

## **SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY, 17 MARCH 2014**

PRESENT:- Councillors Brian Ford (Chair), Robert Wright, Abdul Amin, Mary Friend, John Haines, Ann Richards, Joe Tray, Julie Wright, Andrew Bennett, Neil Heavens, Vera Tomlinson, Oliver Donachie and Richard Hurley

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Peter Heaton-Jones.

### **122. Minutes**

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2014 be confirmed and signed.

### **123. Declarations of Interest**

With respect to Agenda Item No. 5 (Fire Authority Question and Answer Session), Councillor Bob Wright made a non-personal and non-prejudicial interest as he is a member of the Swindon and Wiltshire Fire Panel.

With respect to Agenda Item no. 6 (Wiltshire Police Question and Answer Session), Councillor Andrew Bennett made a non-personal and non-prejudicial interest as he is a member of the Swindon and Wiltshire Crime Panel.

### **124. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions

### **125. Fire Authority Question and Answer Session**

The Chair advised the Committee that, unfortunately, representatives from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service were not able to attend the meeting to take part in a question and answer session. The Committee expressed its disappointment that no-one from Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service was able to attend the meeting.

John Aldridge, Deputy Chief Fire Officer, submitted a report detailing the core functions of Fire and Rescue Authorities under the Fire and Rescue Act 2004: (a) Fire Safety (b) Fire-fighting (c) Road Traffic Accidents and (d) emergencies.

The report set out the strategic aims and the Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service Vision: *“to continue to provide an excellent community safety and response service working with our partners to deliver services by being in the heart of the community, for the community”*

The report provided a summary of the activities delivered by Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service to the community of Swindon working with (a) Children, Young People, the long term unemployed and Families First (b) Vulnerable People (c) Business Community Activities (d) Operational Activities (e) Community Engagement and (f) Partnership Working.

Councillors Bennett and Wright gave a brief presentation concerning the work of the regional Fire Authority and the proposed merger with the Dorset Fire Authority.

Councillor Tray recounted his own personal experiences during his career working with the Fire Authority.

## **126. Wiltshire Police Question and Answer Session**

Representatives from Wiltshire Police attended the meeting and provided an update on current Police operations and statistics relating to crime, non-violent crime, assault and domestic abuse.

Members of the Committee put questions to representatives from Wiltshire Police on the following areas:

- Lack of referrals from Wiltshire Police to the Neighbourhood Justice Panels
- A reduction in the number of Neighbourhood Justice Panels held.
- Police operations in the Broad Street area of Swindon
- Event parking at the County Ground, County Road Swindon
- Members of staff witnessing suicides and suicide attempts.
- Police “1<sup>st</sup> contact” skills with members of the public following a reported incident
- Priority traffic routes accessing and egressing the outlying villages around Swindon
- The reporting of issues to Wiltshire Police by Councillors on the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the ward areas they represent.
- The vandalism and destruction of play parks within Swindon
- Operation Harness
- CCTV cameras in the Town Centre.
- The lack of CCTV security cameras in the Penhill area of Swindon
- Neighbourhood Watch schemes

## **127. Neighbourhood Justice Panels**

The Committee watched a DVD “The Wolf Within” which provided examples of restorative justice.

Resolved – (1) That all Council Departments that deal with low-level offending consider making referrals to Neighbourhood Justice Panels

(2) That this Committee records its thanks and congratulations to Phil Thomas and Simon Evans for the work, innovation and progress made in successfully introducing and delivering the Neighbourhood Justice Panel programme.

(3) That Neighbourhood Justice Panel training be tailored to assist Parish Councils, Councillors, Localities and others in best delivering the Neighbourhood Justice Panel programme.

(4) That the Police and Crime Commissioners Panel be encouraged to make the continuation of Neighbourhood Justice Panels a priority.

As this was the last meeting of the Committee, the Chair signed the minutes following the meeting

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