



Vibrant, Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

20 November 2014

Time 6.00 pm **Public Meeting?** YES **Type of meeting** Scrutiny

Venue Committee Room 3 - Civic Centre, St Peter's Square, Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Chair Cllr Stephen Simkins (Lab)

Vice Chair Cllr Andrew Wynne (Con)

Labour

Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Ian Brookfield

Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Caroline Siarkiewicz

Cllr Tersaim Singh

Conservative

Cllr Barry Findlay

Liberal Democrat

Cllr Richard Whitehouse

UKIP

Cllr Malcolm Gwinnett

Quorum for this meeting is three Councillors.

Information for the Public

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact the democratic support team:

Contact Deb Breedon
Tel/Email 01902 551250 or deborah.breedon@wolverhampton.gov.uk
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Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential or commercial nature. These reports are not available to the public.

Agenda

- | <i>Item No.</i> | <i>Title</i> |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 | Apologies |
| 2 | Declarations of Interest |
| 3 | Minutes of the previous meeting (02.10.2014) (Pages 1 - 6) |
| 4 | Budget Review - 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 - 2018/19 (Pages 7 - 10)
[To seek the panel's feedback on the draft five year budget and medium term financial strategy that was approved as the basis of consultation by the Cabinet on 22 October 2014, in particular the elements that relate to the work of this panel] |
| 5 | Savings Proposal URN 0360 - Deletion of Neighbourhood Wardens Service (Pages 11 - 14)
[To provide details of the Neighbourhood Warden savings proposal for further discussion] |



Vibrant, Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel Minutes - 2 October 2014

Attendance

Members of the Vibrant, Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Stephen Simkins (Chair)
Cllr Andrew Wynne (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Mary Bateman
Cllr Greg Brackenridge
Cllr Ian Brookfield
Cllr Barry Findlay
Cllr Bhupinder Gakhal
Cllr Keith Inston
Cllr Tersaim Singh
Cllr Richard Whitehouse

Employees

Deborah Breedon	Scrutiny Officer
Christopher Hale	Head of Housing
Andy Jervis	Head of Regulatory Services
Joanne Mason	Manager - Anti-social Behaviour Unit
Karen Samuels	Head of Community Safety
Adam Sheen	Senior Solicitor

Part 1 – items open to the press and public

Item No. *Title*

- 1 Apologies**
There were no apologies for non attendance.
- 2 Declarations of Interest**
Cllr Tersaim Singh declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 on the agenda as a member of Wolverhampton Homes Board.
- 3 Minutes of previous meeting (17 July 2014)**
Resolved:
That the minutes of 17 July 2014 Vibrant Safe and Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.
- 4 Matters arising**
Cllr Andrew Wynne voiced his concerns that the Neighbourhood Warden report requested at the last meeting had not been forthcoming, the scrutiny officer advised that a briefing note is been prepared for circulation to the group. Cllr Andrew Wynne

they voiced further concern that the Scrutiny Panel would not be receiving all savings proposals that fall under the panel remit and asked for some clarity about the budget process.

Cllr Stephen Simkins requested that panel members are notified of specific savings proposals that fall under the panel remit and are given opportunity to request a specific report to panel meeting 4 December 2014 on any item that falls in the remit of the panel.

Cllr Wynne and Findlay voiced their opposition to the reduction of Neighbourhood Wardens from 15 to 0 as a budget saving proposal and requested a more in depth report to this panel on 4 December 2014.

Resolved:

That the chair of Scrutiny Board and the Leader be requested to clarify the process for budget scrutiny this year

That Scrutiny Board is requested to approve a report relating to Neighbourhood Wardens to VSSC Scrutiny Panel 4 December 2014.

5 **ASB Service Review and options' appraisal for future service delivery**

Cllr Elias Mattu introduced the report and provided a summary of the future delivery of the City's Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Service. Karen Samuels outlined the options outlined arising from the comprehensive service review.

Cllr Gakhal welcomed the work of the ASB team and congratulated them on the fantastic work they are doing.

Cllr Mary Bateman suggested that ASB is still a major problem in her Wednesfield North ward as the figures reveal there has been a 15% increase in the first seven months of 2014. She welcomed option 4, the proposed new staffing structure and TUPE transfer of Wolverhampton City Council (WCC) staff to Wolverhampton Homes (WH) as the preferred way forward.

Cllr Stephen Simkins also considered option 4 as the way forward and suggested that scrutiny should keep an overview of how the proposal moves forward and for scrutiny to help shape the service going forward.

Cllr Richard Whitehouse referred to paragraph 3.2.1 of the report a section relating to noise nuisance and voiced concerns that there would be no out of office hours unless in serious circumstances. He referred to a noise nuisance incident that had occurred recently; a Sunday church service had been disturbed by noise from a neighbouring restaurant, which he advised is a criminal offence. He endorsed option 4 as the right way forward.

Cllr Ian Brookfield referred to the proposed teams that will cover the business districts and suggested that work should be done to get support from local businesses, he referred to a recent issue canal boats had had with a public house and restaurant in a Wednesfield business district. He welcomed the ASB team and

new ways of working from 1 October 2014 and endorsed option 4 emphasising that he would like to see proposals reaching out to business districts. Cllr Ian Brackenbridge praised the good work of the ASB team in Wednesfield South ward. Cllr Findlay further praised the ASB team for the good work they are doing.

Mark Henderson thanked Councillors for their comments

Scrutiny Panel heard that ASB team works closely with local police to talk to complainants to reduce tensions in local areas, Jo Mason advised that there is a police officer based in the ASB team and that the relationship between police and ASB team is strong and develops enhanced information sharing.

Councillors agreed that nipping ASB incidents in the bud through communication to express what the issue is and trying to resolve the issue at an early stage is the sensible way forward.

Cllr Andrew Wynne indicated that the scrutiny of ASB has resulted in a good and efficient ASB service with a joined up ASB team, in terms of moving to WH he asked for assurance that there has to be a robust management framework. He was assured that there is already a strong performance management network in place.

Cllr Tersaim Singh asked if Tenant Management Organisations (TMO's) are charged for ASB services. Chris Hale advised that housing services does try to support TMO's and that there is no formal charging back process.

Cllr Stephen Simkins voiced his concerns that there may be an imbalance, not charging for services. He suggested that other housing associations in the City could be considered and queried whether this could be an opportunity to offset the loss of three officer posts. He referred to Bromford Midland Heart Housing association who has its own ASB team.

Councillors considered that ASB officers doing the same job should be entitled to the same rate of pay.

Cllr Stephen Simkins considered that the out of hour's noise nuisance team should not be withdrawn, if there is a possibility of finding funding for the service, bearing in mind the community trigger and the need for the service to be there, to avoid putting extra pressure on police services. He suggested it may be merged into the ASB team. In response Andy Jervis advised that the noise nuisance team service is most likely to remain where it is currently, however he advised he would monitor how the new configured noise service will look to review in the future.

In response to a question from the Chair, Adam Sheen advised that the integrated legal team would save costs and would reduce the potential for two separate teams of lawyers pulling in different directions.

The Chair summarised that this was a good paper and that the areas of concern are:

- Out of hours noise nuisance cover
- Anomaly of different rates of pay for ASB officers
- Open negotiations with other housing providers in the City in relation to ASB
- Need for two full time police officers to work with the ASB team

Chief Inspector Tracey Packham confirmed that there is one full time ASB police officer. She advised that the police force is also facing staffing reductions and an additional ASB police officer is not a likely consideration.

Resolved:

1. That the scrutiny panel comments on the options for the future delivery model of the city's Anti-social Behaviour Service; in particular on the preferred option (Option 4) detailed in the report be taken into consideration in the final report to Cabinet, as follows:
 - Out of hours noise nuisance cover
 - Anomaly of different rates of pay for ASB officers
 - Open negotiations with other housing providers in the City in relation to ASB
 - Need for two full time police officers to work with the ASB team
2. That the scrutiny panel endorse the proposal to retain the existing arrangements for the management of domestic noise complaints.
3. That the scrutiny panel endorse the proposal to procure a single supplier for legal services for ASB legal work.
4. That the scrutiny panel endorse the application of a consistent approach to managing ASB cases in Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) properties by the introduction of a city-wide ASB policy.
5. That the item has been considered as pre-decision scrutiny and can therefore not be available for call-in once a decision is made by the Executive.

6 **Anti-social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014**

Joanne Mason provided a report to brief councillors on the new legislation relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and provide an update on plans for local implementation. Panel Members views were requested on the proposed threshold and process for the Community Trigger.

The report highlights that the ASB elements of the bill (parts 1-6) are designed to introduce simpler, more effective powers for tackling ASB and provide better protection for victims and communities, act as a deterrent to perpetrators and give victims a say in the way their complaints are dealt with.

Chief Inspector Tracey Packham highlighted the following points:

- ASB powers are being streamlined from 19 to 6.
- Encourages partnership working.
- Keen to give victims voice.
- Not entirely sure of the work load the community trigger may generate, in the pilot it had little effect, however in reality it could be very different.

The report highlighted that there is no additional funding from government for implementation of the new legislation and that the Community trigger process which is a statutory requirement, will have to be managed within existing resources.

Cllr Richard Whitehouse referred to the Community Trigger, he questioned what the legislation relating to Community Trigger was all about and what the point of it was.

Cllr Andrew Wynne indicated that the legislation was about empowering victims and anything that helps the victim and the community is good.

Cllr Stephen Simkins surmised that the take up and impact of the Community Trigger is an unknown factor; how many, what cost and what is expected of ward Councillors is yet to be established.

Cllr Stephen Simkins suggested that a briefing note for Councillors would be useful, to address the points made and addressing what is expected of ward councillors.

Resolved:

1. That councillors note the legislative change and plans for local implementation.
2. That the scrutiny panel comments on the proposed threshold for the community trigger and the suggested processes for its provision are noted.
3. That a briefing note is prepared for circulation to all Councillors to inform of the changes to Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) legislation with a focus on the 'Community Trigger, the trigger threshold and the role of ward councillor'.

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Vibrant Safe & Sustainable Communities Scrutiny Panel

20 November 2014

Report Title	Budget Review – 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19	
Cabinet Member with Lead Responsibility	Councillor Roger Lawrence Leader of the Council	
	Councillor Andrew Johnson Resources	
Wards Affected	All	
Accountable Strategic Director(s)	Keith Ireland, Managing Director Sarah Norman, Community Tim Johnson, Education and Enterprise	
Originating service	Strategic Finance	
Accountable officer(s)	Mark Taylor Tel Email	Assistant Director Finance 01902 55(6609) mark.taylor@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Panel is recommended to:

1. Provide feedback to Scrutiny Board for consolidation and onward response to Cabinet on the draft budget and medium term financial strategy 2015/16 to 2018/19, in particular those elements that are relevant to this Scrutiny Panel, including specifically:
 - a. the savings proposals summarised at Appendix A.
2. Approve that the Scrutiny Panel response be finalised by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Panel and forwarded to Scrutiny Board for consideration.

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to seek the panel's feedback on the draft five year budget and medium term financial strategy that was approved as the basis of consultation by the Cabinet on 22 October 2014, in particular the elements that relate to the work of this panel.

2. Background

- 2.1. At its meeting on 22 October 2014, the Cabinet considered a draft budget and medium term financial strategy for the period 2015/16 to 2018/19. Cabinet approved the draft budget strategy as the basis of budget consultation and scrutiny over forthcoming months.
- 2.2. The Cabinet report identified a requirement to make further savings of £59.2 million by 2018/19, due to a combination of reductions in resources and cost pressures. The report included a list of new savings amounting to £8.9 million to contribute to addressing this savings requirement, in addition to £18.1 million of savings that were approved for further development by Cabinet on 25 June 2014.
- 2.3. As detailed in the Cabinet report, the budget and medium term financial strategy will be considered by scrutiny panels during the November/December round of meetings and the feedback from those meetings will be reported to Scrutiny Board on 9 December 2014, which will consolidate that feedback in a formal response to Cabinet on 14 January 2015. The feedback provided to Scrutiny Board will include questions asked by panel members, alongside the responses that they received. These arrangements have been endorsed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scrutiny Board.
- 2.4. Scrutiny Board will consider the budget again in January 2015, following an update to Cabinet (Resources) Panel on the draft budget and medium term financial strategy and the local government finance settlement, which is scheduled for January 2015. The purpose of this meeting will be to consider the response of Cabinet to the comments made by Scrutiny Board during the November/December round of meetings, together with any new savings proposals that may emerge. The outcome of this Board meeting will be incorporated into the final Cabinet budget report, scheduled for February 2015, ahead of full council considering the budget in March 2015.
- 2.5. In order to limit the volume of paper used as part of the budget reporting process, the Cabinet report has not been appended to this covering report. Panel members are instead requested to bring their copy of the 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19 report, which was circulated with the 22 October 2014 Cabinet agenda. Detail of individual savings proposals can be found on the council's website at: <http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/budgetsavings>.

3. Proposals relating to the work of this panel

- 3.1. Included in the draft budget and medium term financial strategy are savings proposals relating to the remit of this panel. These are listed at Appendix A. The panel is requested to provide and record its comments on these proposals, for submission to Scrutiny Board and then Cabinet.
- 3.2. In addition to commenting on these specific savings proposals, the panel may also request additional information or clarification in relation to the budget and medium term financial strategy. Any such requests will be noted separately, either for consideration by the panel at a future date, or for information to be forwarded to the panel members concerned.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1. The financial implications are discussed in the body of the report, and in the report to Cabinet.
[MF/29102014/J]

5. Legal implications

- 5.1. The legal implications are discussed in the report to Cabinet.
[RB/30102014/W]

6. Equalities implications

- 6.1. The equalities implications are discussed in the report to Cabinet.

7. Environmental implications

- 7.1. The environmental implications are discussed in the report to Cabinet.

8. Human resources implications

- 8.1. The human resources implications are discussed in the report to Cabinet.

9. Schedule of background papers

- 9.1 2015/16 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 – 2018/19, report to Cabinet, 22 October 2014

Leisure and Communities

Removal of subsidy for Blakenhall Community & Healthy Living Centre	Community	-	100	-
Deletion of Neighbourhood Wardens Service	Education & Enterprise	-	480	-
Acceleration of reconfiguration of internally delivered Cultural Services	Education & Enterprise	-	220	(220)
Accelerated Savings From Grand Theatre Grant	Education & Enterprise	-	15	(15)
Review of Community Safety Service	Education and Enterprise	-	35	(35)

City Services

Reduction in the level of management in the waste service	Delivery	-	40	-
Acceleration of saving proposal 0041 - reconfiguration of the waste service	Delivery	-	230	(230)
Reduction in waste disposal costs (landfill)	Delivery	-	100	-
Removal of the historical contract growth costs for landfill tax	Delivery	-	140	-

Economic Regeneration and Prosperity

Additional New Homes Bonus through the Empty Homes Council Tax data cleanse	Education & Enterprise	-	400	-
Housing Revenue Account Shops Portfolio	Education & Enterprise	-	250	-
New combined Housing service	Education & Enterprise	-	100	-



Savings Proposal

Report Title	Deletion of Neighbourhood Wardens Service
Cabinet Member with Lead Responsibility	Elias Mattu Leisure and Communities
Accountable Strategic Director	Tim Johnson
Originating service	Education & Enterprise
Accountable officer	Sheila Collett
	Tel 01902 556042
	Email Sheila.Collett2@wolverhampton.gov.uk

1.0 Description of Savings Proposal

To delete the Neighbourhood Wardens service. This proposal removes the entire service with no on-going patrolling and neighbourhood level public re-assurance services provided by the City Council. The proposal removes the ability of the City Council to directly target neighbourhood level issues. Whilst the Neighbourhood Safety Co-ordinators would still be in place to provide tasking and Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings across the City, proactive street level resources would be removed.

The service led consultation has identified a number of issues. Officers are currently exploring how some of these issues can be mitigated whilst still meeting the required savings targets. The options available will be considered by Cabinet in due course.

2.0 Table Setting out Financial Proposal

2.1 Total base budget savings

	Year 2014/15 £000	Year 2015/16 £000	Year 2016/17 £000	Year 2017/18 £000	Year 2018/19 £000	Year Total £000
Total base budget savings	0	480	0	0	0	480

2.2 Staffing Implication

	Year 2014/15 FTE	Year 2015/16 FTE	Year 2016/17 FTE	Year 2017/18 FTE	Year 2018/19 FTE	Year Total FTE
Total base						
budget	0.0	18.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.0
savings						

3.0 Communications Strategy Implications

3.1 The Communications Strategy Implications of this proposal represent a considerable risk. This proposal will require the appropriate level of consultation and will take into account the views of service users and key stakeholders. A consultation exercise has now been undertaken and the findings will be reported to Cabinet as part of the wider Cabinet report.

4.0 Corporate Landlord Implication

4.1 The Corporate Landlord Implications of this proposal represent some risk. The wardens currently occupy 3 Local Area Offices working alongside other staff in Neighbourhood Services. This proposal would remove the viability of the service remaining in these offices. The sites would be handed back to Corporate Landlord once they become surplus to determine their future, the choices being either to be reutilised for another Council service, asset transfer or full disposal.

5.0 Customer Implications

5.1 The implications for customers of this proposal represent a considerable risk. Local people will no longer have access to Neighbourhood Wardens in any part of the City. This will greatly reduce the resolution of local issues and the fast track approach to addressing crime and community safety issues in neighbourhoods with a far greater reliance on partner interventions rather than direct Council intervention. Public re-assurance and early intervention will be greatly reduced through the lack of a presence in neighbourhoods.

6.0 Economic Implications

6.1 The Economic Implications of this proposal represent some risk. The proposal will lead to the loss of day-to-day contact with small businesses in all neighbourhoods. In turn this will significantly reduce the resolution of business issues particularly related to crime and community safety. The loss of public re-assurance to all neighbourhoods will potentially impact on the levels of crime amongst businesses and their customers.

7.0 Environmental Implications

7.1 The Environmental Implications of this proposal represent a considerable risk. There could be increased nuisance and environmental issues in neighbourhoods. Fewer environmental issues will

be identified and addressed at an early stage leading to longer term, potentially more costly, issues to resolve and more unresolved issues. This is likely to lead to a reduction in the environmental quality of neighbourhoods, countering the Council's attempts to reinvigorate the City - one of its Corporate aims

8.0 Equality Implications

8.1 All proposals will be assessed to determine if there are potential equality implications. Where appropriate, an equality analysis screening will be undertaken. Where this indicates that implications may exist, a full equality analysis will be completed.

9.0 Financial Implications

9.1 The Financial Implications in terms of savings and investments are as described in the proposal above. There may be some longer term costs associated with this proposal as a result of early issue identification and intervention being lost.

10.0 Health Implications

10.1 The Health Implications of this proposal represent some risk. There are potentially some low level health implications that may arise as a result of a reduction in capacity to provide re-assurance and neighbourhood safety particularly amongst the elderly, isolated and vulnerable.

11.0 Legal Implications

11.1 The Legal Implications of this proposal are minimal.

12.0 Policy Implications

12.1 The Policy & Corporate Plan Implications on agreed Council policy represent some risk. From 2015/16 delivery of the priorities in the Re-invigorating the City corporate priority will be affected as there will be the loss of the main Council frontline resource for reporting and addressing crime and community safety issues, providing public reassurance and contributing to tackling eyesores in neighbourhoods and urban areas. From 2015/16 there will also be an impact on the Corporate Plan priority Empowering People and Communities due to the loss of a further resource to directly engage with local communities and to encourage more active communities, healthier lifestyles and early intervention.

13.0 Procurement Implications

13.1 The Procurement Implications of this proposal are minimal.

14.0 Staffing Implications

14.1 The HR Implications of this proposal represent some risk. The closure of the service would result in the loss of 18 jobs. Reductions to employee numbers will be managed first through voluntary redundancies, vacancy management and re-deployment and will require fair and due

process to be followed regarding the consultation, selection and implementation of compulsory redundancies.