

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 11 April 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Bill Hartnett (Chair), and Councillors Roger Hill, Wanda King, and Rebecca Blake

Also Present:

Michael Collins (As Independent – Vice Chair of the Standards Committee)

Officers:

Sue Hanley (As Chair of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership), and Bev Houghton

Committee Services Officer:

Michael Craggs

22. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Anita Clayton, Sheila Blagg (West Mercia Police Authority), and Phil Griffiths (Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire Service).

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

24. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on Tuesday 17th January 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

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25. ANNUAL REPORT - CHAIR OF REDDITCH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Members received the Annual Report from the Chair of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership which was provided in accordance with a list of questions that had been proposed at the previous meeting of the Panel.

- 1) (The Panel has been made aware that the Victim Support Scheme provides invaluable support to victims and witnesses of crime). What is the Community Safety Partnership doing to raise awareness of the scheme in Redditch? Exactly what time of support is being provided through the scheme?

It was explained to the Panel that the Community Safety Partnership helps to raise awareness of Victim Support through its involvement in a number of certain projects. Victim Support is a key partner in the Joint Hate Incident Partnership, making and receiving referrals from victims of hate crime or incidents. As part of the Hate Incident Reporting Scheme, its local office is promoted as a Community Reporting Centre. Victim Support also works closely with the Community Safety Team through cross referrals to the Home Security Project which offers support to victims of burglary and attempted burglary.

Members were informed that all victims of personal crime are now referred to Victim Support. Victims of the most serious types of crime, including rape, sexual assault, domestic burglary, and domestic abuse, are contacted within 48 hours of the crime taking place. In North Worcestershire, an independently funded Serious Crime Worker operates to offer further support to victims of crime. Also, volunteers trained by Victim Support can provide emotional and practical assistance to victims in Worcestershire.

Members heard that Victim Support operates an independent witness service in every criminal court. This helps to put the victims and witnesses at ease about attending court. For example, it is explained to them what they can come to expect at court.

In Redditch, the team based at the Ecumenical Centre can undertake home visits to victims upon request.

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Nationally, a number of promotional campaigns, radio advertisements, and fund raising events support the work of Victim Support and help increase public awareness about the help it provides to victims and witnesses of crime.

- 2) (The Panel is also aware and very much supportive of the Community Payback Scheme in Redditch). How is the Partnership helping to expand, improve, and further publicise the scheme in the Borough?

The Panel was informed that the Partnership is working closely with probation partners to support and promote the use of the scheme. However, much of this work is already done in-house by the Probation Service which manages the scheme.

Elsewhere, the Partnership is represented on a Countrywide Integrated Offender Management Group, a sub-group of the Worcestershire Safer Communities Board, focusing on improving the way that offenders are rehabilitated in Worcestershire. Central to this work is improving the public image of the scheme.

Members heard that 8,716 hours of community payback had been carried out in Redditch between April 2011 and February 2012, of which 923 hours had been undertaken on behalf of the Borough Council. It had also been undertaken at local charity shops, sports clubs, churches, and schools.

In the West Mercia area, the Probation Trust recently moved to a cost neutral model that prioritises projects that cover the costs for the supervisor. The average cost for each project is £150 or equivalent in-kind contribution. Members heard that a neighbouring local authority covered these costs in their particular area. The Panel consequently requested the Chair of the Partnership to feed this information back to the Partnership and to ask that it consider making a contribution to these costs.

Regarding Community Payback, Members queried whether there was sufficient demand for this scheme. Officers replied that arranging Community Payback projects required pre-planning and organisation and they were keen to facilitate this; however in some instances the Council needed further assistance to help manage and supervise certain schemes in Redditch.

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Members suggested that snow clearing during periods of inclement weather would be an appropriate activity for the scheme. Furthermore, it was felt that the Borough Council could benefit from this work. However, the Panel was advised that there were a number of health and safety issues involved. It would also be very difficult to plan this activity in advance, although Officers agreed to pass the Panel's suggestion onto the relevant Environmental Services Team.

- 3) (The Panel understands that members of the Community Safety Team have recently been trained to become specialist advisors on the prevention of crime). What benefits do you expect the Partnership, and Redditch in general, will accrue through this?

Members were referred to a number of important benefits that the Partnership and town in general might obtain. This included: better skills and knowledge to engage with Development Control and Development Plans to positively influence the design of new developments; and implanting crime reduction and community safety principles into development plans from the outset. However, it was explained that Officers cannot be called on as a statutory consultee in the planning applications as this remains the function of the Police Architectural Liaison Officers. Members felt that the West Mercia Police Authority should be asked to reconsider this and to recognise the Officers as official consultees. The Chair of the Partnership agreed to report this suggestion back.

The Panel heard that an accredited crime prevention design advice would likely be made available to non-residential buildings and environments, especially business and civic/community premises. Members heard that this was already taking place in certain locations within the Borough.

It was thought that there would be a greater chance that an in-house crime reduction advisory function could be introduced.

Finally, it was felt that the training itself was an important aspect of the Officers continued professional development which would benefit the Council, Partnership, and Borough as a whole.

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In terms of future training opportunities for other members of the Community Safety Team, the Panel was advised that this would be facilitated wherever possible and resources permitting.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chair thanked Sue Hanley for her report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

**26. REDDITCH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP
PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - QUARTER THREE**

The Panel received an overview of the 2011/12 quarter three performance tables for the Redditch Community Safety Partnership Framework and was led through the crime figures for each of the four priority areas:

Protecting Communities

The number of recorded offences under this priority area generally had remained stable compared to the previous quarter or against the same point in 2010/11.

It was explained to Members that a decrease in the level of hate crime reports to the Council had coincided with an increase in case complexity. It was therefore taking longer for each case to be properly managed and investigated. However, Officers felt that it was encouraging that the more complex cases could be investigated and that more residents were willing to report these incidents of crime.

An analysis and evaluation of Operation STAYSAFE had been commissioned in March 2012. This was a scheme where parents and young people identified would be able to receive advice regarding the harm caused by misuse of alcohol. Additional funding had been provided from the Safer Communities Board to fund this.

Officers had recently delivered hate-crime prevention workshops in local schools. It was reported that this had already worked very well at Trinity High School. Plans were in place to deliver these across other schools in the area.

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The Council had also received very positive feedback from the local lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community having facilitated two gay nights at a town centre nightclub. Officers were liaising with premises and Bromsgrove Pub Watch to establish "Safe Zones" for the LGBT community.

Reducing Re-offending and Restorative Justice

The crime figures under this priority were mixed, with the level of incidents up in some areas and lower in others compared to the same point the year before.

Members were advised that two conferences were being arranged for the West Mercia and Worcestershire areas to provide more information to local agencies on the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Programme. A number of pathways had been developed by the private, public and voluntary sectors in collaboration to help reduce the level of re-offending. It was explained that the Community Safety partners including County Council and Police were already working together to support this programme across Worcestershire. However, it was not thought that the effectiveness of IOM could be measured until approximately eighteen months time.

Safer Streets and Places

The Panel was again informed that the levels of crime were generally mixed compared to previous quarters. However, Members were advised that there had been a decrease in the level of most serious violent incidents compared to the same quarter in 2010/11. Also, the level of night-time economy related violence and public order offences had been decreasing each quarter since June 2010.

Regarding the association projects under this priority area, Members heard that the RoadWay Arts programme was ongoing. The latest decorated bus shelter had been unveiled in March 2012. Elsewhere, there had been no indication that the County Council would be allocating its funding for street light improvements to the CSP for 2012/13.

Secure Homes

Reported incidents of crime for domestic burglary, criminal damage, and serious acquisitive crime had all increased compared to the same point in 2010/11. The Partnership was considering a number

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of options to tackle this problem, including the introduction of a metal-theft prevention project.

Elsewhere, the Panel was informed that the introduction of CCTV at the Winyates Centre had led to the conviction to a lead thief in the area.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted

27. NOTES OF THE REDDITCH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

The Panel considered the minutes of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership Board meetings which had taken place on Wednesday 2nd November 2011 and Monday 5th December 2011.

The Panel was informed of the preparatory arrangements for the English Defence League march which had since been cancelled. The Partnership, Borough Council and key partners had agreed that there would be increased security and surveillance installed at the local mosques to coincide with the march. The Chair of the Partnership had also been delegated the authority to act on behalf of the Partnership regarding the march without the need to convene a meeting.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership Board meetings on Wednesday 2nd November 2011 and Monday 5th December 2011 be noted.

28. END OF YEAR REVIEW

The Panel felt that the previous year had been very successful, not only in terms of holding the Community Safety Partnership to account, but also through publicising its achievements in the local media. Members felt that the Council benefitted from the work of the Panel which is one of the only local authorities in Worcestershire with an established crime and disorder scrutiny forum.

Members referred to the establishment of a new Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Worcestershire as a prime example of the Panel's good work. The Panel had previously lobbied relevant

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authorities for its introduction. Members heard that it was already in operation.

As Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, Sue Hanley thanked the Panel for its hard work and commented that the Partnership sincerely valued its help and support. It was explained however that the Borough Council would need to soon consider the arrangements for scrutinising the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

29. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

30. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that

the Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.10 pm