town centre police officers but this was not the case now. Currently there were 2 Community Support Officers (CSO's) dedicated to the town. In addition, Kidderminster was divided into 2 beats East and West and within those 2 areas there were officers who worked in addition to the CSO's.

Councillor J A Shaw left the meeting at this point (7 pm).

- A Member commented that statistics had been given on the reduction of crime and it was queried how this area compared with others in Worcestershire. The Safety Project Analyst responded that it depended on each office but he considered that this area was in line with others but we were better than Worcester City and performing well according to national indicators. Most indicators showed as green not red.
- A member queried what was the last period that crime figures increased. In response he was advised that over the past 5 years there had been a year on year reduction in crime. However, there were seasonal trends e.g. at Christmas hence a Christmas campaign had been launched. The area was a low crime area and crime figure were very low compared with national figures.
- Members requested the membership of the Partnership to be circulated to them.

Agreed:

- 1. The presentation be noted.**
- 2. The Community Safety and Partnerships Officer to circulate to Members details of the membership of the Partnership.**

Councillor K Prosser left the meeting at this point (7.10 pm)-

C&R.64 Community Safety Delivery as Part of the Areas of Highest Need Project

Members received a presentation regarding the Areas of Highest Need Project from the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer and the Community Development Manager of the Vestia Community Trust.

Members were advised that the Project had been set up following the receipt of a Local Area Agreement reward grant whereby money was allocated to district Local Strategic Partnerships to deliver services as part of the LAA to their most deprived areas. Further, Members were advised that in Wyre Forest three geographical areas had been selected, namely Walshes, Horsefair and Oldington and Foley Park. A team supported the partnership in each of the three areas and worked on priorities and outcomes including a significant focus on community safety.

The Community Development Manager outlined to Members the work of Vestia Community Trust. Members were advised that it was a company within the Community Housing Group which had charitable aims and had been set up to build on the group's success in working with residents and partners to improve communities within the Wyre Forest and across Worcestershire. It comprised

Agenda Item No. 4

experience staff from the Community Housing Group and also staff from the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder and Worcestershire wide Family Intervention Project.

The Vestia Community Trust focussed its work around 5 key themes namely:

- Training and Employment
- Families and Young People
- Resident Participation
- Neighbourhoods
- Community Safety

Members were advised of achievements made by Vestia Community Trust and these included the setting up of a Co-Ordination Group, Neighbourhood Tasking, the setting up of a Service Level Agreement between Wyre Forest District Council and Vestia Trust. Members also received information regarding the benefits of an integrated team which included:

- Additional and better use of resources
- Flexibility
- Improved accessibility for colleagues and partners
- An opportunity to split strategic and operational community safety responsibilities

Following the presentation Members raised the following questions:

- A Member queried whether early intervention could be introduced fairly quickly to any of the 3 areas. It was confirmed that this was possible through a multi-agency approach.
- A Member queried whether work was carried out on the other estates in Wyre Forest. In reply they were advised that they were working in the areas of highest need. However in the Partnership Group it was possible to consider issues if they were raised and these would be looked at in the wider partnership realm.
- Members were advised if they required direct communication with certain wardens this information could be sent to them.

The Chairman thanked the Community Safety and Partnerships Officer, the Community Safety Project Analyst and Community Development Manager of the Vestia Community Trust for their presentation which she was sure had enlightened Members as to the work that was being undertaken.

Agreed : The Principal Committee Officer to add this item to the Work Programme.

C&R.65 Feedback from Cabinet

Members considered the feedback from the Cabinet meeting held on 16th November 2010 relating to the Local Development Framework Strategy Development Plan Document – Adoption, Waste Core Strategy for Worcestershire, Private Sector Housing Action Plan and Sustainability Policy.

Agreed: The information be noted.

C&R.66 Work Programme

The Committee considered the Work Programme and the Principal Committee Officer advised that there was an additional item to be included on the Work Programme for January 2011 which was a report on the North Worcestershire Local Investment Plan for submission to the Homes and Communities Agencies.

Agreed : the information be noted.

C&R.67 Press Involvement

There were no future items for scrutiny that required publicity.

The meeting ended at 7.27 pm.