

Monday 6 September 2010
at 6.00pm



Scrutiny Committee

MEMBERSHIP:-

Councillor MARSDEN (Chairman) Councillor SZANTO (Deputy Chairman), Councillors BELSEY, Mrs POOLEY and Miss WOODALL.

(Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Purchase and Thompson).

8 Minutes.

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 July 2010 were submitted and approved and the Chairman was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

9 Declarations of Interest.

None were received.

10 CRP Annual Report

The committee considered the report of the Senior Head of Community advising members of the performance of the Crime Reduction Partnership during the past year, and the results of the East Sussex Community Safety Review and the potential implications for Eastbourne.

Appendices to the report comprised a letter from County Councillor Bob Tidy, Chairperson of the East Sussex Safer Communities Partnership, seeking support for the recommendations in the review report and a copy of the executive summary from the report.

The Crime Reduction Partnership Co-ordinator highlighted comments in the report that since implementation of the crime reduction partnership plan there had been further substantial reductions in crime over and above reductions from 2005/08. Since the beginning of the 2008/09 performance year, overall crime was down 20% up to end of June 2010 against a target of 15% in the 3 year plan. Eastbourne was compared with 14 similar districts/boroughs nationally and of the 26 crime categories measured, Eastbourne had the lowest crime in 7 categories, was in the lowest 30% in 17 categories, and was below the median in 25 of the 26 crime categories.

Members were advised that the current structures for CRPs had been established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Although the Government had not made any official announcement in relation to the future of partnerships nationally the potential for funding cuts had led to an East Sussex-wide review. The East Sussex community safety steering group had now endorsed the review recommendations which included having only one administration co-ordinator for Eastbourne, Lewes and Weald.

Members noted that Cabinet had considered the report at their meeting on 1 September 2010 and had endorsed the review on the basis that the new proposal provided a 'value for money' core level of service, maintained links within an East Sussex structure retaining the benefits attributable from cross boundary working. However, members expressed concern about the risks associated with the reduction in the number of co-ordinators. Members were advised that the Senior Head of Community would make compensatory arrangements (for 2011/12 onwards) at a local level to minimise any negative impact through the Service and Financial Planning process.

Members discussed various aspects of the CRP plan including issues around reducing the sales and trafficking of drugs, methods to prevent cold calling, shop lifting and its peak times during Christmas and other schools holidays and ways to address the problem, robbery, its definition and its cyclic nature. The Committee also discussed the national statistics versus the 'most similar group' statistics and requested further information following the meeting.

The committee thanked the Crime Reduction Partnership coordinator for the work that he was doing and expressed their hope that this would continue despite the proposed changes and expanded area.

NOTED.

11 Covalent Presentation.

The committee considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive updating members on the Council's performance against Corporate Priority Indicators for 2010/11.

Members were advised that the 2010/15 Corporate Plan set out a series of key actions and indicators to deliver and measure progress against key priorities. Throughout the year, performance against key indicators would be reported to Cabinet and Scrutiny on a quarterly basis. Earlier this year and with the support of Improvement and Efficiency South East, the authority purchased the Covalent system to help improve performance management and reporting. This system was used to report the outturns of the 2009/10 Corporate Plan actions and indicators to Cabinet in July and would combine indicators and action updates against the current Corporate Plan in order to produce a meaningful overview of achievements against the Council's priority themes.

Members noted that **Appendix 1** to the report showed the Quarter 1 outturns of the performance indicators listed within the Corporate Plan. The report showed the latest available outturns for the National and Local Performance Indicators featured in the 2010/15 Corporate Plan broken down into the 4 theme chapters. There was a summary table at the beginning of each chapter's data to show the number of indicators on and off target. The actual outturn period of each indicator was highlighted in the title of the individual gauges as not all National Indicators were available for this period. The PI tables showed which indicators were performing on target (green tick icon), failing to reach target (red octagonal icon) or are "near misses" (amber triangle icon). The quarterly targets were

in the process of being reviewed to ensure that seasonal variations and profiling was taken into account in the performance reporting process.

The actual outturn for each PI was shown on the performance gauges and column 5 - "Current Value". The gauges showed visually how the level of performance compared to targets (green zones) and "near miss" levels (amber zones). Over time, these amber zones would be reviewed to reflect appropriate levels of performance expectation and any national targets which were lower than the Council's local aspirations.

Notes had been included in the outturn tables where supplied. These provided some contextual background to the performance and this function would be developed further as the Covalent system became used more widely across the organisation.

Members asked for clarification on the descriptions of CD_011 Taxis and private hire – number of applications processed, DE_003b Seafront Maintenance – medium risk and NI 154 Net additional homes provided. The Strategic Performance Manager advised members that this information would be provided following the meeting.

Members highlighted CD_002 Customer Contact Centre % of Customers seen within 15 minutes as an area for concern and discussed how targets were developed, use of the previous years data and questioned whether targets being set were challenging enough. The Strategic Performance Manager advised that it was important for targets to be SMART and that looking for alternative ways of providing services may be an answer to improving the Council's performance in certain areas.

Members also highlighted NI181 Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax benefit new claims and change events and were advised that improvements would be seen in the future - as the backlog was being cleared it allowed officers to process applications much quicker.

The Deputy Chief Executive thanked the Strategic Performance Manager and his team for their input and ongoing development of the Covalent system to ensure the information was meaningful and correct. The Committee were advised that in future, the Senior Heads of Service would be attending Scrutiny for the presentation of the performance data to answer members' questions.

NOTED.

The meeting closed at 7.24 p.m.

**Councillor Marsden
Chairman**