
COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 04.03.2014

PRESENT - Councillor Eric M. Jones, (Chairman)
Councillor Angela Russell (Vice-chair).

Councillors:- Annwen Hughes, Linda Morgan, Dilwyn Morgan, Nigel Pickavance, Caerwyn Roberts, Mike Stevens, Gethin Glyn Williams, Gruffydd Williams and Eurig Wyn

OFFICERS: Debbie Anne Williams Jones (Democratic Services Manager), Lowri Haf Evans (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

ALSO PRESENT:

- i) In relation to item 5 on the agenda – Catherine Eirlys Roberts (Delivery Manager - Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety), Geraint Hughes (Community Safety Manager – Gwynedd and Anglesey, Fire and Rescue Service).
- ii) In relation to item 6 on the agenda – Mr Winston Roddick (North Wales Police Commissioner) and Mr Julian Sandham, Deputy Commissioner and Police Inspector Neil Thomas.
- iii) In relation to item 7 on the agenda – Mr Alex Goss (Temporary Superintendent Police Force Control Centre), Mr Paul Shea (Call Centre Manager, St Asaph)
- iv) In relation to item 8 on the agenda – Councillor W. Gareth Roberts – Cabinet Member for the Environment, Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department) and Bethan Rowlands (Acting Integrated Transport Unit Manager).
- v) In relation to item 9 – Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager), Ann Elizabeth Roberts (Assistant Performance Improvement Scrutiny Officer).
- vi) In relation to item 10 – Councillor Sian Gwenllian – Cabinet Member for Education

APOLOGIES: Councillors Louise Hughes, Mandy Williams-Davies and Robert J. Wright.

1. **WELCOME:** The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**
No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. **URGENT ITEMS**
Nothing to note

4. **MINUTES**
The Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 December 2013 as a true record.

5. ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Catherine Roberts (Delivery Manager – Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety) and Geraint Hughes (Community Safety Manager – Gwynedd and Anglesey, Fire and Rescue Service) were welcomed to the meeting.

An update was provided on the work of the Community Safety Partnership. It was explained that the Partnership was required to report formally to the Committee every year providing an overview of the year's main activities. This ensured that the Partnership met its obligations in accordance with the sections of the Police & Criminal Justice Act 2006. It was emphasised that the committee's duty was to scrutinise the Partnership's work, rather than the work of individual officers.

The main points of the Report:

- The Partnership's statutory duties
- Rationalisation of Gwynedd and Anglesey Partnerships
- A 14% reduction in recorded crimes between April and December 2010/11 and 2012/13.
- The priorities of the Community Safety Partnership's Strategic Plan – which was now a regional plan.
- Establishing the North Wales Safer Communities Board
- Main activities to respond to the priorities
- Key milestones and actions

Reference was made to some of the projects being held in the community that were good examples of effective collaboration between agencies.

- Integrated Offender (high risk) Management Plan
- Phoenix Plan – a Fire Service plan for young people.
- A plan by the Fire and Rescue Service and Police to deal with empty buildings, businesses and vulnerable people.
- MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) Plan specifically for domestic violence.
- Youth Offending Team Service

In response to a question regarding the validity of the crime reduction figure, it was confirmed that the figures were collated by the Police and that they compared well with the British Crime Survey figures.

In relation to the Home Office's changes to the procedure for recording crimes, the Commissioner reiterated that those changes were being scrutinised in detail. Reference was made to the Crime Recording Group which scrutinised the procedure for analysing and gathering information on crime. National Survey also scrutinised elements of the procedure.

In response to a question regarding the Partnership's concerns of transforming the substances fund to a regional grant rather than a county grant and the assumption that Substance Misuse Action Teams would not be needed, the importance of effective collaboration was emphasised and identifying ways of ensuring that the Partnership continued to deliver good preventative work.

The information was appreciated.

The report was accepted.

6. PRESENTATION BY THE POLICE COMMISSIONER

Mr Winston Roddick (North Wales Police Commissioner) and Mr Julian Sandham (Deputy Police Commissioner) and Police Inspector Neil Thomas were welcomed to the meeting.

Submitted – the Police and Crime Plan for North Wales (consultation draft) – it was noted that the consultation period for the proposed plan had come to an end on 3.3.2014 and that the final version would be submitted on 17.3.2014.

A letter from Councillor John Wyn Williams with Gwynedd Council's response to the plan was read out and it was noted that the Council's priorities were in keeping with the Commissioner's vision.

Reference was made to the contents of the report and the following points were highlighted:

- Establishing four new main objectives
- The challenge and vision of maintaining north Wales as one of the safest places in the county. It had been reported in January 2014 that Gwynedd was the safest county in Wales and England.

Question and answer session:

What were the Commissioner's plans to strengthen the Police's relationship with countryside communities?

There was a need to strengthen effective networking with communities.

It was noted that the Countryside Policing Procedure Plan had been developed using Police Officers who had background and expertise in the culture of the countryside. The plan had been in existence for 12 months – the Farmers' Unions had welcomed the Plan.

What were the Commissioner's plans to increase the number of police officers on the street – this was core to the relationship between the Police and the community?

It was noted that different programmes were being created for different areas. The Police's main objective was to prevent crime and therefore it was essential to have more Police presence in areas where the crime rate was at its highest. There had been an increase in Police Community Support Officers – Offices had opened in Penygroes, Bethesda and Llanberis.

Organised crime and drug trafficking. How did the Commissioner go about dealing with people who dealt in / sold drugs?

Accepted that there was a drug problem in north Wales. Collaboration with neighbouring counties was essential.

Dog Fouling. A request to renew the protocol for Police Community Support Officers to issue fixed penalty notices to dog owners who did not clean up after their dogs.

Inspector Neil Thomas was willing to consider the request.

How could problems such as 'neknominator' be solved?

A national problem. No local incidents had been recorded to date. The Police Community Support Officers used social media to communicate with young people.

The Committee was grateful for the presentation.

7. PRESENTATION BY THE MANAGER OF THE NORTH WALES POLICE COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

Mr Alex Goss (Temporary Superintendent Police Force Control Centre) and Mr Paul Shea (Call Centre Manager, St Asaph) were welcomed to the meeting.

In response to Superintendent Alex Goss's request to share information with communities and to raise awareness of the Communications Centre's work, he had been invited, along with the Manager of the Emergency Call Centre at St Asaph to give presentations on their day to day work. The requirement for the police to respond to cases was discussed and case studies were presented of the type of inappropriate calls they received.

A small team from the Committee were invited to visit the Call Centre should they wish to do so.

The Committee thanked them for their comprehensive and interesting presentation.

8. PUBLIC TRANSPORT MATRIX

Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member for the Environment, Aled Davies (Head of Regulatory Department) and Bethan Rowlands (Acting Integrated Transport Unit Manager) were welcomed to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member explained that the matrix had been developed some years ago by a Task Group (on behalf of the Environment Scrutiny Committee) to seek to establish a logical basis for comparing services which received a subsidy. Since its development, the matrix had not been used to influence the Council's investment in the transport services. Retendering contracts had now become a priority and this process had been completed.

Bethan Rowlands submitted details on Assessing Public Transport Services and noted the appropriate elements within the matrix and the weighting given to each of those elements.

The Committee was asked to consider the propriety of the relevant elements along with the different weightings applied to them. It was also noted that the Cabinet Member wished to ask the Committee whether or not the matrix was an appropriate tool for evaluating the value for money provided by the transport services.

Members' Observations:

- The matrix was welcomed and it was noted that it could be developed as an effective tool – it could apply logic to difficult decisions.
- It was expressed that examples of journeys would provide a better indication of the situation.
- There was concern that essential journeys were likely to receive a low scoring in the matrix and that this could lead to the isolation of residents in the countryside.
- Shopping and work category – needed to highlight that it had been included under 'access to services.'
- Transport to education and work had been considered under peak time journeys.
- There was a need to include Care and Residential Homes within one of the access to service elements.
- There was a need for the matrix to consider when and where the greatest need was located (specific attention to Ysbyty Gwynedd visiting hours). There was a need for the journeys to respond to people's needs.

In response to a question on amending the matrix for the holiday season, it was noted that there would be an opportunity to analyse the data received from the companies every season once the first year of the contracts period had come to an end.

The amendments / observations proposed by the Members would be considered by the Cabinet Member. It would be the Cabinet Member who would determine the final matrix and whether or not he wished to use it as a tool for developing options for shaping the future of the transport services provided in Gwynedd.

Everyone was thanked for their contribution.

9. BANGOR PRIDE SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION REPORT

(This item was chaired by the Vice-chair as the Chairman had been part of the investigation)

Gareth James (Member Support and Scrutiny Manager) and Ann Elizabeth Roberts (Assistant Performance Improvement Scrutiny Officer) were welcomed to the meeting.

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan was introduced as the Chairman of the investigation along with Councillor Gareth Roberts, the Cabinet Member for the Environment.

It was reported that the investigation had been undertaken with the intention of assessing the success of the plan to improve the local environment and to identify good practice to be shared across the County. It had become apparent very early on that the work encompassed much more than the environment and they had obtained valuable messages in terms of the element of partnership working and collaboration.

As a consequence of those broader messages, it had been recommended that the report should be shared with all Cabinet members as a number of the areas in question were common to all departments. It was felt that maintaining the quality of services and improving them for users was at the heart of Gwynedd Council's work and therefore there was a need to maintain focus on local service users when planning and providing services.

Main points from the discussion:

- Strong evidence of working together in the citizen's interest
- Evidence of departmental collaboration (mixed messages)
- Wales Audit Office's requirements of evidence of engaging with the public had caused the investigation timetable to slip – an extension had been approved to create a questionnaire.
- In relation to applying the plan to other areas in Gwynedd, it was noted that the will to improve the community had to come from the community. The Council did not have the capacity to lead.
- A request was made for the Cabinet Member to provide a progress report in six months.

Attention was drawn to the recommendations of the investigation, specifically for the Bangor area and also further recommendations relating to Gwynedd as a whole.

The Cabinet Member accepted the report and the recommendations. It was agreed to prepare a progress report within six months.

Specific comments were made on the work, commitment and instinct of the Street Services Manager to maintain the services in Bangor. The Councillors and officers were also thanked for their work and their time.

10. POST-16 EDUCATION TRANSPORT SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION BRIEF

The Cabinet Member for Education – Councillor Sian Gwenllian was welcomed to the meeting.

The Cabinet Member outlined that concern regarding Post-16 Education transport had been highlighted at a meeting in August 2013. In September 2013, in response to those concerns, it had been agreed to undertake an investigation in the post-16 transport field.

The Committee was reminded,

- That there was no additional funding available to improve the service.
- That a plan responding to the obstacles would be welcomed
- That providing Post-16 Transport was not a statutory service.

Debbie Anne Williams Jones (Democratic Service Manager and the investigation's lead officer) submitted the investigation brief. The Committee was asked to agree to the brief and confirm the membership. Recent correspondence had been received by Councillor Craig ap Iago noting that it would not be possible for him to commit his time to the investigation. Consequently, the committee would nominate another member to serve the investigation (and to consider the possibility of electing a member from Arfon to ensure a balanced representation).

Councillor Eurig Wyn was proposed.
The proposal was accepted.

Observations were made that there was a need to consider the Welsh Government's guidance on post-16 education transport. It was agreed to include the observation in the brief.

The first meeting of the investigation would be held on 13.3.2014.

The brief was accepted.

11. SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2013-2014

The Work Programme (latest version) was circulated for information. The programme would be developed over the next three months by holding a workshop with the Members to discuss the main areas of priority and the contents of the revised programme for 2014-2015.

Everyone was thanked for their contribution.

The meeting commenced at 10am and concluded at 1.50pm.