REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 26 September 2018

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Pattie Hill (Chair), and Councillors Julian Grubb, Gemma Monaco and Jennifer Wheeler

Officers:

Bev Houghton

Democratic Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Debbie Chance.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on 27th September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE REPORT

The Community Safety Manager presented the latest update from the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership and in so doing highlighted the following:

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Chair

- The partnership had responsibility for the three districts in north Worcestershire including the Borough of Redditch.
- The Council was involved in holding the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for the West Mercia Police force to account, via the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Regulatory Services' participation in meetings of the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.
- Since the previous meeting of the panel a new sub-group of the partnership, the North Worcestershire Serious Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG), had been introduced.
- There were also a number of operational sub-groups. The Blue Light Group had only been established very recently and was part of a county wide initiative that had been trialled in Worcester to tackle the issue of street drinking.
- Members were advised that the Partnership Plan 2017 – 20 was in the second year of implementation and all of the projects that were delivered by the Partnership linked to their priorities.
- The partnership also received funding from the PCC which had to be spent on specific projects matching his priorities.
- The PCC was not a member of the partnership but had a duty to work closely with all the community safety partnerships in the areas he served.
- The partnership had been allocated funding of £200,000 to spend on local CCTV schemes and a report about this would be presented for Members' consideration in due course.
- Officers were aiming to upgrade the CCTV suite and to move to digital systems like the Police control room.
- There was one lead Community Safety Project Officer for Redditch.
- The Safer Redditch Group had provided funding for a project to tackle youth anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Matchborough. Community groups such as Redditch Boxing Club had provided assistance with this.
- The nominated neighbour scheme was very successful with 80 residents signed up. It was designed to tackle rogue traders and was a scheme that had been piloted in Redditch and Bromsgrove at the request of the PCC.
- Problems with ASB in Smallwood had been reported by residents and Councillor Debbie Chance at PACT meetings. Investigations had found drugs paraphernalia, including discarded needles. The Environmental Services team were disposing of used needles safely and looking for patterns in behaviour.
- The Community Safety Partnership was working with Swanswell on a local pharmacy incentive scheme for drug

addicts. These involved offering a voucher for every five used needles that were returned safely to the pharmacy which then had to be exchanged for clean needles.

- Redditch Pub Watch continued to meet, with the latest meeting having been attended by representatives of 18 organisations. Participants could share information about those who had been thrown out of a public house or of those suspected of committing crimes such as theft.
- A project to tackle ASB in Abbeydale had taken place in March and April 2018 based on concerns reported by a resident. There had been positive feedback from the local community about this project.
- Following a meeting between Councillors, the Police and residents in a local park, action had been taken to tackle ASB in Astwood Bank with a positive outcome.
- The Community Safety Team had worked with the housing Locality Teams over the summer to tackle ASB involving Council tenants.
- The team also took part in the Young Citizens Challenge every year, with children vising the fire station and learning about issues such as fire and water safety.
- The Safer Places Scheme, which provided a safe place in public buildings to those with learning disabilities, continued to be supported in the Borough.
- Hate Crime Awareness Week had been relaunched in 2017 with a range of events.
- The Hate Crime Awareness Week in 2018 would take place on 19th October. Some celebrities would be attending to raise awareness of hate crime whilst Frank Bruno had donated boxing gloves which would feature in the week's events.
- Later in the year there would be 16 days of action as part of the White Ribbon Campaign to help raise awareness of domestic abuse. Professionals would be provided with training to help them identify the signs that might indicate that a person was being abused.
- A youth event was due to take place on 16th December. During this event a survivor of the Rotherham child sexual exploitation case would talk to young people at risk of exploitation about her experiences.
- The Community Safety Partnership undertook evaluations and performance monitoring of every project in line with the PCC's requirements.

Following the presentation Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The action that should be taken to initiate PACT meetings in local communities. Members were advised that generally the police organised the meetings, though partners worked together at the meetings.
- The changing nature of PACT meetings, which were moving away from a traditional Committee meeting structure to more flexible gatherings that met the needs of local communities.
- The support provided by the Council to PACT meetings. Members were advised that Officers attended PACT meetings where relevant. Significant support was also provided by the elected Members who attended these meetings.
- The difficulty for Members that could arise when PACT meetings were booked to take place on the same evening as the Council's Committee meetings which were booked months in advance.
- The potential for a PACT meeting to be arranged for residents living in Abbeydale.
- The extent to which the partnership advertised the Nominated Neighbour Scheme. Members were advised that there were leaflets which Members could distribute and staff in the Housing Service, Police and the fire service had received training in respect of this matter. However, due to limited resources it had not been further promoted.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

5. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The Community Safety Manager delivered a very detailed presentation in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and in so doing highlighted the following:

- CSE could involve gangs or individuals sexually exploiting children.
- Contrary to popular myth boys could be just as vulnerable to CSE as girls, but were less likely to report the issue and more likely to be criminalised.
- CSE was happening in nearly every town and city in the country.
- There had been some cases of CSE in Redditch, including one where the perpetrator had been sentenced to eight years in prison.
- It was often assumed that those from migrant communities would be trafficked but young people from all backgrounds could be trafficked across local authority boundaries.

- Frequently children would view their initial contact with their perpetrators as being exciting.
- Sometimes children would not recognise that they were being abused but would think that they were in a relationship with an adult.
- Where family breakdowns occurred children were often at increased risk of CSE, with some searching for a father figure.
- Children who had been victims of bullying were also at an increased risk of CSE as they would welcome the initial attention from what might appear to be a friendly adult.
- There had been a lot of cases in the national press of perpetrators targeting looked after children, including those in foster care, as they were particularly vulnerable and viewed as being easier to entice.
- The Community Safety Partnership had been advised that anywhere where children and young people gathered was a high risk location for CSE.
- There were a number of risk factors which could indicate that a child was the victim of CSE, or at risk of exploitation. This included a child mentioning the name of an adult not previously referenced in conversation, increased visits to sexual health services and teenage pregnancy.
- The sexual health service team monitored those using their services and this could help staff to identify children and young people who were potentially at risk.
- Regular meetings were held at the safeguarding hub in Worcestershire to help target and support those children at greatest risk of exploitation.
- SOCJAG focused on CSE as part of its remit in relation to serious organised crime. A key part of their approach was to protect, prepare, preview and prevent CSE.
- Where there was a suspicion that CSE was occurring but there was no evidence to support an arrest, disruption of group gatherings was important to help prevent exploitation.
- The Community Safety Partnership commissioned mentors to help support those children at risk of CSE.
- The Local Government Association had produced a resource pack for elected Councillors to help them recognise the signs of CSE.
- Workers in the public sector had been advised by the government to be careful about the language that they used. For example it was important to recognise that children were being coerced into CSE; they were not in relationships.

Members subsequently discussed the following points relating to CSE:

- The process that was followed when children did not attend school and whether data protection rules created barriers to reporting concerns about truancy to the relevant authorities. Members were advised that data protection rules should not prevent schools from raising concerns about persistent truants and consent was not always needed, particularly in cases where there was a risk of CSE.
- The arrangements in schools to identify those at risk of CSE. Members noted that many schools, including academy schools, employed Education Enforcement Officers who picked up on issues such as truancy.
- The progress achieved over the last ten years in terms of raising awareness of the risk of CSE, with increasing recognition that CSE could occur anywhere.
- The fact that perpetrators could come from any background and the need to avoid stereotyping the type of person or groups of people who would commit this crime.
- The safeguarding lead for the Council. Members were advised that the Head of Community Services was the lead Safeguarding Officer. In her absence the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services could be contacted and in their absence the Children's Centre Manager.

Members concluded by noting that the Local Government Association's resource pack in relation to tackling CSE would be helpful for all Councillors. Therefore it was agreed that a copy should be circulated for the consideration of all Members.

RESOLVED that

1) the Local Government Association's 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: A Resource Pack for Councils' should be circulated for the consideration of every member of the Council; and

2) the report be noted.

6. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR DATA

The Chair opened this item by explaining that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel should receive a report about ASB in the Borough. This item would help Members to ascertain whether further investigation of ASB was needed.

The Community Safety Manager subsequently delivered a presentation for Members' consideration:

- Statutory guidance had been issued in December 2017 in relation to the provisions within the Anti Social Behaviour Police and Crime Act 2014.
- The Home Office had provided three definitions of ASB in the guidance; the first related to ASB against an individual, the second related to ASB in relation to housing and the third related to ASB in a public place.
- The government had recognised the need for different ASB incidents to be appropriately recorded, primarily in response to the case of Fiona Pilkington. Ms Pilkington had been harassed to the extent that she had committed suicide and killed her daughter who had disabilities and it had been found that whilst she had reported incidents to the police these had not been linked.
- Councils could apply for a court order in relation to ASB but would need to provide evidence in order to be successful.
- The community Safety team received data from the West Mercia Police analyst group which was based in Worcester.
- The data provided by the police clarified that ASB occurred in seasonable patterns. This tended to peak at around Halloween but was lower in the spring and summer months.
- Whilst people often assumed that ASB in the community was getting worse the data indicated that the levels and patterns in behaviour remained similar every year.
- The data in terms of ASB per ward helped to identify area where ASB was more prevalent in the Borough.
- Members were asked to note that the Abbey ward could be expected to have higher rates of ASB as the town centre was located within the ward. ASB incidents on Unicorn Hill and in the Market Place tended to be quite high.
- ASB was not distributed evenly across wards. In each ward there could be a particular area where ASB was more likely to occur. For example in Greenlands ward this was more likely to occur in parts of Woodrow.
- All of the district centres in Redditch featured in the areas where ASB was most likely to be reported.
- The level of ASB in Redditch was less than in Wyre Forest District but more than in Bromsgrove District.
- The Community Safety team had access to a small fund which could be used to support local targeted activities that could help to tackle issues such as ASB.
- The team had helped to secure derelict buildings, including former public houses.

- The Gate Order relating to the gate that and been installed in 2012 on a footpath in Crabbs Cross to address ASB at that location was now permanently open and no reports had been received of ASB.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

7. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 - IMPLEMENTATION OF PROVISIONS - IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL

Members noted that at a meeting of the Executive Committee on 11th September a report in respect of implementing the provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 had been considered. During consideration of this item it was proposed that the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel should receive monitoring update reports every six months in respect of the implementation of the provisions, including use of officer delegated powers as well as updates on Public Safety Protection Orders. This proposal was agreed by Council on 17th September 2018.

The first such update would be provided for Members' consideration at the next meeting of the Panel on 27th March 2018. The Chair proposed that once this monitoring arrangement had been in place for 12 months the Panel should review the process to assess how effectively it was working.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.50 pm