

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 30th
September, 2020

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Chair), and Councillors Roger Bennett, Joanne Beecham, John Fisher and Mark Shurmer

Also Present:

Nyear Nazir – Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services

Officers:

Bev Houghton and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Wanda King and Pattie Hill. Councillors John Fisher and Mark Shurmer attended as their named substitutes.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

3. TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25TH SEPTEMBER 2019

RESOLVED that

Chair

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the minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday 25th September 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE ON WORK IN REDDITCH

The Community Safety Manager presented an update in respect of the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) in Redditch from September 2019 to August 2020.

During the presentation of the report the following points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The NWCSP covered the North Worcestershire wide partnership area and had been in existence since 2013. The responsibility for the Partnership was held by the relevant Portfolio Holder for community safety at each District.
- There were a number of sub-groups of the partnership which addressed specific community safety themes, including the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Complex Cases group, the Hate Incident Partnership and the district Safer Groups.
- A Strategic Assessment was produced annually which led to a Community Safety Partnership Plan which set the priorities for the Partnership.
- There had been difficulties in developing the Partnership plan due to Covid-19 particularly with key partner agencies who had to prioritise local corporate delivery.
- A 2021-24 Partnership Plan was being developed which aligned with the new timescales of the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) Plan. The plan had been delayed due to the cancellation of the PCC election and delivery timescales had been extended by a year in light of the extraordinary circumstances.
- The role of the Deputy PCC was outlined, and it was confirmed that the NWCSP worked closely around the commissioning model which led to a substantial investment for NWCSP activity. This investment included data analysis

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- support and improvements to CCTV. A large proportion of CCTV infrastructure and modernisation work was carried out under difficult circumstances during the Covid-19 restrictions.
- £65k of PCC capital funding was allocated to 2020-21 to NWCSP to support additional or further works that might be needed to improve CCTV. This might include the improvement of existing cameras and further upgrades to the current digital infrastructure.
 - There was no final plan for the funding yet, but scoping work was being undertaken which might include 'bolt-ons' that would enhance the current scheme and the logistical and physical location of cameras.
 - The CCTV Monitoring Centre operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was noted that staff that worked in the Monitoring Centre did a fantastic job. Some Members were keen to visit the centre once the Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. It was explained to Members that currently all Monitoring Centre Staff were working as part of 'bubbles' to ensure their protection against Covid-19. The Community Safety Manager confirmed to Members that contact would be made with the Monitoring Centre Manager and a visit arranged once restrictions were lifted and it was safe to do so.
 - A number of projects that were funded by the PCC related to and focussed on diverting and supporting young people from crime and ASB and was to be delivered in schools. The funding for these projects was finalised in August 2020 with a planned in-school delivery date of October 2020. Other projects that were to receive funding included supporting Redditch Town Centre in terms of community safety and the night-time economy and the Nominated Neighbour Scheme.

It was reported to Members that over 90 residents had signed up to the Nominated Neighbour Scheme. The scheme was implemented to protect the Borough's vulnerable residents and involved the nomination of a neighbour, trusted friend or organisation that was to be contacted should a cold caller attempt to make contact with the resident. This meant that the credentials of the cold caller were checked prior to contact with the resident. The additional funding

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that was received was used to improve marketing of the scheme and the development of the Nominate a Neighbour pack, which Members of the Panel had previously received. It was agreed that the packs would be distributed to new Members of the Panel. It was presumed that once Covid-19 restrictions were further lifted there would be an increase in people making cold calls and rogue traders. The Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services, Councillor Nyear Nazir was invited to speak regarding the Nominated Neighbour scheme and in doing so expressed her support and urged Members to promote and communicate the scheme as much as possible.

Members were informed that the Hate Crime Awareness Week 2020 was being organised and invites were to be circulated to Members very shortly. High-profile speakers, including Frank Bruno MBE and Stuart Lawrence, younger brother of the murdered teenager Stephen Lawrence, had been secured for the event which was to be conducted online this year.

The Chair thanked the Community Safety Manager for her thorough report and noted she was particularly interested in the projects that involved young people. She expressed the view that she was also interested to see how successful current and future projects were, the benefit of these projects to the Town and whether they would be extended. She questioned how much of an increase there had been in incidents during Covid-19 and associated lockdown. Officers explained that NWCSP still received the quarterly updates and at the beginning of lockdown there was a significant reduction in all crime, due to restrictions. It was noted, however that there was a significant increase in ASB during the lockdown period. It was further commented that data collected during lockdown might have been slightly distorted and that the rise in reports might have been as a result of people working from home and a heightened awareness and sensitivities due to the pandemic.

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- 1) **Nominated Neighbour Scheme information packs be circulated again for the consideration of new Members of the Panel; and**
 - 2) **the report be noted.**
5. **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE PARTNERSHIP**

The Community Safety Manager summarised the ASB Update on the work of the Partnership and in doing so highlighted the following to Members:

- The update report was provided as a result of a request at Overview and Scrutiny Committee that an update on ASB was provided at the annual Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel meeting.
- The report looked at activity undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership to address ASB.
- ASB was a key theme in the data provided by the Community Safety Partnership and was regularly monitored and was a key priority for partners.
- Early intervention was key when dealing with ASB and there were a number of tools that were used to prevent the escalation of problems.
- Introductory Tenancies/Starter Tenancies were a very useful tool for Redditch Borough Council to use in the authority's role as a social housing provider as they clarified landlord and tenant expectations from the outset of the tenancy.
- Community Protection Warnings had been issued in 2019/2020 around various ASB incidents.

Members expressed an interest in whether there had been an increase in the amount of fly-tipping over the lockdown period. It was confirmed by the Community Safety Manager that, unfortunately this had been the case as during lockdown there had been less natural surveillance and footfall in certain areas. In addition to this, enforcement had been made more difficult due to lockdown restrictions. It was hoped that once restrictions

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were lifted this would have a positive impact on both enforcement and investigations of fly-tipping.

The Chair queried the effectiveness of the Community Protection Warnings that had been issued. It was confirmed that they were effective and that only one warning that had been issued had proceeded to a Community Protection Notice. These were more formal notices and a breach of a Community Protection Notice resulted in a criminal offence.

There was a question in regard to the two Community Trigger applications for issues relating to disruptive neighbour nuisance that had been noted in the ASB report. Members expressed an interest in whether these cases were still ongoing or had been resolved and if they been issued in the current municipal year. The Community Safety Manager clarified that the cases were ongoing and had been issued in the current financial year, which started in April 2020. The process and criteria of the application for a Community Trigger was clarified to Members and it was explained that the process was predominantly concerned with finding action and outcomes for the applicant. The process was then monitored, reviewed and assessed by officers. Anything further that could be done to help the applicant was then identified.

One Member questioned whether a Closure Order could be applied if there was disorder and breaches in respect of Covid-19. The Community Safety Manager explained that there was specific legislation dealing with Covid-19 and that this legislation was enforced by the Police and Worcestershire Regulatory Services and was a swifter method of dealing with these kinds of breaches.

The Chair queried with officers whether the suspension of evictions was still in place and the Head of Community Safety and Housing Services reported that currently evictions were still suspended but that there were concerns about what would happen in the longer term.

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Once the presentation had been completed the Chair thanked the Community Safety Manager for the detailed and informative report. She also thanked the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services, Councillor Nyear Nazir and the Head of Community Safety and Housing services for their attendance.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.40 pm