



Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 3rd December,
2024

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Craig Warhurst (Chair), and Councillors Claire Davies, Joanna Kane and Rita Rogers

Also Present:

Councillor Monica Stringfellow – Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services

Officers:

Bev Houghton and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officers:

M Sliwinski

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Fry.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

3. TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 1ST NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the meeting of Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel that took place on 1st November 2023 were presented for Members' consideration.

There was one Member of the Panel who was present at last year's meeting but submitted his apologies for tonight's meeting.

The only Member in the room who was present at the meeting of the Panel last year, Councillor Kane, confirmed that the minutes

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submitted were an accurate record of the meeting. However, no seconder was proposed for the minutes as other Members abstained from discussion on the matter.

RESOLVED that

the approval of the minutes of the meeting of Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel on 1st November 2023 be deferred and that agreement be obtained as to their being an accurate record by the Member of the Panel who has submitted his apologies for this meeting.

4. REVIEW OF THE WORK OF NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP FROM MARCH 2024 TO DATE

The Chair invited the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services to address the Panel. The Portfolio Holder reassured the Panel that all partners within the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) remained fully committed to the aims of the partnership and to dealing with emerging challenges; it was highlighted that these emerging challenges were reflected in the new priorities for NWCSP. The Portfolio Holder took the opportunity to thank the Community Safety Officers and the Chair of NWCSP.

The Community Safety Manager provided a detailed presentation on the work of the NWCSP in Redditch Borough. It was noted that the Partnership's Plan was reviewed in February 2024 and following from this there were new priorities for the period April 2024 to March 2027, which were:

- Public, Place Violence & the Serious Violence Duty
- ASB, Nuisance and Environmental Issues
- Shoplifting and Neighbourhood Crime: [Neighbourhood Crime is defined as domestic burglary, robbery (against the individual/household), theft from a person and vehicle crime]
- Protecting Vulnerable Communities including Hate Crime & Targeted
- Harassment, Domestic Abuse & DHRs and Sexual Violence
- Serious Organised Crime via a Joint Action Group (SOCJAG).

Alongside these local priorities NWCSP worked closely with the South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, through the

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countywide Safer Communities Board (SCB), which identified and addressed countywide issues. Through Worcestershire SCB, the two statutory CSPs collaborated on key countywide projects and initiatives.

It was reiterated that local authorities had a statutory duty to scrutinise the work of its local Community Safety Partnership, under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. The Partnership had a duty to collaborate with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and there was a direct role for the Council's elected members to scrutinise the PCCs work through the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP).

It was explained that from 2023-24, new funding had been made available by the Home Office via PCCs to support Community Safety partners in Implementing the Serious Violence Duty (SVD). Worcestershire received a funding allocation of £50,599 for the current year to implement activities to prevent and tackle serious violence. The Youth Violence Intervention project had been implemented jointly by NWCSP and SWCSP using this fund. Through this project, intensive 1:1 mentoring was being delivered to support and guide young people who were identified as being at greater risk of criminalisation.

Alongside the PCC's force-wide commissioning, NWCSP had been allocated an annual ring-fenced amount from the PCC of £139,250 to identify and address issues at district levels. The details of the NWCSP agreed project allocation for 2024/25 was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

In addition to the annual ring-fenced grant, the PCC also allocated additional Safer Communities funding to NWCSP. This funding was allocated to the Partnership to complement the ring-fenced grant and address identified issues that were of most concern and/or were having a detrimental effect on local communities across north Worcestershire.

The use of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) tools and powers by NWCSP during the period 2024 was outlined. At Redditch, the Council's Neighbourhood and Tenancy Team managed its cases via a new case management system implemented in January 2024 and to date housing-led enforcement outcomes ASB outcomes include four injunctions and six possession claims.

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Since 1st June 2024, enforcement functions within Environmental Services and Planning had been delivered by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS). This included a number of enforcement functions which previously formed part of reports on ASB tools to Crime and Disorder Panel. Since the introduction of new arrangements, one investigation had been carried out for fly tipping and side waste in the Town Centre and a warning had been issued.

West Mercia Police-led ASB activity included the enforcement of Redditch Town Centre Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) since its inception in January 2024. To date, the Police had issued 10 notices requiring persons to leave the designated area and 5 Community Protection Warnings for street drinking. The District Police Inspector had also provided an overview document of Police-led ASB and Crime actions to date set out at Appendix 2. The Community Safety Team had also carried out 1 ASB Case Review (Community Trigger) relating to an ongoing neighbour dispute.

It was reported that between March 2024 and November 2024, the Community Safety Team received 92 requests for service, in addition to project work in Redditch. These requests for service included 40 Sanctuary assessment requests, 7 home security assessments for victims of burglary or other vulnerability, 15 crime prevention surveys carried out, and 30 advice and signposting requests.

One of the responsibilities of the NWCSP was to reduce fear of crime and raising awareness in communities was part of that. The Community Safety Team worked to promote key community safety and crime reduction messages and promote the work of NWCSP members. This was mainly done through national and local campaigns, which included projects led by the Community Safety Partnership – Respect Programme, Nominated Neighbour Scheme, and Hate Incident Reporting. Details of specific initiatives and campaigns carried out by NWCSP from March 2024 to date were set out at Appendix 3 to the report.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the review of NWCSP's work from March 2024 and subjects covered in discussion included:

- Community Safety Team staffing – It was noted that one officer had recently left the organisation and the team was currently composed of the Community Safety Manager, two

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community safety project officers, and one part-time officer. In addition, there would be an 18-month secondment post in the team from April 2025.

- Modern slavery and serious organised crime – It was reported that the Council's Community Safety Team was part of the Serious & Organised Crime Joint Action Group (SOCJAG). This group involved agencies across North Worcestershire including the Police. It was reported that there had been no recent intelligence of modern slavery in Redditch. SOCJAG had powers to enter premises under various legal powers and investigate activities based on intelligence received. The majority of recent cases were around vaping and illegal vape sales.
- A Member commended the Housing Team on the work it had carried out over a few years in tackling anti-social behaviour and to support tenants. It was highlighted that tenancy officers were working effectively with different partners to expedite resolutions to any issues in this area.
- Shoplifting – It was noted that the Borough had seen constant levels (a slight increase of 2 cases) in this type of crime. The importance of responding to this challenge was seen in priority three for the new NWCSP plan – Shoplifting and Neighbourhood Crime. The Community Safety Officers were using the crime prevention triangle to analyse which elements of the crime problem were most open to interventions and then implement actions to tackle shoplifting. In terms of working on reducing opportunities for shoplifting, the Community Safety Officers were working particularly with small retailers to advice on how to make layout adjustments in stores to reduce opportunities for shoplifting, for example through moving higher-value goods behind the counter etc.
- There was also an effort to identify prolific shoplifters in the area that included significant enforcement action against those who were offenders across multiple types of crime. The Community Safety Team worked on increasing CCTV capabilities, including redeployable cameras when and where these were needed. It was noted that if the council tenants were convicted of a serious criminal offence, the Council could seek to repossess the property under available

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legal powers (including the mandatory ground provision in section 85A of the Housing Act 1985).

The review of the Community Safety Partnership projects in 2024 was provided as follows:

- A breakdown of projects delivered through the NWCSP core funding for 2024/25 was provided.
- The NWCSP also received additional Safer Communities Funding of £100,000 for 2024/25, which was the final year of this funding.
- Safer Redditch – Tasking Fund for 2024/25 amounted to £12,470 and was used for specific community safety projects within Redditch. In particular, the funding was used to support Redditch Self Defence Youth Engagement Project and to contribute to the purchase of two knife poles for use at operations to tackle serious violence, knife crime and county lines. As part of this, there would now be a mobile knife detection facility in each of the NWCSP districts.
- Redeployable cameras funded by the NWCSP grant between 2020 and 2023 were installed in areas of concern following application and suitability assessment.
- Details of community safety projects and events attended by NWCSP were provided. In relation to domestic abuse, it was noted that the Community Safety team and partners were currently hosting the Annual White Ribbon Domestic Abuse Campaign to campaign and promote the work of Domestic Abuse support services.

Following this part of the presentation, Members discussed the following matters:

- Access to support services for minority communities – It was reported that significant work was being undertaken by NWCSP, that included engagement with grassroots organisations, to identify how to facilitate provision of support for people who could not speak English and from communities in which there was a stigma with regard to seeking help in cases of sexual / domestic abuse.
- Allocation of funding to NWCSP – It was explained that the NWCSP's core funding and allocations for each district were entirely the decision of West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner. The allocations were mostly identified based on levels of crime recorded in a given district / area. In

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addition, there were also thematic types of funding bases on specific crime types.

- Requirements of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership – Officers reported that they felt there was a need for Community Safety Needs Assessment for North Worcestershire and each district (Redditch, Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest) so that a profile of each of the district could be developed. In terms of the Community Safety team, it was felt that additional staffing was needed in order to develop the workstreams carried out at present.
- A Member commented that elected members were ready to champion the needs of Redditch in conversations with Worcestershire County Council and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, but it was highlighted that Members needed more regular briefings with Officers to understand specific crime prevention needs within Redditch, i.e. what projects/initiatives needed funding. Officers thanked the Members present for this and stated that regular information updates would be provided. The Officers stressed that the most effective aspect of the Partnership work was focusing on crime prevention.
- Health and community safety – It was noted that at local authority level health was the responsibility of Worcestershire County Council, however, the NWCSP had engagement with the WCC's Public Health and the NHS in specific areas, for example, engaging with Public Health around issues linked to domestic abuse. It was noted that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) was a responsible authority on the community safety partnership.
- It was noted that due to structure of health service, there were certain challenges with forging links as there were many individual partners to consider within the health service. It was highlighted that engagement was taking place in specific initiatives, for example with the NHS in the Starting Well programme, and other organisations at county level in specific schemes.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.35 pm