

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Thursday, 22nd November, 2012

Present:- Councillors Robin Moss (Chair), Ben Stevens (Vice-Chair), Patrick Anketell-Jones, Brian Simmons, Michael Evans and Manda Rigby

42 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

43 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Democratic Services Officer drew attention to the emergency evacuation procedure.

44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Brett had sent her apology to the Panel.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

46 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

47 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

There was none.

48 MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 27TH SEP 2012

The Panel confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting as a true record and they were duly signed by the Chairman.

49 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN: AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE 'IMPACT' (30 MINUTES)

The Chairman invited Andre Langford (Avon and Somerset Police) to give an update on 'IMPACT'.

Andre Langford said that in December 2010, Avon and Somerset Police launched IMPACT, which is a multi-agency Integrated Offender Management unit, which includes Police, Probation, Prisons and Drug services. Its key focus is to stop re-offending - working together to target those offenders of most concern in a more structured and coordinated way. The IMPACT approach was nationally recognised in the Government's green paper; 'breaking the cycle: effective punishment, rehabilitation and sentencing of offenders'.

Bristol, being one of our major cities, was chosen as a pilot site. IMPACT in Bristol was established 3 years ago. The problem that Bristol faced was really quite significant considering that there is a group of 700 prolific offenders in Bristol whilst in B&NES there is around 10% of that number. Andre Langford said that the unit is relatively well staffed in terms of ratio to subjects/individuals involved in the scheme.

The scheme is quite challenging as it deals with most problematic people, which are prolific offenders. Very often the success is moderate but the true rehabilitation does require time. The scheme did however contribute towards reduction in crime in the area. The scheme is able to provide much better support to individuals who are subject of the scheme through partnership with other agencies and organisations, such as Drug and Alcohol Treatment Services.

Currently the IMPACT office is based in Bath and there are two Police Officers, offender managers, intelligence officers and administration support dedicated to the team, with Andre Langford. The team is working closely with two Probations Officers and Probation Team Leader. The scheme has mostly male clients.

Individuals that are involved in the scheme have to meet certain criteria in order to be included in the scheme. It would be wrong if the scheme has increased number of clients – the purpose for the scheme would never be achieved.

The IMPACT is very careful about the risk assessment towards the concerns of the community. The IMPACT use traffic light measure based on risk assessment. Red present most risk and therefore needs more immediate attention. Amber area is the one that deserves the real attention. It is not as big in risk as red but could easily be high risk if it is not managed properly. Green is the lowest risk area. The scheme is not only to watch over the offenders but also to provide the adequate support.

The IMPACT team has regular meetings, two per month. One is to manage offenders (discussion on individuals in the group) and one is to review where they are in terms of numbers and individuals (are they ready to transfer, did they improve, how they cope, etc).

Performance information for the district is impressive. B&NES continue to enjoy healthy crime reduction. Over five year period reductions in theft from motor vehicle equal almost 27%, theft of motor vehicle 34%. Some of those successes are down to IMPACT though it is difficult to measure how much IMPACT contributed to reduction of crime.

Andre Langford read out short case study of individual who committed a number of crimes and who was drug and alcohol user from the age of 15. In prison he realised that he has to change. He decided to join the programme and successfully completed some courses and with the help of probation officer found the job. He was also better with his family. He was grateful to IMPACT. However, he was involved in robbery and sent back to the prison. In the prison he got engaged in some other courses in a hope that he will be straight and narrow. Andre Langford said that the reason why he turned back to crime was that he was bored; peer pressure and easy reach to alcohol and drugs led him into crime. Andre Langford said that the recent news are that individual in question is doing well and determine to succeed in his quest to become straight and narrow.

Andre Langford concluded that this is all about the IMPACT, in broad sense, and that he welcomes questions from the panel.

The Chairman thanked Andre Langford for this update. The Chairman said that it seems like that criminal behaviour in individuals is related to problematic families so he asked if the IMPACT had the opportunity to work with families as well as individuals.

Andre Langford said that they do work with the families but that there is much more that the team could do. Andre Langford said that he is not directly involved in the work with families, as he is more involved in the work with individuals, but that he would be interested to work with families in near future.

The Chairman asked to what extent the IMPACT is acting as deterrent as well as support agency for individuals.

Andre Langford said that the IMPACT is always looking how to quantify the measure of success although it is not quite straight forward how to do that. There are few meetings and seminars across the country discussing this issue and Andre Langford will network with other authorities in order to take on board their experience on this field.

Councillor Simons asked if the number of offenders changed, in relation to number of offences, since the IMPACT is in operation. Councillor Simmons asked if the IMPACT covers Anti-Social Behaviour.

Andre Langford said that certainly there was a reduction in crime. In terms of the Anti-Social Behaviour – it is recognised as terrible problem for the community. There is allocated Anti-Social Behaviour Team though at the present time it is not under IMPACT criteria. If there are issue with young individuals that are not within IMPACT criteria then they will be referred to Youth Offending Team or similar.

Councillor Evans said that the best rehabilitation is passage of time since time is the best rehabilitator. Councillor Evans thanked Andre Longford for being honest with the Panel on successful and on not so successful stories. Councillor Evans said that he was particularly interested in the case scenario and how the individual went back

to crime because he was bored (no work) and because he mentally didn't cope well so he wondered what IMPACT actually do to get people into work.

Andre Langford responded that through their contacts in employment services they can help individuals to get, like in this case, forklift truck licence. Also work together with other partners, such as Princess trust, to provide opportunities to those individuals.

Councillor Rigby said that she would like to see how much it would cost to keep someone in prison in comparison to have the same individual outside of prison, through the IMPACT programme.

Andre Langford said it is far more expensive to keep an individual in the prison than for them to live in the community under the IMPACT watch.

The Chairman thanked Andre Langford for the update.

It was **RESOLVED** to note the update.

50 MEDIUM TERM SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING - 2013/14-2015/16 (90 MINUTES)

The Chairman made the following points before he opened the discussion on this item:

There are two budgets before the Panel - Regeneration, Skills and Major Projects and Tourism, Leisure & Culture (including Heritage) so the Chairman suggested that those budgets are taken separately. The Panel agreed with Chairman's suggestion.

The Chairman also informed the Panel that budget reports in front of them are quite broad and overlap remits of many PDS Panels so he asked the Panel that discussion stick to the remits of this Panel.

The Chairman said that, few days ago, there was a statement by the Prime Minister that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) would no longer be a requirement from Local Authorities and asked if there is any more information on that considering that EIAs are there to protect us as authority from legal challenge, under Equalities Act.

Samantha Jones (Equalities Manager) commented that there were few articles across the country about the potential implications of the statement made by the Prime Minister. It is under British Law, and not European Law, that Equalities Act 2010 sits and we would have to re-write all the policies if that is the case. Samantha Jones said that at the moment she can't see that to work and in terms of B&NES we should continue with the EIAs. Samantha Jones reminded the Panel that Council and Elected Members have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations – when making decisions and setting policies. To do this, it is necessary for the organisation to understand the potential effects of its activities on different people. Where these are not immediately apparent, it may be necessary to carry out some form of assessment or analysis, in order to understand them.

The Chairman thanked Samantha Jones for this comment and asked for the briefing in relation to the latest on the statement from the Prime Minister including the briefing on Members' responsibilities when making and recommending financial decisions according to the Equalities Act 2010. The Chairman suggested that those two briefings be circulated to all Members of the Council. The Panel agreed with Chairman's suggestions.

The Chairman said that the Panel received confirmation that the BDUK will go ahead as they received State Aid. The Panel involvement on broadband provision was through the Call In that was hosted by this Panel. The Chairman therefore question if the cuts to the Scrutiny process, as outlined in the budget proposals, would be appropriate for good governance. The Chairman said that this issue has been a topic of the last Chairs and Vice Chairs meeting couple days ago where the Chief Executive put through the proposal to cut on Scrutiny. The Chairman said that his personal view is that while we may want to look how we do things and how we do things better, the Scrutiny is an important part of the Democratic process and broadband Call In is a good example how Scrutiny works.

Councillor Rigby added that Scrutiny is part of the Democratic Services and they fall within Resources PDS Panel remit, on which Councillor Rigby is a Vice Chair. The Panel is formally asking every Panel to give their views on proposed cuts in Scrutiny and those comments will be on Resources PDS agenda for January meeting.

The Chairman said that he would want to see details in budget proposals across the piece that gives the opportunity to scrutinise rather than some individual projects.

Andrew Pate (Strategic Director for Resources) said that he wanted to start by introducing the Medium Term Plans in general in terms before each of plan.

The whole idea of the report is to enable the Panel to input in the budget process. The Panel is asked to highlight specific issues which will then be taken into account and all the comments from all Scrutiny Panels will be summarised for Resources Panel meeting in January 2013. In addition the comments made by the Panel, or individual Panel Members, could be taken on board by the relevant Cabinet Member and Cabinet. The report does give the substantial detail in this stage, including the £30m saving, and it therefore enable to comments to be made early about the shape of the budget, hence why there is no plan to come back in January with more details. There are couple of things that will come back in January and one is proposed cuts in Democratic Services end, which includes some cuts in Scrutiny, which was already discussed at the last Resources Panel meeting and which will be on Resources Panel January agenda. In a meantime some work will be done for the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs on some of the options. Conclusions had not been drawn at this stage.

Andrew Pate said that we are working under basis that the Equalities Legislation applies and that the EIAs are the best way to demonstrate that we comply with Equalities. With that in mind, the relevant Divisional Directors in Planning had to implement the changes in the Medium Term Plan are carrying out assessments. The Resources Panel will be looking all the Equalities issues at its January meeting.

The Council spends about £250m each year from its day to day revenue budgets (excluding schools which are funded separately). The level of budget challenge is £30m, which is a 3 year figure. The approach being taken is a 3 year approach, programme of changes to meet that challenge. That challenge is broke down to 3 almost equal parts. There is about of third which relates to increase in income, and that includes quite different measures which appear making Resources block, which would include an impact on Tourism. The other measures are linked to getting more from commercial states and commercial activities, which isn't only about putting rents up but through more creative means. The second third of the challenge is being met by efficiencies, back office savings (through the Change programme). The final third relates to service reductions, service cuts, which are included in appendices. All three together make the £30m and the visibility to spot individual numbers is there where there is a saving linked to service cuts, and that's why someone could not see all the numbers as some of them are with back office savings. Nevertheless the Plans do address all these issues.

Andrew Pate said that it is challenging period and particular uncertainty this year because Government settlement will not be announced until 19th December. This is very unhelpful as it will give us very little time to react. It is a new system and our grants will be given to us under that system. Andrew Pate said that he heard assumption that it may change and depending how it ends up it may cost us an extra £1m. It is much more than usual uncertainty around. We used national expert to help us model and come up with the best possible assumptions.

There is a substantial investment taking place in priorities and Regeneration is a key aspect of that. In that plan there will be reference to several projects and ongoing investments to those projects. The appendix 2 of the Regeneration Plan has details of the capital programme. Place Plan has also included capital plan. Regeneration Plan savings are mainly management savings whilst with the Place Plan it is much more complicated than that which is explained more in the appendix 4 of the Plan.

The Chairman said that he knows that there is £4.7m in the reserves for the Change programme and he asked if that can be used to fund changes to organisations that we have contractual relationship (i.e. Bath Tourism Plus).

Andrew Pate responded that the intention of the reserve is to enable authority to change to find deficiencies and if the reserve isn't used in that purpose then we are in trouble in terms of finding deficiencies. The Tourism levy is crossing boundaries that we can look into possibility of potentially using that reserve for partnership organisations. How much of it we can use is a challenge.

Councillor Stevens said that there is an assumption that business rates will increase in 0.5% increase and he was wondering, in terms of actual businesses, how that could be quantified.

Andrew Pate responded that, with the new resources system coming to Local Government, there is an opportunity to benefit from an increase in business rates. As a result of the growth incentive scheme, that comes from the City Deal and if that goes through the Council, we could retain a 100% of business rates growth. If we

look into the Enterprise area, where most of the growth is, it equates to around 36m increase in business rates. It is a significant number but not a game changing number. In short terms, there are risks because people can appeal against business rates which will be under responsibility of Local Government.

John Wilkinson said that we are in the middle of process right now and map the Enterprise area. We have to be absolutely certain that this will give us better outcome considering that the message from the Government is that incentives from growth are more and more important than funding from the Government.

John Wilkinson took the Panel through the Regeneration Plan and highlighted the pages 23 (that sets out the proposed savings over 3 years) and 33 (priorities for the current 3 years).

John Wilkinson said the West of England, through the City Deal, has managed to get £2m from BIS (Business Department in Government) for our Bristol and Bath investment service. That is to market the region nationally and internationally. Discussions are in place on exactly how to spend the money. We have got a proposed business plan on how to use the money. For the first time we have some really descent resources from the Government on that programme.

Councillor Stevens said that considering that the Government indicated that our funding for Local Government is more depended on our ability to grow our economy his concern is that our regeneration Team has the resources they require to ensure to receive the funding we need. Councillor Stevens asked if the officers are confident that they have resources they need.

Andrew Pate responded that the substantial investment is going in and despite the level of cuts that we have we are not short in resources, in terms of people on the ground who are involved in projects.

John Wilkinson added that close work between departments and services within the Council (i.e. Regeneration and Major Projects with Planning) gives the resources needed for development.

Andrew Pate said that at the moment we receive Revenue Support Grant which is based on combination of needs and the ability of Local Authority to raise its own resources. In future that will be basically frozen and growth in funding will come from business rates. What we won't get is an increase in Government grant for needs in future (i.e. if cost of social care goes up we won't get grant to cover that up).

Councillor Evans expressed his concern that we spend money attracting business marketing the area though number of measures which we doing to raise the revenue seem to destroy the business.

Andrew Pate said that if we are not increasing the income we will have much more cuts in services.

The Chairman said that his concern with levy is that in continental countries it tends to be a compulsory and not voluntary levy. Voluntary levy is likely to be avoided.

His concern is that small businesses might be interested in voluntary levy to help Bath whilst big companies might not.

The Chairman invited David Trigwell and Mike Butler to introduce Tourism, Leisure and Culture Plan.

David Trigwell took the Panel through the main report and reminded that if the Panel do not like the savings in one area then they should highlight the area where the alternative saving should come from.

Mike Butler (Interim Director for Tourism, Leisure and Culture) took the Panel through the detailed part of the report.

The Chairman commented that the proposal in the report is to look at a voluntary tourist levy and, and as he stated above, some businesses will be looking to avoid that levy so there should be more structured, more formal, more compulsory tax or similar to be equitable at the whole piece. The Chairman also expressed his concern about the Bath Tourism Plus and transition that they have to go through in order to look at different ways to raise the income. That is the discussion that has to take place with the Bath Tourism Plus and that is where the Change programme reserve could be used for.

The Chairman also expressed slight concern that we still need to retain a strategic view of the tourism in the authority that can consider project on how to make sure that people stay for longer time. The Chairman said that one of the ways to do that is by lowering cost of hotel beds/rooms in Bath. The Chairman said that there are a number of hotels in Bath that doesn't want to see, or agree, with these proposals.

The Chairman said that he is also concerned about pg 50 bullet point 'Scope on reducing activities supported by the Council' and that there was no detail attached to it.

The Chairman also said that he was confused what was proposed for Victoria Art Gallery. First of all it was introduction of admission charges (pg 50) then on pg 58 there is mention of 'Implement new retail and exhibition charging measures at the Victoria Art Gallery'. The Chairman asked does that mean the front desk will charge everyone who comes in or are we looking to similar charging model as Tate Modern.

Mike Butler said that discovery card owners will not be charged.

Mike Butler also said that it is voluntary contribution through levy. The idea is to come up with the plan with all the partners, such as the Bath Tourism Plus (BTP), and look out how we can create a levy that will not be bound in law but under some sort of agreement.

Mike Butler is said that there is no intention to remove the funding from the BTP. If there are any decisions to be made in the future then those will be made in the consultation/discussion with the BTP.

Mike Butler also said that there a number of organised trips to Christmas market where overnight staying is way outside of the area. Budget hotels are economic development issue.

Councillor Stevens said that the Council is not able to make tourist levy compulsory. Councillor Stevens said that he would hope for better tax for hotels – hotels with fewer rooms charged less and those with more rooms get higher tax. Councillor Stevens asked about Roman Baths ‘phase 2’ investment and if that will increase the capacity.

Mike Butler said that Roman Baths run over the capacity and that main development is concentrated on maximising the visit during the off-peak hours.

David Trigwell added that the other reason for investment in Roman Baths is to keep it up to date (in terms of what visitors expect to see) and to keep the site in competition nationally and keep the numbers of visitors.

The Chairman said that the Council felt overly optimistic last year with income figures. The Chairman said in order to maximise income there could be different charge in the day (i.e. entry fee to Roman Baths higher during the peak times). The Chairman also suggested that those who fail to turn up, groups and coaches, should pay full or partial amount for not turning up, like it is the case in some other venues across the country.

The Panel **RESOLVED** that:

- 1) The Panel felt that all Officers and every Member of the Council should be briefed that they have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations – when making decisions and setting policies. The Panel also asked Equalities Manager to circulate a briefing in relation to the latest on the statement from the Prime Minister.
- 2) The Panel requested a report on the discussions with the Bath Tourism Plus in terms of the consensual agreement on transition of funding;
- 3) The Panel requested a report on how Tourism Levy will come out in practice, including models of charging versus income

51 WORKPLAN

It was **RESOLVED** to note the workplan.

The meeting ended at 3.00 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services

