

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 21 January 2013 at 10.30 am.

Present:-

County Councillor Liz Casling in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, Karl Arthur, David Blades (substitute for Bernard Bateman), Helen Grant, David Jeffels, Andrew Lee, Stephen Shaw.

In attendance:

County Councillor Carl Les.

Officers:

Neil Irving (Central Services), Rob Polkinghorne (Central Services), Jonathan Spencer (Central Services), Gary Fielding (Central Services).

Present by Invitation:

Nigel Hutchinson (North Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service)

Julia Mulligan (Police and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire).

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Robert Heseltine (substitute for Philip Barrett), Neville Huxtable and Geoff Webber.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

105. Minutes

Resolved –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 November 2012, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

106. Public Questions or Statements

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

107. York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum and Community Safety Agreement 2012/13

Considered –

The report of the former Chair of the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum providing the Committee with an update in respect of the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum (the Forum), to outline the priorities contained in

the Community Safety Agreement (CSA) 2012/13 and the proposed future delivery structures for Community Safety.

Nigel Hutchinson, former Chair of the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum provided an overview of the work that the Forum had been doing over the last year to address the issues set out in the Community Safety Agreement, including the priority issues for 2012/13. He explained that the PCC had agreed to chair the Forum from now on.

The priorities in the CSA remained Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Abuse, Violent Crime and Road Safety. The detail of the work continued to be undertaken by the Joint Co-ordinating Groups. Reducing Reoffending and Domestic Abuse had been flagged up as areas of concern in terms of progress and, in the case of Domestic Abuse, future resourcing.

Tackling domestic abuse was a longstanding priority, with a focus on protecting and assisting victims. The Joint Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy for North Yorkshire & York would be signed off at the next Forum meeting. The strategy was seeking to ensure that funding and resources to tackle domestic abuse were put on a more secure funding. This would be a challenge however in light of on-going reductions in government funding for community safety. He went on to note that from April 2013 the responsibility for allocating Community Safety funding locally would transfer to the Police and Crime Commissioner. Separate to this the Performance Reward Grant would continue for another financial year.

Nigel Hutchinson said that over the past seven years the focus and work of the Partnership had become more finely honed. County-level organisations in particular had gained a good understanding of community safety issues in each locality and how these priorities related to other areas. This had allowed them to develop an objective and proportionate response in each district.

Referring to Section 7 of the report he said that there was a need for a change of mindset amongst partners from the assumption of utilising additional funding for projects to one where partners thought innovatively how to tackle problems within existing resources. Whilst in some instances there would continue to be a need to provide pump-priming money for projects, in others the capability already existed to apply mainstream resources.

He went on to note that the funding situation meant that the current community safety structures in the county would be unsustainable in future financial years. Accordingly the Forum was developing a business case to present to the PCC on the various options for re-organising community safety structures in the county. The Forum could become a single strategic board for Community Safety & Criminal Justice, and the district Community Safety Partnerships could become 'local delivery groups'. The latter would continue to tackle local priorities but have slimmed down administrative structures and share resources more generally.

Members made the following comments:

- The Chairman thanked Nigel Hutchinson for his role of Chair of the Forum for the last seven years and for attending the Committee in that time to report back on the issues and achievements of the Forum. The Chairman went on to note that a number of issues that the public often reported as areas of key concern were not included in the CSA. Nigel Hutchinson replied that the CSA priorities arose from the findings of the Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment and was where strategic work was required to bring partners together. However this did not mean that work in other areas was not being

carried forward. Underlying the priority areas was the fact that other issues readily identified by the public were often contributory factors such as alcohol abuse in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour and Domestic Abuse. Julia Mulligan, PCC for North Yorkshire noted that there was a need for a clear relationship between the drivers of the core issues, the interventions to be commissioned and the outcomes to be achieved. She said that she was not convinced that this was sufficiently joined up strategically at the moment, such as in the case of tackling alcohol abuse. Nigel Hutchinson noted that particularly in light of funding constraints there was a need for projects to be able to demonstrate clearly the added benefits that they could bring including in respect of inter-linked issues.

- Evidence that the economic situation was increasing the number of Domestic Abuse incidents. Nigel Hutchinson said that he was not aware that this was the case. Incident reporting had increased including self-referrals but this was not necessarily a bad thing. There were concerns in the Scarborough area about a lack of a domestic abuse refuge but where possible the preferred approach across the county was to make the victim's home safe for them to stay and ensure that the offender was kept away.
- The extent of work being done in schools to focus on domestic abuse. Nigel Hutchinson noted that a lot depended upon the level of importance attached to it in the curriculum by governors and Headteachers. It was noted that the Community Safety Partnerships did however undertake work in schools to increase awareness of domestic abuse. The Safer Neighbourhood Teams were also attached to a school. The Army Welfare Service in Catterick worked closely with the Hambleton and Richmondshire Community Safety Partnership to confront the problems arising from returning troops to the Garrison, which included domestic abuse.
- The success or otherwise of the night-time economy initiatives of Night Marshals (non-policing patrols) and Street Angels (volunteers providing assistance to people). Nigel Hutchinson replied that this was one of the areas that would benefit from better analysis of cause and effect. An evaluation of their effectiveness was required. County Councillor Carl Les noted that the advantage of deploying Night Marshals was that they could be used at times of need. However the cost was relatively high, with the Forum allocating £460,000 in 2011 to pay for the scheme.

Resolved –

- a) That Members note the update in respect of the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum (the Forum) and the priorities contained in the Community Safety Agreement (CSA) 2012/13.
- b) That Members support the direction of travel as outlined in the Outline Business Case for the future delivery of community safety across York and North Yorkshire.

108. The Police and Crime Commissioner: Vision and Priorities for North Yorkshire

Considered –

The oral report of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) concerning the emerging priorities that the PCC would be consulting on to develop the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17.

Julia Mulligan, PCC for North Yorkshire explained that she was in the midst of developing the Police and Crime Plan. The process brought together a whole range of data and evidence, the views and concerns expressed by the public during the election process, and public feedback that she had gained since then. Six themes had been developed under which there would be a series of objectives, actions and outcomes.

People responding to the consultation would be invited to answer ten questions. The six themes in the Plan were:

- 'Reduce harm' (responding effectively to crime, anti-social behaviour etc.)
- 'Put people first' (improved victim support etc.)
- 'Deliver more with less' (achieve maximum value for money)
- 'Ensure that we are 'fit for the future' ' (police infrastructure)
- 'Drive justice' (deal more effectively with prolific offenders, ensure the appropriate use of cautions, restorative justice etc.)
- 'Police UK' (meet strategic national policing requirements)

The finalised plan would be produced for April. Julia Mulligan went on to invite Members to help her engage local communities in the consultation process. Posters and leaflets inviting people to comment on the Police and Crime Plan would be displayed in public buildings and packs could be sent to Members. Her intention was to attend all the Area Committee meetings in the coming months to ensure that County Councillors had the chance to meet with her to raise issues and concerns, and to provide two-way communications back to residents.

Julia Mulligan said that her future plans included putting victims of crime first and to this end was developing a 'Victims Charter'. She would not neglect rural areas in spite of the challenging financial times. Rural communities experienced community safety problems even though they might be different in nature to urban areas and rural crime was often under-reported. In connection with this there would be an expansion of special constabulary and non-warranted volunteers to provide 'Parish Constables' in rural and urban areas.

Members made the following comments:

- The YLCA Association held branch meetings, providing a good forum to consult the Parish Councils. Consultation with Area Committees provided an effective means of meeting with all County Councillors. Public attendance at these meetings tended to be low however and often comprised the same people. Members however could follow this up by 'getting the messages' out to the public to provide reassurance and respond to public perceptions of crime and the fear of crime. The Chairman noted that there was also a range of other organisations that the PCC could consult to target particular groups including schools, the Young Farmers, the National Farmers Union and local clubs such as Bowling Clubs.
- A Member noted that a number of people in his Division had expressed their concerns to him about the possible closure of North Yorkshire Police HQ at Newby Wiske. Concerns included the impact that this would have upon employment. He queried the cost-effectiveness of re-locating Police HQ to alternative premises, including the saleability of the current building, and asked for further details about when the consultation would happen. Julia Mulligan replied that she was working closely with the Estates Office to develop a range of options and a comprehensive business case would be developed. She said that she was aware of the importance of consulting with staff first to let them know what the overall strategy would be before doing any

external consultation. She was therefore not able to provide any further details at this stage.

Resolved –

That the emerging priorities that the PCC for North Yorkshire would be consulting on to develop the Police and Crime Plan 2013-17 be noted.

109. Protocol between the Police and Crime Panel and the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committees in North Yorkshire

Considered –

The report of the Assistant Director (Policy and Partnerships) to introduce a draft protocol on the relationship between the Police and Crime Panel and the Local Authority Crime and Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

Neil Irving noted that previously under the Crime & Disorder Act, the Police Authority was a 'Responsible Authority' on Community Safety Partnerships. This was not the case for the PCC and a separate scrutiny process was involved via the Police and Crime Panel. The protocol set out the respective roles of the Panel and Crime & Disorder Overview & Scrutiny Committees. The principle was to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to promote ways to work together on issues of common interest. All other Crime & Disorder Committees in North Yorkshire and City of York had signed up to the protocol.

Resolved –

That the Corporate & Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee approves, as submitted, the Protocol between the Police and Crime Panel and the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committees in North Yorkshire.

110. Domestic Abuse Commissioning Strategy for North Yorkshire & York

Considered –

The report of the Domestic Abuse Officer, Prevention and Commissioning.

In the absence of the Domestic Abuse Officer Jonathan Spencer (Corporate Development Officer) provided an overview of the draft Domestic Abuse Joint Commissioning Strategy. The Strategy had been developed by the North Yorkshire & York Domestic Abuse Joint Co-ordinating Group and would be considered for approval at the next meeting of the York and North Yorkshire Safer Communities Forum.

The purpose of the strategy was:

- To improve the safety of victims and children who witnessed and experienced domestic abuse;
- To enable the development of services based on evidenced need, improving the quality of monitoring, recording of outcomes and impact to ensure the success of services;
- To deliver equitable, coordinated and consistent services across the county, working towards alignment of services across York and North Yorkshire;
- To provide a funding framework for current and future domestic abuse services by using the vehicle of a Community Budget; and

- To evidence the partners' long-term commitment to reducing the impact of domestic abuse and to deliver the City of York and North Yorkshire Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Resolved –

That Members approve the progress and direction of the Domestic Abuse Joint Commissioning Strategy for North Yorkshire and York 2013-2017.

111. Additional Budget Savings Required in 2013/14 and 2014/15 – Central Services Directorate

Considered –

The covering report of the Corporate Development Officer/oral report of the Corporate Director (Strategic Resources) to provide an opportunity for the Committee to contribute to discussions and plans for achieving the additional budget savings required in 2013/14 (Year 3) and 2014/15 (Year 4) in the Central Services Directorate.

Gary Fielding, Corporate Director (Strategic Resources) noted additional budget savings were required amounting to £2.5m. Savings proposals were emerging which would be considered by the Executive on 5 February 2013 and then go to the County Council Meeting on 26 February for approval. Emerging proposals sought to protect libraries and customer services: the public facing services within the Directorate that the public identified and valued. He explained that at this stage he was not able to provide the detail of the proposals because due process needed to be followed around staff consultation.

The outline proposals for additional savings to be made by the Central Services Directorate in response to the Provisional Government Settlement for 2013/14 were:

- ICT Services (opportunities arising from the Microsoft transition and Wide Area Network procurement exercise);
- Corporate Property Management (property running costs, minor property rationalisation and review of staffing);
- library & community services (back office costs);
- financial services (reviewing the finance function along One Council principles);
- legal and democratic services and HR services (by managing vacancies and staff turnover); and
- by reviewing the ways of working and management structures across Central Services.

Members made the following comments:

- The Chairman asked if there had been any areas that had initially been considered for further savings but had been discounted later. Gary Fielding replied that at this stage there were no plans to make further reductions in the repairs and maintenance budget other than those already earmarked as part of the One Council programme. Savings would arise in the repairs and maintenance budget by reducing the number of County Council properties.
- The future of Norton Library. Gary Fielding replied that all options were being looked at including exploring with Ryedale District Council the refurbishment of Malton library.

- Ways to involve more Members in discussions about corporate property management issues and proposals. County Councillor Carl Les suggested that to this end consideration should be given to setting up a Members Working Group in the new Council.

Resolved –

- a) That Members note the plans for achieving budget savings across the Central Services Directorate.
- b) That a Members Property Working Group be set up after the May County Council Elections to enable more Members to have a closer oversight of property issues.

112. One Council Update

Considered –

The oral report of the Chairman of the One Council Members Task Group and the Organisational Change Programme Director.

Rob Polkinghorne mentioned that the One Council Members Task Group had met in November to discuss the progress of some of the implementation plans within the Customer Access work stream ('I need Support to Live Independently' and 'My Child is Starting School'). The task group had also discussed the draft Internet Strategy and had been provided with a practical demonstration on the new 'stripped down' webpages for users accessing the website with mobile devices. The group had also received an update on the development of the draft Management Framework, and had scrutinised the programme highlight report for October.

The task group would be meeting after today's Committee meeting to discuss the cultural change agenda (changing staff behaviours: values, expectations, leadership styles etc.); to comment on the draft Management Framework; and to receive the latest programme highlight report.

Resolved –

That the progress of the One Council programme and the work of the One Council Members Task Group be noted.

113. Work Programme

Considered –

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting the Committee to consider the work programme.

Jonathan Spencer reported that further to the Committee's previous work programme update, Ian Guest (Chief Officer for South Yorkshire Credit Union), had agreed to attend the Committee's meeting in April to discuss SYCU's plans for North Yorkshire.

Resolved –

That the work programme report be noted.

The meeting concluded at 12.20pm

JS/ALJ