

BABERGH AND MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCILS

Minutes of the meeting of the **JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the King Edmund Chamber - Endeavour House, 8 Russell Road, Ipswich on Thursday, 20 September 2018

PRESENT:

Councillors:	James Caston	Michael Creffield
	John Field	Barry Gasper
	Elizabeth Gibson-Harries	Lavinia Hadingham
	Bryn Hurren	Lesley Mayes
	Alastair McCraw (Chair)	Adrian Osborne
	Derek Osborne	Keith Welham
	Kevin Welsby	Stephen Williams

In attendance:

Councillors	Margaret Maybury
	Suzie Morley
	Mike Norris
	Rachel Eburne
	Dave Muller
	Glen Horn
	Chief Executive (AC)
	Strategic Director (KN)
	Assistant Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer (EY)
	Corporate Manager (Interim) – Safe and Strong Communities
	Governance Support Officer (HH)

27 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillor Melanie Barrett and Councillor Michael Creffield was substituting for Councillor Barrett.

28 JOS/18/13 CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES ON THE MEETING HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2018

It was RESOLVED:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 3 September 2018 be confirmed as a true record.

29 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interests.

30 TO RECEIVE NOTIFICATION OF PETITIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE COUNCIL'S PETITION SCHEME

None received.

31 JOS/18/14 REVIEW OF THE WESTERN SUFFOLK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (WSCSP)

- 31.1 The Chair invited the witnesses to introduce themselves.
- 31.2 Councillor Joanna Spicer – Chair of Western Suffolk Community Safety Partnership (WSCSP), expressed the importance of the work of the WSCSP and said that the link across the four Districts was important. Work was being conducted with key partners, NHS, Police, Fire and Rescue services, which were present at the meeting, and that this included the Probation service, which also formed part of the Partnership.
- 31.3 A lot of work had been conducted to combat anti-social behaviour, especially within the towns. The aim of the partnership was for the partners to work together to combat all forms of violence, which included the increasing problem of County Lines and the associated violence caused by drug abuse and distribution.
- 31.4 Councillor Spicer thanked the two Member representatives from Babergh and Mid Suffolk for their work on the WSCSP.
- 31.5 Claire Harvey, Community Safety Lead – Localities and Partnerships Team, who was representing the Suffolk County Council on the WSCSP, added that she supported all councillors, not just for the WSCSP, but in all community safety issues.
- 31.6 Paul Goodman, Protection and Prevention Manager for Suffolk Fire explained his role and said that the prevention part of his job included fire safety of the home, water safety, road traffic collision reduction and children and young persons.
- 31.7 The Fire Service's role in the WSCSP was to support the Partnership in anything related to fire safety and a prevention team identified vulnerable persons and conducted home visits identifying and installing safety measures.
- 31.8 In relation to the WSCSP, the Fire Service had responded to arson and fire related crimes, as a result of the gang and drug violence generated by County Lines.
- 31.9 Superintendent Kim Warner informed Members that he was the Western Area Commander for Suffolk and held the Senior Suffolk Lead for portfolios such as Body Worn Cameras, Mobile Data, Stop Search, and Children and Young Persons (CYP).
- 31.10 Eugene Staunton, Associate Director of Transformation across the Eastern and Western Suffolk Clinical Commissioning Group, which supported the commissioning and transformation of the health services across Suffolk. His team worked with NHS providers and non-NHS mental health providers, supporting and developing not just traditional mental health services, but also, increasingly, emotional health and well-being. The team was

developing a case for change for how the mental health service would provide suitable service in the future and were working with Health Watch Suffolk, Suffolk Family Carers, Suffolk Parenting and Carers at Work and Suffolk Users Forum. Work was being undertaken with the CCG and Suffolk County Council for children and young persons to create a young people's emotional health hub to support mental health and emotional well-being. He said that his main role was to support the CCG with the commissioning for the mental health and emotional well-being.

- 31.11 Lois Wreathall, Head of Primary Care for West Suffolk CCG, said her main area of responsibility was to keep all 24 practices in West Suffolk open to see patients.
- 31.12 Councillor Margaret Maybury, Cabinet Member for Communities and Babergh District Councils representative on the WSCSP, began by forwarding an apology from Melanie Yolland – Communities Officer (Safe) and said that Ann Hunter – Interim Corporate Manager for Communities was here to respond to questions instead. She then introduced the report and thanked the team for the comprehensive content.
- 31.13 The interim Corporate Manager – Communities, drew Members' attention to page 6, bullet point 4.3, which outlined the aims of the WSCSP. She said that County Lines was a major issue for the WSCSP and that it affected not just towns but also all villages. Other issues included violence against woman and children, men and boys. The WSCSP identified hate crime and radicalisation of people through the organisation Prevent.
- 31.14 Councillor Elizabeth Gibson-Harries, Mid Suffolk District Council's representative on the WSCSP, agreed with the previous speakers and continued that as communities grew it was important that residents were aware and reported anything which made them uneasy. She said that the WSCSP had grown in the last few years and carried more weight.
- 31.15 Members then asked about the Strategic Action Plan, which was mentioned in the papers and how prevention of County Lines was being included in this plan.
- 31.16 Superintendent Warner explained that the Strategic Action Plan was confidential. He outlined the operation of County Lines, and how drug dealing groups, not located in the area, used young people, often boys, as couriers to deliver drugs to customers. They used mobile phones to receive orders and to instruct their couriers. The gangs were high risk to themselves, other groups and the public they preyed on. They used extreme violence including the use of firearms to control the gangs, and to reclaim unpaid debts from customers. The gangs were flexible and often operated for a limited time in one location, which made the issuing of arrest warrants difficult. Also, the couriers were dispensable and were quickly replaced, if they were arrested. Recently there had been two murders and two stabbings in Norfolk in direct relation to the operation of County Lines. He assured Members that the Police was responding to the issues and that the WSCSP had developed a Strategic County plan and a Western Tactical Plan to be ahead of the developments.

- 31.17 A Serious Crime Disruption Team operated in Suffolk and was a County wide resource. West Suffolk had a Scorpion team, which issued all arrest warrants, disruption visits and a variety of covert operations.
- 31.18 He continued that Suffolk and Norfolk Constabularies worked with the Metropolitan Police and Hackney Gang Units in a variety of areas to combat County Lines operations.
- 31.19 Councillor Hadingham asked how practical it was for Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils to the delivery of key actions in the Tactical Action Plan (page 7, 4.10). The Interim Corporate Manager – Communities responded that there were four areas for development, but that the draft plan was restricted.
- 31.20 Superintendent Warner said there was much Members could do to support the work of the WSCSP. Members could raise awareness of the gravity of the situation, know what to look for and to report anything to the appropriate organisations. They could also signpost appropriate help for residents.
- 31.21 Councillor John Field asked if there were enough resources to support the WSCSP and related projects.
- 31.22 The Superintendent responded that the Tactical Action Plan incorporated both the WSCSP and the Police. In response to if there was enough work being done to prevent young people getting involved with crime, he said that this was included in the Tactical Action plan.
- 31.23 In relation to how schools could prevent drug dealing inside and outside the school, the Superintendent responded that police officers always responded quickly to any reporting for offences involving children and that schools received support in tackling these issues.
- 31.24 Councillor Michael Creffield enquired why more was not done to prevent the criminal use of mobile phones and the response was that listening to mobile phones was subject to strict regulations to protect the public.
- 31.25 Councillor Keith Welham raised concerns on how to get residents to report any issues to the police, because the '101' Service was a lengthy process and required detailed information of the caller, which may concern some callers.
- 31.26 Members agreed and said that it was possible that the public was concerned of being targeted by gangs for providing information to the police. Superintendent Warner reassured Members that there had been no reports of members of the public being intimidated by County Lines gangs after they had provided information to the police.
- 31.27 Councillor Maybury reassured Members that the Communities Team were working hard to support the youth in the districts, and that there had been conversations with established youth projects to investigate the best way to provide this support.

- 31.28 Councillor David Muller said that his experience with dealing with drug related issues in the community had been well supported by the local neighbourhood communities' teams, Suffolk County Council and other Mid Suffolk District Council.
- 31.29 Councillor Rachel Eburne was concerned that young people would not report each other whether it was in relation to drug dealing or mental health issues such as self-harm and low self-esteem. She wanted to know how the WSCSP was supporting these problems.
- 31.30 Eugene Staunton, Associate Director of Transformation Lead for Mental Health for the CCG responded by outlining the work being undertaken to support emotional health and wellbeing. All organisations dealing with young people were required to have a Young Peoples' Emotional Health and Wellbeing plan in place which was updated every year. In Suffolk the plan had been in place for four years.
- 31.31 He referred to the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Hub, which was a single point of access replacing mental health referrals, which had been formed by a variety of different mental health providers.
- 31.32 Investment had been made into multi professional training for mental health issues to raise awareness. An example of this was Mental Health First Aiders recently rolled. Mental health of young people was the responsibility of families, schools and health providers.
- 31.33 Members then discussed and question violence against women and Children.
- 31.34 Councillor Lesley Mayes was concerned that the three refuges for women and children was in the north of the district, which made it difficult to maintain contact with family and friends for those entering these refuges.
- 31.35 Councillor Keith Welham added that these refuges were for women with young children and that women with older sons were unable to be admitted. Also, these refuges did not allow men to be admitted.
- 31.36 Claire Harvey – Community Safety Lead – Localities and Partnerships Team, responded that there were 23 static accommodations across the County, which could house these victims and that male victims, who could not access this service, received support from the Communities team within the Districts. She made Members aware that only victims of intimate relations could seek admission to the refuges.
- 31.37 Councillor Keith Welham asked if victims from other counties were admitted into local refuges and if Suffolk move victims of domestic violence to other counties. It was confirmed that was the case.

- 31.38 Councillor Hadingham referred to appendix 4, page 31 and asked why there was a 50% drop out in arrests. Superintendent Warner responded that it was possible that historical domestic violence had an influence on the arrest percentage, as these cases often required different actions. It could also be that an arrest was not the right solution, but that the issuing of a domestic violence protection notice was the appropriate solution.
- 31.39 Councillor John Field was concerned that there existed a back log of 55 victim cases for Suffolk Rape Crisis (appendix 4, page 34), and the service was considering further provision for men, before dealing with the back log.
- 31.40 Claire Harvey explained that Suffolk Rape Crisis was not under the remit of Suffolk County Council. But she clarified that waiting times were quite common especially after high profile cases had come forward. This had resulted in victims disclosing cases which had happened 30 to 40 years ago. She believed the 55 cases were waiting for assessment and engagement, but that victims were being supported whilst on waiting for full engagement for the full service.
- 31.41 The Chair referred to the appendix 4, page 31 and asked if the WSCSP was making improvements to be in a better position, to follow the strategic points in the report.
- 31.42 Claire Harvey responded that during the last three years, there had been dedicated resource for domestic violence. There was also more funding put into domestic violence than before. Whilst the figures in the appendix appeared to be increasing, it was a result of an increase in awareness of domestic violence and that domestic violence was now recognised as unacceptable by victims. Also, historical cases were being reported especially by older women, who had previously not reported the violence.
- 31.43 Councillor James Caston asked when disclosure was activated, as victims may not be ready to go to the police.
- 31.44 Claire Harvey responded that the primary concern of the service was to ensure that the victim was safe. Victims did not always want the perpetrator to be arrested or prosecuted. Disclosure to the police only happened when the victim was ready to proceed to that stage of the process.
- 31.45 In response to further questioning, Claire Harvey explained work was being undertaken to develop a Suffolk Co-ordination Centre intended to be a safe point of entry for victims of domestic abuse to report and disclose their cases.
- 31.46 Councillor John Field ask if there existed any data analysis of the outcome of the quantitative data on page 31 to 34, as it would be useful to measure the success of the service in relation to the refuges and if they had made any differences.

31.47 Claire Harvey responded that in terms of contract performance there was a robust management system in place, VAWG strategy plan, which measured performance. A quarterly report listing the beneficial outcome could be made available to the Committee.

31.48 Councillor Elizabeth Gibson-Harries said that it was the intention of the WSCSP to have had provided a list of contact details for all Parish Councils.

NOTE Councillor Stephen Williams left the meeting at 11.08am

31.49 Paul Goodman said that the Fire Service was supporting the WSCSP and that the Fire Service had their own resources. All services were working of finding a way to support the WSCSP

NOTE: Councillor Elizabeth Gibson-Harries left the meeting at 11.15 am.

31.50 Members discussed Hate Crime and Prevent, in relation to the Prevent Strategy which indicated that 60% of the work was directed towards Islamic thinking. They were concerned that there was now an increase in far-right groups activities, which increasingly took up funding from Prevent. Members were interested in how this was reflected locally.

31.51 Superintendent Warner said that locally there was no indication of a rise of threats in this area, but that the police received national review on threat assessments.

31.52 Claire Harvey informed that beneath Prevent Strategy was a channel panel which identified individuals, who were at risk of radicalisation and that the far rights groups were increasingly of interest to Prevent.

31.53 The Corporate Manager – Communities added that all Councillors were offered training in Safeguarding and Prevent awareness.

31.54 Councillor Hadingham enquired why it was necessary to conduct a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) when the police had already conducted an investigation.

31.55 It was a statutory duty to undertake a DHR and did not cross over with the police investigation. A DHR investigated if the perpetrator had previously had any contact with the public services and if intervention could be improved. Frontline practitioners were not always aware of the signs and the WSCSP provided further training and awareness for them in this area. DHRs were a way to review the processes and to learn from these.

31.56 Councillor Margaret Maybury explained that one Babergh and Mid Suffolk officer always conducted the investigation and that the Councils provided administrative support. DHRs were very time consuming and costly, even if the costs were divided up between the four Districts in the WSCSP. Funding and resources were needed to be able to maintain this kind of necessary investigation.

31.57 The Witnesses then summed up key messages for the Members including:

- Members should report any issues to the appropriate organisation;
- Awareness was important not just for Members but for residents;
- Councillors could play a role in signposting services at community levels, community groups and local parish councils;
- County Lines affected all communities and was happening in all areas;
- Education of residents in local setting with regard to County Lines was paramount;
- Members were community leaders and they could play an important part in educating members of the public and to increase awareness.

31.58 Members then discussed the recommendations and agreed that a Member briefing and a toolkit for Members with contact details for emergency services present that at the meeting were to be provided to all Members.

31.59 Councillor John Field requested that officers prepared a summary of the main points and that these were forwarded to Suffolk County Council.

By a unanimous vote

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1. That a joint Member briefing be delivered to all Members detailing the issues in the report.**
- 2. That a toolkit with the key contact details for agencies dealing with the issues discussed today be formulated and distributed to all Members.**
- 3. That officers prepare a summary of the main points of the discussion to be circulated to Suffolk County Council.**

32 JOS/18/15 INFORMATION BULLETIN

The Chair requested a 5-minute recess at 11.50 am

NOTE: Councillor Gasper left the meeting.

The meeting recommenced at 11.55 am.

- 32.1 Justin Wright-Newton – Corporate Manager for BMBS, provided a verbal update on the standard figures, which had improved. Currently the Joint Standard Voids time was 20 Days. He said that the Information Bulletin was a summary of Reports JOS/18/14 and JOS/18/15 which both went to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 3 September.
- 32.2 Members agreed that the Voids Update Information Bulletin should continue to be presented to the Committee every three months.

It was RESOLVED: -

- 1. That the Information Bulletin be noted.**
- 2. That the Information Bulleting be presented to the Committee every three months.**

33 JOS/18/16 FORTHCOMING DECISIONS LIST

Kathy Nixon - Strategic Director, informed the Committee that if the Tree Policy met the parameters of the LA Act 2002 in any way in relation to the conservation of trees, it would be presented to both Councils in December after being presented to both Cabinets.

It was RESOLVED: -

That the Forthcoming Decisions List be noted.

34 JOS/18/17 BABERGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

It was confirmed that the HQ Regeneration Proposal was a Council decision but would be presented to both Cabinets before going to Full Council.

It was RESOLVED: -

That the Babergh Work Plan be noted.

35 JOS/18/18 MID SUFFOLK OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN

It was RESOLVED: -

That the Mid Suffolk Work Plan be noted.

The business of the meeting was completed at 12.05 pm.

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Chair (& Date)