

**MINUTES of the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday 11 February 2011 at 10.00 am**

**Present:** Councillor TM James (Chairman)  
Councillor KG Grumbley (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PL Bettington, BA Durkin, PJ Edwards, KS Guthrie, G Lucas, SJ Robertson, RH Smith and AP Taylor

**In attendance:** Councillors PA Andrews, WLS Bowen and AT Oliver

**55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors MAF Hubbard, B Hunt and D W Greenow

**56. NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Councillor PJ Edwards substituted for Councillor B Hunt and Councillor G Lucas for Councillor DW Greenow.

**57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Interest</b>
Cllr RH Smith	6 - Safer Herefordshire Scrutiny Review Group Annual Report 2010 7 - Future Developments of the Safer Herefordshire Partnership	Council appointed Member of the West Mercia Police Authority.

**58. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes for the meeting held on 13 January 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**59. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY**

Mr J Faulkner submitted a written request that, in the light of the findings of the Committee's Review of the Strategic Direction of the Edgar Street Grid Project, which noted that funding for a new library was no longer possible, the Committee should consider the future of the library programme within the County.

The Sustainable Communities Director said that new ways of delivering library services were being considered in conjunction with Shropshire under the modern libraries programme, and the report from this review would be available shortly.

**RESOLVED:** That the matter should be added to the Committee's Work Programme

**60. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTION OF THE EDGAR STREET GRID PROJECT**

The Committee received a report on the findings arising from the Scrutiny Review of the Strategic Direction of the Edgar Street Grid Project.

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT**

- (a) the findings of the Scrutiny Review on the Strategic Direction of the Edgar Street Grid be agreed and the findings be forwarded to the Cabinet Member.**
- (b) subject to the Review being approved, the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan should be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive had approved its response; and;**
- (c) a further report on progress in response to the Review should be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.**

**61. SAFER HEREFORDSHIRE SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP ANNUAL REPORT 2010**

(Councillor R H Smith declared an interest)

The Committee received a summary report of the activity of the Safer Herefordshire Review Group during 2010 which set out the considered findings and recommendations from the Group.

The Partnership Manager outlined the key findings from the work of the Review Group. These had been based on national indicators within the Corporate Plan that were linked to the Local Area Agreement priorities. The chosen indicators were NI21 (Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime issues by the local council and police), NI30 (To reduce the re-offending rate of prolific and other priority offenders), NI39 (To reduce alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates) and NI40 (To increase the numbers of people in effective drug treatment).

She reported that the Review Group felt that co-ordination of the activity which surrounded alcohol harm reduction would become the key to its success. The suggestion that funding streams and all alcohol commissioning should be centralised, with the commissioning of services by the Alcohol Harm Reduction Group directed through the Joint Commissioning Group, had been supported.

The Partnership Manager went on to say that whilst considering NI40, it had been revealed that in-patient detox and rehabilitation programmes were not as effective as other treatment regimes. Whilst the drug and alcohol treatment services dealt with the physical aspects of addiction, a more effective approach would be a holistic, wrap around model, which would also address the underlying causes of addiction. It had been suggested that Registered Social Landlords should be encouraged to set some housing stock aside for users, as part of the wrap around agenda.

The Vice Chairman reported that scrutiny of the Safer Herefordshire Partnership had been a useful undertaking. Whilst road safety was one of the partnership priorities, the Group had decided not to consider NI 147 (to reduce the number of people killed or injured in road traffic accidents), as there were a number of groups that were already

working in this area. He believed that whilst the Group had made as much progress as was possible in scrutinising Safer Herefordshire, and that it would be appropriate for the work to be continued within the new Council, after the elections in May 2011.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- A Member stated that the SHIFT Care Farm programme would receive joint funding from West Mercia Police Authority and the West Mercia Probation Trust.
- A Member raised concerns regarding policing levels in Hereford after 10pm. The Vice Chairman said that whilst the Review Group had been looking at strategic issues, it had been advised not to become involved in operational matters. Concerns germane to operational matters should be raised through the Partnership at the monthly MATAC (Multi-agency Tasking and Co-ordination) meeting. A Member added that he had attended a MATAC meeting, and found it to be well organised, with a wide reaching attendance from the agencies involved. It had dealt with broad strategic matters as well as individual cases.
- A Member expressed concerns that the South Wye area of Hereford, which consisted of over twenty two thousand people, was policed only by one constable and two Community Support Officers. This had resulted in a great deal of frustration for the residents in the local area.

**RESOLVED:**

**That**

- a) **the report be noted; and;**
- b) **it be recommended that the arrangements in place for conducting scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership should be continued when the Council determined its new structure following the elections in May 2011**

**62. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE SAFER HEREFORD PARTNERSHIP**

(Councillor R H Smith declared an interest)

The Committee received a report on the future developments of the Safer Herefordshire Partnership.

The Partnership Manager reported that the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review would impact on the financial viability of Safer Herefordshire. The partnership had relied heavily on Area Based Grant (ABG) funding and smaller partner contributions. As revenue grants would no longer be ring fenced, Safer Herefordshire budgets were vulnerable. Partners were also unsure what future resources they would be able to provide. The reduction in Supporting People funding could have an impact, as a decrease in housing support to vulnerable individuals could lead to greater levels of crime, substance misuse and domestic abuse.

She went on to say that the Home Office had produced a White Paper entitled 'Policing in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century' which highlighted a need for more effective working with local authorities and wider criminal justice system as well as the intention to abolish Police Authorities, which would be replaced with directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

Safer Herefordshire carried out the function of Drug Action Team (DAT) for the County, so had responsibility for all substance misuse work. Work was currently funded through a pooled budget of funds from the National Treatment Agency (NTA) and PCT. With the abolition of PCT's by 2013, the funding would move to the new Public Health Service. The NTA would be incorporated into the Department of Health (DoH). A new combined Government strategy recognised the need for policies on drug and alcohol treatment to be joined up. The strategy detailed the need to focus on the problem of drug dependency rather than merely on drug treatment. A recovery and abstinence model was being developed in the County, which would focus on planned discharges from the service. Substance misuse commissioning would move towards an outcome based approach.

In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- In reply to a question from a Member, the Partnership Manager said that community resilience was a term which was used to address quality of life and anti social behaviour issues within communities. This was an area that the Partnership would focus on.
- A Member applauded the priorities laid out in paragraph seventeen of the report, but expressed concern over the impact of the viability of the Partnership in the light of the Comprehensive Spending Review cuts, as stated in paragraph five.
- A Member said that the Committee should be aware that with the abolition of Police Authorities, an executive of 17 members which included elected Members, would be replaced by one executive officer who would be supported by a panel with have oversight of the strategy of the Commissioner. This individual would be expected to have oversight of the West Mercia region; Herefordshire, Shropshire , Worcestershire and Telford and Wrekin.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

### **63. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted its Work Programme. Following the suggestion from a Member, it was agreed that a Review of the policies and procedures used to preserve historic buildings should be included in the Programme.

**Resolved: That, subject to the addition above addition, the work programme be approved and reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

The meeting ended at 10.55 am

**CHAIRMAN**