

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 10 April 2013

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Ken Hazeldene, Chair, North Worcestershire Hate Incident Partnership

Officers:

J Cooper and J Willis

Committee Services Officer:

M Craggs

56. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Joe Baker and Brandon Clayton.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

58. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on Thursday 31st January 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

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59. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Panel received the latest Community Safety Partnership Framework Performance Report which contained year to date totals up to January 2013 for 2011/12 and 2012/13 with the relevant percentage change, both for North Worcestershire collectively, and for the individual districts of Redditch, Bromsgrove, and Wyre Forest. The report contained five recommendations for the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) which had all been accepted.

In particular, Members were referred to the second and fifth recommendations. The second recommendation concerned the updated “perceptions of ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour) as a problem” data as obtained through the Worcestershire Viewpoint survey conducted in November 2012. 216 completed forms had been received for Redditch. Of these, perception of ASB in the area was 14.2%. This had fallen from 19.7% in November 2011.

The Panel felt that perception was often all important in terms of ASB. In particular, Members felt that young people who were innocently congregating together were arguably too often seen as a potential threat. However, Officers referred to work that was being undertaken in Redditch to improve the general perception on young people through projects financed by positive activities funding. Members were very interested in receiving more information on this work at a future meeting whenever it was available.

The Panel also referred to the final recommendation that the NWCSP note that additional analysis had been requested on shoplifting in Redditch in response to rising crime numbers. Officers explained that the increase of sixty offences in Redditch during the previous twelve months would most likely be attributable to one or two prolific offenders who were spiking the figures. Members were reassured therefore that the increase in incidents did not suggest that Redditch in general had a shoplifting problem.

However, action was being taken to reduce shoplifting incidents. In particular, the Business Crime Partnership had been liaising with its equivalent body in Taunton to find out more about the proactive approach taken to tackling shoplifting that had been successful in reducing the number of related incidents in the local area.

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Members were reassured that shoplifting was taken very seriously in Redditch and was regarded as a form of theft, and heard that the local Prolific Offender Management Group regularly examined the characteristics of prolific and other priority offenders to help minimise their impact on the community. It was expected that this would include persons committing theft from shops.

Members questioned the suitability of the term 'shoplifting' and suggested that it should be amended to 'theft in shops'. Officers agreed to check the official Home Office offence description.

Officers explained that theft of alcohol could be combated through licensing powers. This could involve the introduction of a licence condition that required all alcohol products to be positioned sensibly in retail outlets, for example, not in close proximity to an entrance/exit.

Finally, the Panel heard that the creation of the NWCSP had led to greater sharing of information and improved general partnership working between the individual districts to help combat crime. For example, Officers in Redditch had contacted their counterparts in Bromsgrove to find out what they had to done to tackle the vandalism of local allotments as this had been a recent problem in the Borough. This was a good example of partnership working.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Panel receive a report at a forthcoming meeting on the outcomes of positive activities funding projects on the perception of young people in Redditch; and**
- 2) The report be noted.**

60. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

The Panel received the confirmed minutes of the Shadow North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) meeting on 17th December 2012.

Members referred to the presentation on Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) that had been delivered by the Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT), and queried whether there should be greater awareness of this. However, some concern was expressed that this

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could lead to increased awareness amongst potential users. Therefore it was acknowledged as a difficult issue.

The Panel also referred to the presentation on Community Payback, and expressed their continued support for the scheme which had clearly benefitted the recent offenders and the wider community. However, it was felt that there more opportunities were needed for recent offenders to participate in the scheme locally.

Finally, Members queried whether the definition of hate crime could potentially be widened to include attacks on other sub-groups of society. It was understood that Greater Manchester Police had very recently agreed to record alternative sub-culture as a hate motivation. The Chair of the North Worcestershire Hate Incident Partnership, Ken Hazeldene confirmed that he could refer this onto the Partnership to consider. However, it was commented that recorded incidents of hate crime, as it was currently defined, had reduced in Redditch.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

61. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

62. WORK PROGRAMME

Members earlier agreed to include a presentation on youth projects in Redditch that had been financed by positive activities funding on the Panel's Work Programme.

RESOLVED that

the Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.25 pm