

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CORPORATE AND PARTNERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 28 March 2011, commencing at 10.30 am.

PRESENT:-

County Councillor Liz Casling, (in the Chair) Karl Arthur, Phillip Barrett, Bernard Bateman, John Blackburn (substitute for David Ireton), Tony Hall (substitute for David Jeffels), John McCartney, Stephen Shaw and Geoff Webber.

Present by Invitation: Louise Johnson (Director, North Yorkshire Local Delivery Unit (York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust)), Liz Rushton (Community Payback Manager (York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust)), Chief Inspector Ali Higgins (North Yorkshire Police Authority), Ian Wolstenholme (Local Accountability and Scrutiny Officer (North Yorkshire Police Authority)).

Officers:-

Justine Brooksbank (Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources and Organisational Development)), Geoff Wall (Assistant Director Financial Services), Fiona Sowerby (Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager (Financial Services)), Jonathan Spencer and Ray Busby (Scrutiny & Corporate Performance), Mary Davies (Legal & Democratic Services),

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Val Arnold, Neville Huxtable and Brian Simpson.

COPIES OF ALL DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED ARE IN THE MINUTE BOOK

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2011, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

29. PUBLIC QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS

There were no public questions or statements to be put to the Committee.

30. EXECUTIVE MEMBER'S UPDATE

The Chairman advised that the Executive Member, County Councillor Carl Les, had sent his apologies. The Chairman referred Members to the additional information which had been handed out during the meeting for item 7 of the agenda, which showed restructuring of the Council (a copy of the paper is included in the Minute Book). The Chairman advised that the Assistant Chief Executive, Human Resources and Organisational Development, would give a verbal report during item 7 of the agenda and a full report would be brought to the Committee's next Mid Cycle Briefing.

31. **COMMUNITY SAFETY: NORTH YORKSHIRE PROBATION SERVICE**

Louise Johnson highlighted the York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust mission: to make communities safer; and, its vision: to reduce reoffending by providing an effective and efficient Probation Service which meet local needs. The Trust covered the whole of York and North Yorkshire and employed over 200 staff. Following the Trusts restructuring in 2010, there are now two local delivery units based in York and North Yorkshire which enable the Trust to work more in line with the two Authorities and working more effectively on local issues. The Trust is part of the National Offender Management Service (NOMS) and worked closely with the Police and Prison Service to reduce reoffending.

Louise Johnson suggested two areas that Members may wish to be updated at future meetings:

- Public protection which was the Trusts number one priority; assessing and managing the potential risk that some offenders present in the community and which is supported through the work of the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements project (MAPPA).
- A presentation by the North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service, which worked with offenders under the age of 18.

Members made the following comments:

- In answer to a question on how many offenders the Trust worked with, Louise Johnson replied approximately 2,500 throughout the year. Louise Johnson handed Members a copy of the York and North Yorkshire Probation Trust newsletter (a copy of the newsletter is included in the Minute Book).
- Concerned that during last year's inclement weather it had not been possible to get Offenders to do community service work such as clearing the pavements of snow due to health and safety concerns. Liz Rushton assured Members that this kind of work can be carried out by people on community service orders. She asked Members to contact the Community Payback Service who would send out an officer to assess the work that needed to be done.
- To what extent was homelessness a problem for offenders after conviction or probation. Louise Johnson advised that whilst homelessness did not affect a high number of Offenders, for the small numbers that it did, access to suitable and/or supported accommodation was a concern. There was limited supported housing/Housing Association accommodation for Offenders in the area and the Trust worked closely with organisations such as Foundation Housing.
- In answer to a question on the Drugs and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), Louise Johnson confirmed that she was a member of the North Yorkshire DAAT Board. She highlighted difficulties in funding and the importance of pooling resources and priorities.
- What support was given to victims. Louise Johnson explained that whilst the primary role of the Trust was to work with Offenders the Trust also had a statutory responsibility to work with the victims of crime, where the Offender received a sentence of 12 months or more for a violent or sexual offence. Louise Johnson drew members attention to the figures in the presentation, noting the Trust managed over 1,100 victim cases in 2009/10. Louise

Liz Rushton gave a presentation on Community Payback to the Committee. She advised that Offenders can be sentenced to between 40 to 300 hours of community service work which had to be completed in a 12 month period. The rules required the Offender to attend a minimum of one day session per week with unemployed Offenders completing up to 3 days per week. A work party started at 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. and would be supervised throughout the day. While working in the community high visibility community payback jackets were worn. Projects which had been carried out included:

Ripon in Bloom

Tree planting

Sand bagging in Richmond

Harrogate Borough Council Cemetery departments.

Cleaning at Leeming Bar Railway Station

Clearing the stream in Valley Gardens in Harrogate

Cleaning work at Kettlewell Church in Skipton

The Chairman asked how County Councillors would know about the Community Payback system and contact details. Liz Rushton referred to a leaflet explaining the Community Payback service which had contact details and highlighted the work being carried out. (A copy of the leaflet is included in the Minute Book). Liz Rushton urged County Councillors to contact her office and let them know the work that needing to be carried out. A project officer would undertake a risk assessment and advise if the work could be done. She noted that there were restrictions on the service, road work could not be carried out but work could be completed on footpaths if they were not near a main road. Members considered the Community Payback leaflet useful information for all County Councillors. Liz Rushton agreed to leave some leaflets to send to other County Councillors. Liz Rushton also highlighted the positive affects of Community Payback work on Offenders coming out of prison.

Members made the following comments:

- How was information on community work fed back to victims. An example of an offence was given. Louise Johnson advised that this example referred to someone under the age of 18 and followed a different system. She briefly explained the work of the Referral Panel for Young Offenders and suggested the Committee may consider asking an officer to a future Committee meeting to explain the work being carried out on Youth Crime by the North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service.

The Chairman thanked Louise Johnson and Liz Rushton for attending and for their very informative presentation.

RESOLVED –

That the report and Members comments be noted.

32. NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE RESTRUCTURE

CONSIDERED –

The report of the North Yorkshire Police Authority's Local Accountability and Scrutiny Officer summarising the restructure of North Yorkshire Police.

Chief Inspector Ali Higgins, North Yorkshire Police, presented the report. She highlighted an inaccuracy in the Appendix to the report; there were no PDSO Beat Managers.

Chief Inspector Ali Higgins advised of her responsibilities as the Director, Response and Reassurance; she was responsible for the 24/7 residual resources across North Yorkshire and the City of York and she had a team of officers and senior managers dealing with road and community safety.

Chief Inspector Ali Higgins said that due to cuts in funding, North Yorkshire Police would have a reduction of £24M to their budget over the next 4 years. She highlighted the significant challenges ahead to the Police to become a more efficient service and the work underway to protect front line services. She highlighted a review which had been underway looking at how best to deploy resources and improve services. Chief Inspector Ali Higgins explained the types of reviews that had been carried out including the reorganisation of shift patterns and changes to the safety neighbourhood areas. Chief Inspector Ali Higgins highlighted the boundary changes to the 5 Safer Neighbourhood teams on page 10 of the report. She also spoke of the need for the deployment of flexible resources.

Chief Inspector Ali Higgins referred to paragraph 3.3 of the report and assured the Committee that Beat Managers were still responsible for all communities within their area in the City of York and North Yorkshire. They had additional patrol officers and a more team ethos approach to the crime problems within the County.

Chief Inspector Ali Higgins referred to paragraph 4 of the report and said that the Police were aware of the impact of the changes. She said that if significant funding reductions could be found then funding would be re-invested into front line services.

Chief Inspector Ali Higgins advised that the Chief Constable had written to all Chief Executives in the City of York and North Yorkshire and Safer Partnership groups setting out changes to the Police as well as media interviews and newsletters.

Members made the following comments:

- The importance of liaising between the Police and local Councillors.
- Whilst acknowledging some areas had very good communications between the Police and Parish Councils this was not the case across North Yorkshire.
- A Member felt that Community Policing was based around Safer Neighbourhood groups and not directly to the community. He noted that only 10% of the community attended some Safer Neighbourhood events which was very low. Chief Inspector Ali Higgins said that the Police tried to engage with as many people as possible and that information was also being sent out on Twitter and Facebook. She acknowledged that communication needed to improve between the Police and Councillors.

- A member was concerned that cuts in the Police would see an end to the Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Chief Inspector Ali Higgins said there would be no cuts to the PDSO's.
- In answer to a question on whether the £24M reduction to funding would be front loaded, Ian Wolstenholme confirmed that it would be front loaded.
- Was any work underway to look at shared services such as payroll and administration services. Chief Inspector Ali Higgins said that this was being looked into. Justine Brooksbank advised of joint Management Board meetings to look at shared services.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Ali Higgins for her presentation.

RESOLVED –

That the report and Members comments be noted.

33. POLICE REFORM AND THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BILL

CONSIDERED –

The report of the North Yorkshire Police Authority's Local Accountability and Scrutiny Officer summarising the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill introduced in the House of Commons on the 30th November 2010.

Ray Busby presented the report which detailed Police and Crime Commissioners, Police and Crime Panels, and, Commissioners and Community Safety Partnerships. He said the key headline in the Bill was the abolition of the Police Authority and the responsibility and role of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The government wanted to increase the accountability of the Police and strengthen links between the Police and the community. Following a County wide election in May 2012 a Police and Crime Commissioner would be elected to serve the City of York and North Yorkshire. Their responsibilities would include: appointing the Chief Constable, determining the local Police Authority's published plan, setting the local precept and Police budget and having powers to make community safety grants. The Police and Crime Commissioner and Community Safety Partnerships would have a duty to request reports and cooperate on any Community Safety Partnership mergers. The Police and Crime Commissioner would be accountable to a new Police and Crime Panel which would be made up of local Councillors and independent lay members. Ray Busby explained that membership of the Police and Crime Panel must be politically proportionate of the County area and that this may present challenges. He highlighted that discussions were currently underway with the City of York Council and District Councils concerning membership of the Police and Crime Panel noting that nothing could be done until the regulations were published.

The Chairman asked that the Committee be kept updated and a report be brought back to a future meeting.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That an update report on the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill, be placed on the work programme and brought to a future meeting of the Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

34. HUMAN RESOURCES AND COMMUNICATIONS UNIT WORK PLAN AND FOCUS

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Human Resources and Organisational Development) which outlined the Human Resources and Communications work programme now and into the immediate future; and current work focused on supporting the organisation in terms of restructuring and changing on a huge scale whilst continuing to communicate with and involve staff at a corporate and local level on the changes which effect them as well as the wider budget issues.

Justine Brooksbank explained that the Adult and Community Services Directorate would be disbanded and replaced with a new Directorate called 'Health and Adult Services'. The new Directorate would comprise of existing adult social care services along with new responsibilities that the Council has as part of the Government's Health Service Reforms. Justine Brooksbank advised that the Derek Law, Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, does not want to be considered for the new post and will instead leave later this year. The Chief Officers Appointments and Disciplinary Committee would be holding interviews for the post. Justine Brooksbank also advised that Libraries, archives, registration service and the coroner's service would move to the chief executive's group and be line managed by Gary Fielding, the Assistant Chief Executive for Policy, Performance and Partnerships. Justine Brooksbank updated the Committee on the organisation review work being carried out and savings.

The Chairman highlighted that a restructuring report would be brought to the next Mid Cycle Briefing.

Justine Brooksbank and Helen Edwards jointly presented the Human Resources and Communications Unit work plan and focus report. Justine Brooksbank highlighted paragraph 2.1 of the report which showed that 48 restructures were ongoing since 2010 and which managers were now able to carry out with support from HR. Paragraph 2.2 highlighted the redeployment and redundancy support offered and wherever possible redeployment was being offered. Justine Brooksbank highlighted the changes to terms and conditions of service at paragraph 2.3 of the report. The Unison ballot had now concluded and the majority of members had voted to agree to the changes. Paragraph 3.1 of the report identified the future workforce with a prediction of a reduction by 25% of manager posts. Paragraph 4.0 advised of reduced overheads and staff costs including online payslips and e-time sheets. Justine Brooksbank advised of an expected reduction to agency workers.

Helen Edwards updated the Committee on internal communications which was expected to be internet based.

Members made the following comments:

- In reply to a question on who was involved in the Unison ballot, Justine Brooksbank replied that it had been for Unison members only but she said there had been a separate consultation with the County Council workforce.
- What were the expected savings for e-payslips and expenses. Justine Brooksbank replied that the saving from e-payslips, expenses and printing County Talk was £40k.

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

35. RECRUITING AND WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS POLICY

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Corporate Director, Finance & Central Services on the progress made to date of implementing the new volunteering policy.

Geoff Wall, Assistant Director Financial Services and Fiona Sowerby, Corporate Risk and Insurance Manager (Financial Services), jointly presented the report. Geoff Wall advised that work had been ongoing to bring together different elements of guidance on risk management for the use of volunteers within County Council services which included a toolkit to sit alongside the Recruiting and Working with Volunteers Policy. A report had been taken to Management Board on 15 February 2011 resulting in agreement to the following proposals:

- That the recruitment and working with volunteer's policy be endorsed.
- That the guidance for expenses, payments and incentive for participation be endorsed.
- That this guidance and toolkit be recommended to officers for use across the County Council in relation to consultation or community engagement initiative.

Geoff Wall highlighted work which had been completed by the Corporate Affairs Overview and Scrutiny Committee on expenses in regard to consultation and community engagement for Volunteers. He highlighted appendix A to the report which laid out the overall Policy document for expenses and working with Volunteers. Geoff Wall advised that Appendix A had been to Management Board for approval.

Geoff Wall advised that the report was being presented to the Committee for information. He said one of the key concerns which had come out of the Committee's Mid Cycle Briefing was in regard to 'Big Society' issues and the different ways the community works with the County Council and there may need to be an update of the Policy as new models emerge. This would need to be carried out on an on-going basis.

Members made the following comments:

- What were the risks involved. Fiona Sowerby explained that the purpose of the guidance and toolkit was to encompass any risks for the County Council.

The Chairman thanked Geoff Wall and Fiona Sowerby for attending.

RESOLVED –

That the progress made on the Recruiting and Working with volunteers Policy be noted.

36. DRUGS AND ALCOHOL MISUSE REVIEW INTERIM REPORT

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny & Corporate Performance updating on discussions at a recent meeting of representatives of the DAAT Board, provider organisations and County Councillors regarding the review of functions and effectiveness of the Drugs and Alcohol Team.

Ray Busby presented the report highlighting the concerns of the County Council on how the Drugs and Alcohol Team had been working. He said that an Independent Review had been held looking at how the Drugs and Alcohol Team functioned and the Review had found that the Drugs and Alcohol Team were not serving the York and North Yorkshire community as well as it should. The Review detailed a series of recommendations for improvements including changes to governance and contractual arrangements. Ray Busby advised that most of the recommendations had now been actioned and the conclusion from Members at the workshop on 24 February 2011 was that the Substance Misuse Board (the new name for the Drugs and Alcohol Team) was now functioning much better. One of the key conclusions in the Drugs and Alcohol Misuse Review Interim report showed that the relationships between the Substance Misuse Board and Provider Organisations, such as the Cambridge Centre who specialise in drug treatment counselling, was much better. This had resulted in Scrutiny Members looking at the balance between the funding on drug treatment and the prevention of alcohol related harm in the County. There was agreement that the balance now needed to shift towards greater spending on alcohol related harm. The discussion at the 24 February 2011 meeting had centred on looking at priority areas in relation to alcohol related harm and how Scrutiny Members could influence this work. Ray Busby highlighted that the Director of Public Health would, in future, become a local authority responsibility and that this may give Members an opportunity to influence any future debate. The Workshop concluded that the Council should take a supportive and lead role on the work being carried out by the Substance Misuse Board on alcohol related harm. Key areas for improvement included earlier intervention work, encouragement to drink less, the availability of alcohol and licensing arrangements.

County Councillor Tony Hall, Chairman of the Task Group, acknowledged that alcohol was a much greater issue in North Yorkshire than drugs but that there was significantly more funding being allocated to drugs than alcohol. He added that early intervention was critical for alcohol related harm and needed to be looked into further.

Members made the following comments:

- Agreement that funding between drugs and alcohol was significant.
- A Member noted that the lack of appropriate housing was a drawback to people recovering from drugs and alcohol; people were going back to an environment where they found it difficult to separate themselves from people who were still “hooked” on drugs or alcohol. He felt that the County Council should be doing more to provide temporary accommodation.

RESOLVED –

That the report and Members comments be noted.

37. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

CONSIDERED –

The report of the Head of Scrutiny & Corporate Performance to invite the Committee to consider the work programme.

The Chairman advised that she had reported the Committee’s views on the Citizen Panel to Executive. County Councillor Carl Les had agreed to take on board these views and would report back to a future meeting. The Chairman also advised that she had spoken to Executive in regard to Area Committee’s and the local Engagement Network in the Selby area. Jonathan Spencer advised Members of the

Area Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs Committee meeting on the 18 April 2011 which would be discussing issues such as - What works well, or doesn't work well at Area Committee's. The Chairman asked that information from this meeting be presented to the next meeting of the Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman highlighted the Scrutiny and Budget Process at paragraph 5.0 of the report. Ray Busby noted that Scrutiny Committee's had worked well looking at budget proposals this year and that this would need to be built on further so that Scrutiny would be better able to understand how to access the budget package.

Members made the following comments:

- That there were still problems understanding County Council functions and Executive functions by some County Councillors. It was essential that Members fully understood any options put before them and what was within these options.

The Chairman highlighted paragraph 5.10 of the report on the budget cycle and noted that an option paper would be brought to the Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee June meeting.

The Chairman highlighted paragraph 6.0 of the report – Access for Rural Services, Big Society and Rural Post Offices. Members discussed the task group visit to Stillington Village Post Office and Shop on 9 March 2011 and the Community run pub and shop in Hudswell on 24 March 2011.

Jonathan Spencer highlighted that Executive had approved the North Yorkshire County Council Parish Charter at its 11 January 2011 meeting setting out the relationship between the County Council and Parishes in North Yorkshire. It was agreed that work looking at the impact of the County Council working with Parish Council should be brought to a future meeting. Jonathan Spencer mentioned that the Parish Charter was on the County Council's website and that details had been circulated to Members in a previous Members Digest. He said that he would also email a copy of the charter to Members of the Committee.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the report and Members comments be noted.
- (b) That information regarding Area Committee's from the Chairs and Vice Chairs Committee meeting be brought to the next Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in June.
- (c) That work looking at the impact of the County Council working with Parish Councils be added to the work programme for a future meeting of the Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting concluded at 12.55 pm.

MD/ALJ