

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 4 October 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Brazier (Chair), and Councillors Brandon Clayton, Pattie Hill and Roger Hill

Also Present:

Phil Berry, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Officers:

B Houghton and J Willis

Committee Services Officer:

M Craggs

39. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillor Joe Baker, Sheila Blagg (West Mercia Police Authority), and Ken Hazeldene (Hate Incident Partnership).

40. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

41. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on Thursday 5th July 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

Crime and Disorder

Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 4 October 2012

42. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - REDDITCH

The Panel considered the draft Community Safety Performance Framework for Redditch. The information provided would be reflected in the Safer Communities Board performance report which included county-wide figures.

Members heard that the framework's main themes and indicators had been selected by the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Group.

Officers provided a verbal summary of the data under each theme. In particular, the following matters were raised:

- Members felt that reducing re-offending was a significant challenge for the Partnership. Offices acknowledged this and commented that it tended to be prolific offenders who disproportionately affected the overall figures.
- Officers confirmed that the Community Safety Partnership had been asked to consider other methods for measuring the prevalence of community payback in Redditch.
- Members queried whether the significant decrease of recorded figures for environmental and personal anti-social behaviour (ASB) was due in part to the way in which these crimes were recorded. Officers acknowledged that this was a possibility. However, it was explained that very specific distinction has since been introduced to determine which form of offence had been committed.
- Following concern being raised about an increase in alcohol-related recorded crimes in Redditch, Officers confirmed that an error had been made in the way this figure had been reached. Clarification would be provided to Members on the correct figure once this was available.
- Officers clarified that a fifty per cent increase in Sexuality Hate Crime was an increase from two crimes committed during this period to three.
- Members were very pleased with the significant reduction in Night-Time Entertainment (NTE) recorded crime. This was due a number of contributing factors, including the installation of improved CCTV at late night venues in the town centre.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 4 October 2012

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- A Member suggested that 'Shoplifting' should instead be classified as 'theft'.
 - It was felt that 'Arson' and 'Deliberate Fires' were essentially the same form of offence. Furthermore, there was some surprise that the figures included within the report were so low given the spate of bin fires within particular areas of the Borough. Officers therefore agreed to check the origin of the data for their accuracy.

It was explained that, unless any breakdown figures for specific areas of crime was requested by Members, future performance information for Redditch could be made publicly available.

Criminal Damage

As requested at the previous meeting, Members were provided with a comprehensive report detailing criminal damage in Redditch. This included: a full definition of 'criminal damage', including the different types of criminal damage offences; trends in the Borough; figures between 1st April and 31st July 2012 for each ward; and total criminal damage to types of building.

Members heard that criminal damage in Redditch was very steadily declining. They were also informed that criminal damage to a vehicle was the most prevalent type of offence within this crime type. However, it was very difficult to implement preventative measures as a deterrent as this was typically an instinctive offence.

There was some concern regarding the number of offences against schools. Officers thought that the limited surveillance of some buildings outside of school hours could be a contributing factor.

The Panel heard that the Partnership provided advice on what people could do to prevent criminal damage being caused on buildings. This was usually a lengthy process which would involve a full on-site assessment.

Officers would continue to monitor general criminal damage figures in Redditch and would be able to compare this data against other districts.

North Worcestershire Hate Crime Report

Finally, the Panel received a detailed breakdown of recorded hate crimes in Redditch from between April and August 2012.

Crime and Disorder

Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 4 October 2012

It was explained that the Hate Incident Partnership Scheme gave affected residents the opportunity to report an offence external to the Police, either to the Council or partner agencies. However, all relevant authorities were obliged to forward on these reports to the Police if a criminal offence had evidently taken place.

Officers agreed to facilitate an opportunity for Members to attend training sessions which prepared partner agencies for dealing with these issues.

RESOLVED that

The reports be noted.

43. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Panel received the minutes of the Shadow North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) meeting on 3rd July 2012. Members heard that, as the NWCSP remained in shadow form, a decision had yet to be made on which information was to be made publicly available. Members were informed that that the NWCSP would try to be as transparent with its information as possible, although information would need to remain confidential where this was specific about individuals.

Members touched upon and raised questions about a number of issues within the minutes, including the development of a draft performance framework for the shadow body. It was the intention for the framework themes to be consistent across all of the district authorities, however each individual partner would have the opportunity to pick up any particular issue in which it was interested. On a related matter, the Panel heard that the Fire Service was working closely with the Police to share crime data.

Officers also provided an overview of the NWCSP's draft terms of reference and operating protocols which had recently been endorsed by all of the individual authorities. An official application had since been submitted to the Home Office for the terms of reference to be ratified. The NWCSP would remain in shadow form until ratification was received from the Home Office, although this was expected to be a mere formality.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 4 October 2012

44. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS

Officers provided a verbal overview of the arrangements for the election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) to be held on 15th November 2012. There had so far been three declared candidacies in the West Mercia Police area. Prospective candidates had up until Tuesday 16th October to declare their candidacy. Shropshire Council was responsible for managing the elections process. The Supplementary Voting System, whereby voters would be able to select their two preferred candidates, was to be utilised. The Home Office and Electoral Commission would very shortly begin their publicity campaigns around the elections.

Members also heard that Police and Crime Panels had been established in advance of this election. Their principal objective would be to hold the Commissioner to account. Fifteen councillors, including the Borough Council's relevant Portfolio Holder, Councillor Rebecca Blake, had been appointed onto the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel. Worcestershire County Council was responsible for the recruitment process. Two lay members were still to be recruited.

The Police and Crime Panel had already met in shadow form. These meetings would become open to the public once the Panel had been formally endorsed.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

45. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

46. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel expressed an interest in receiving an update on the outcome of the Police and Crime Commission election at its next meeting on 3rd January 2012. Members were also interested in exploring its relationship with the newly formed Police and Crime Panel.

It was expected that the Panel's consideration of the NWCSF's performance framework figures for Redditch would be able to take place in public session.

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 4 October 2012

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers to provide an update on the election of the new Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia at the next meeting;**
- 2) the Work Programme be noted.**

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm