

DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL
Thursday, 27th January, 2011

Present:- Councillor Austen (in the Chair); Councillors Currie, Cutts, Dodson, J. Hamilton, Hughes, Johnston, Parker, Sims and Tweed.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Littleboy, Mannion and Pickering.

Also in attendance was Joanna Jones (Community Representative).

41. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

42. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or the press.

43. POLICE REFORM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY BILL

Consideration was given to a report presented by Cath Saltis, Head of Scrutiny and Member Support, which set out details of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill which comprised 156 clauses in five Parts and sixteen Schedules. The Parts covered:-

- Police Reform.
- Licensing.
- Parliament Square Garden and surrounding area.
- Miscellaneous including misuse of drugs and arrest warrants.
- Final Provisions.

Parts one and two were directly relevant to the Council.

Part 1 covered provisions to abolish Police Authorities and replace them with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners. Police and Crime Commissioners would be responsible for holding the Chief Constable of their Police Force to account for the full range of their responsibilities. The Chief Constable would retain responsibility for the direction and control of the Police Force.

Part 2 made amendments to the Licensing Act 2003 (c. 17) to give licensing authorities, the Police, Local Authorities with responsibility for controlling noise nuisance and communities more powers in licensing decisions. The Bill also provided a role for Primary Care Trusts in licensing processes.

This report, therefore, covered these provisions and identified potential implications for the Council in more detail.

Further information was also provided on:-

- Police Commissioner being elected through the supplementary system.

- Exclusions of people who could be elected.
- Membership of the Police Crime Panel.
- Continued role of the Crime and Disorder Committee and power of Councillor Call for Action.
- Duty to co-operate.
- Powers to Licensing Authorities.

A discussion and a question and answer session ensued and the following issues were raised and clarified where possible;-

- Crimes under the Telecommunications Act.
- Current positions with regards to Sex Entertainment Licenses.
- Legalities of an existing Councillor being elected the post of Police Commissioner.
- Implications associated with an Elected Mayor being Police Commissioner.

Resolved:- (1) That the report be received and the contents noted.

(2) That any potential implications for Community Safety and scrutiny of Crime and Disorder matters be identified.

(3) That further reports be submitted to this Scrutiny Panel as the Bill passes through Parliament and detail commencement issues become known.

(4) That information be sought and provided for this Scrutiny Panel on the current position with regards to Sex Entertainment Licenses and the legalities and implications of an existing Councillor or Elected Mayor becoming Police Commissioner.

44. ROTHERHAM VICTIM SUPPORT

The Scrutiny Panel offered a warm welcome to Yvonne Cherry who gave a verbal report on Rotherham Victim Support. The service provided confidential, emotional and practical support to victims and witnesses in Rotherham dealing with the impact of crime, whether this be related to anti-social behaviour, burglary, domestic violence, assault, theft or rape.

Rotherham Victim Support worked closely with the Safer Rotherham Partnership on a multi-agency basis where victims were concerned.

From April, 2009 to March, 2010 Victim Support accepted 4,858 referrals in Rotherham and from April to December, 2010 4,662 referrals had been accepted. Out of these 4,662 512 had been as a result of a victim calling into the office in Rotherham. Comparable data showed that there had been 25 victims calling into the office during December, 2009 and this had increased to 63 during December, 2010.

The service was delivered by volunteers and supported by three members of staff in Rotherham. Risk assessments were always undertaken before a volunteer was allowed to visit a victim. A Victim Care Unit was also based in Mexborough running an 8.00 a.m. to 8.00 p.m. service Monday to Friday. Consideration was currently being given to the possibility of extending this over

the weekend.

Further information was provided on the number of agencies working with Victim Support, the reporting and inclusion of reports on the Police computer system and the work in signposting to accessible services,

Glen Holmes, a volunteer from Victim Support, provided further information on his role and how the service was funded.

Yvonne Cherry drew further attention to the witness service and the support provided through the justice system.

A discussion and question and answer session ensued and clarification sought on:-

- Scrutiny of the service through their work with the Safer Rotherham Partnership.
- Excellence of the support being provided.
- Identification of funding sources and outcome reporting.
- Signposting and referrals to other agencies.
- CRB checks and training for volunteers.
- Implications for Rotherham should the funding streams be removed and the service move to Mexborough.
- Statutory levy funding for Victim Support.
- Home visits throughout the borough.

Resolved:- (1) That Yvonne Cherry and Glen Holmes be thanked for their contributions.

(2) That a briefing note on the work on Victim Support be provided for all Panel Members.

(3) That further information be provided on the funding streams and statutory levy funding for Victim Support.

45. NATIONAL INDICATOR SET AND FEAR/PERCEPTIONS OF CRIME - CURRENT POSITION

The Scrutiny Panel offered a warm welcome to Steve Parry, Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Manager, who gave presentation on the national indicator set and the current position with regards to the fear and perception of crime.

The presentation drew specific attention to:-

- The National Indicator Set.
- The Single Set of Indicators.
- Draft Data List out for consultation.
- Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour Statistics.
- Latest figures across all categories down 11.2%.
- Performance against "All Crime" categories across South Yorkshire down 10.4%.
- Crime detection rates.
- Confidence and Satisfaction and the latest results of the "Your Vice

Counts" survey.

- SNT satisfaction rates consistent with the exception of Rotherham North and Rotherham South Area Assembly areas.

Steve Parry reported on the Joint Action Group meeting, which was the operational delivery arm of the Safer Rotherham Partnership, which was held yesterday. The results of the survey were discussed and an action plan to address any areas was being devised.

Overall it was noted that the number of crimes being committed was reducing significantly, but unfortunately the perception of crime reducing was not comparable.

A discussion and question and answer session ensued and clarification sought on:-

- Inaccuracies in the satisfaction rates across the high risk areas for Rotherham North and Rotherham South.
- Trailblazing and excellent partnership workings identified in the areas for Rotherham North and Rotherham South.
- Accuracy of the statistics presented and the decreased reporting of crime due to lack of response by the Police.
- Significant increases in fly tipping.
- Inclusion of the current standards in the Single Data Set.
- Impact of perception of crime on the image of Rotherham.
- Appropriateness of Scrutiny being involved in the consultation process for the Single Data Set.

Resolved:- That Steve Parry be thanked for his very informative presentation.

46. PARTNERS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER MEETINGS (PACT)

Consideration was given to a report presented by Steve Parry, Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Manager, which set out details of the Casey Review (Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime) examining how to better engage communities in the fight against crime and the raising of public confidence in the Criminal Justice System. The review set out a number of priorities for Community Safety Partnerships, one of which was 'One dialogue with the public on crime', the main driver being the introduction of Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings in every Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) Area.

In February, 2009, the Area Assembly Chairs supported the proposal for PACT meetings in Rotherham to be accommodated within existing Area Assembly meetings and the PACT process was currently established within that overall structure across the seven Area Assembly/SNT areas.

It was felt overall that Rotherham easily integrated the PACT meeting into existing, well established structures and was well advanced in terms of partnership working and boundaries that were co-terminous e.g. SNTs, Area Assemblies, Streetpride, Localities etc.

Evidencing the effectiveness of PACT meetings in reducing crime and disorder was difficult, other than to establish that if an issue was raised at the PACT, it

was addressed by the authorities and as a result of that activity the problem ceased and the community informed of the outcome. Rotherham was currently seeing some significant reductions in reported crime and anti-social behaviour and it may be more appropriate to see PACT meetings as one of a number of contributory factors in achieving this success.

However, the Police had since informed the Safer Rotherham Partnership that the PACT "stand alone" meetings would no longer take place, but gave their assurance that communication would continue.

A discussion ensued and the following issues were raised and subsequently clarified:-

- Success of the PACT process in some Area Assemblies.
- The raising of expectations of the communities.
- PACT as a dynamic and responsive way of communication.
- Trailblazing success of the PACT process in Rotherham North.

Resolved:- That the current position in relation to the PACT process in Rotherham and progress made to date be noted.

47. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY - RED STATUS ACTIONS

Consideration was given to a report presented by Sarah McCall, Performance Officer, which set out how the Council intended to procure its goods, works and services in order to support the Authority's overall aims and objectives over the life span of the Strategy. It outlined the Council's current position and clearly pointed to areas where improvement was needed with a supporting action plan to deliver those areas. The associated action plan was managed by the Council's Procurement Panel and actions within were assigned owners and performance managed.

There were currently three action points in the procurement strategy action plan that had red rag status assigned to them:-

- 2.02 Publication of a Rotherham Procurers' Guide.
- 2.03 VCS training to be provided by procurement officers.
- 3.05 Equality and diversity audits on two key suppliers per year.

In terms of 2.02 the Procurement Panel have been using generic guidance drawn up by the National Audit Office for interim advice. This guidance was extremely thorough, up-to-date and relevant for any Local Authority to use. In light of the lack of resources it was proposed that officers use this advice as a permanent solution, completing the action.

In terms of 2.03 and taking account of the National Audit Office guidance, VCS training for procurement officers should not be necessary as the guidance was straightforward and contained links to guidance on other areas of procurement such as procurement legislation. If officers needed any clarification on certain elements of the guidance, the Procurement Panel should be able to provide it. It was proposed that this action be closed off.

For 3.05 the Council had carried out audits on key suppliers' environmental

performance for three years running and this had borne good results, including the cessation of illegal practices by one key supplier. This action, therefore, remained unchanged and due to an increase in resources in the Community Engagement Team following the recent Commissioning, Policy and Performance review, it would be rescheduled as a priority for 2011/12.

A discussion ensued and points relating to National Audit Office guidance, the resolution of the illegal practices by one key supplier and the lack of match funding for ERDF and the re-designation of the action points given the recommended action.

Resolved:- That the reasons for the delayed action points and the proposed remedial action be noted.

48. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON 28TH OCTOBER, 2010

Consideration was given to the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th October, 2010.

The Chairman suggested that, in the move towards becoming a paperless society, the minutes of this Panel and other minutes placed on the agenda for information and noting, be no longer supplied in paper format and that a link be provided to the intranet/internet. One copy would be available at the meeting for signing by the Chairman as a correct record. Members that had difficulty accessing the minutes electronically would be provided with a paper copy should they be requested from Democratic Services.

Reference was also made to the legalities of the minutes being placed towards the end of the agenda for approval and whether these should be one of the first items for consideration.

Resolved:- (1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Renewal Scrutiny Panel held on 28th October, 2010 be approved as a correct record for signature by the Chairman.

(2) That the legalities of the correct position of the minutes on the agenda be investigated and reported back to this Scrutiny Panel.

49. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE PERFORMANCE AND SCRUTINY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE HELD ON 12TH NOVEMBER AND 17TH DECEMBER, 2010

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of the Performance and Scrutiny Overview Committee held on 12th November and 17th December, 2010.

Resolved;- That the contents of the minutes be noted.