

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

22nd October 2013

MINUTES

Present:

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

Also Present:

Superintendent Kevin Purcell and Councillors Rebecca Blake, Bill Hartnett, and Pat Witherspoon

Officers:

Alasdair Baker, Sue Hanley and Bev Houghton

Committee Services Officer:

Michael Craggs

63. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillors Andrew Fry and Adam Griffin. Councillor Yvonne Smith was named as substitute for Councillor Fry.

64. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

65. MINUTES

With reference to the resolution at the previous meeting on 10th April 2013 that the Panel receive a report on positive activities funding projects at a forthcoming meeting, Members heard that the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee was to consider a report on this issue at its next meeting on Monday 4th November. Therefore, Members were encourage to attend that meeting if they so wished to hear the discussion. It was therefore suggested and

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Chair

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agreed that the Panel would therefore no longer receive this item to help avoid any duplication.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on Wednesday 10th April 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

66. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS FOR POLICING IN REDDITCH

The Chair welcomed the Divisional Superintendent for West Mercia (North Worcs), Supt Kevin Purcell, to the meeting to give a brief overview of the policing arrangements for Redditch in the future.

Supt Purcell advised the Panel that West Mercia Police were in the process of recruiting Police Community Safety Officers (PCSOs) who would work within local secondary schools to offer support to pupils and teachers and the local community. Ideally, candidates would have previous experience of working with young people and particular skills suited to working in a schools partnership environment.

More Special Constables were also being recruited to compliment the work of Police Officers and PCSOs. They were to be trained up to the required level over a shorter time period than in previous years so that they could quickly join the Safer Neighbourhood teams and support important work in the local community.

Members were advised that West Mercia Police were attempting to strengthen their engagement with young people by recruiting police cadets as part of a force wide volunteer scheme. This would primarily give the cadets an opportunity to raise their understanding of policing and to help them to become good citizens. One of the force's intentions was to break down barriers to entry for under represented communities, for example around financial concerns, and to generally have a more diverse range of volunteers within the scheme.

The Panel was told that these initiatives would help to further increase the visibility of the policing in the local community. The force has already received very positive feedback from residents around there visibly being more police on patrol.

Members heard that the police were looking at whether it the police base in Redditch should be relocated to an alternative facility as the existing station was said to be very costly to maintain. It was

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confirmed that there would always be a policing base in Redditch no smaller than the existing station.

The Panel was also informed that West Mercia Police were working alongside Worcestershire County Council and other partners around how to best deal with people in custody that have mental health issues. We were told that this is a national issue and not something that could be resolved satisfactorily by working purely at the local level on an ad hoc basis.

On behalf of the Panel, the Chair thanked Supt Purcell for attending the meeting and providing some very useful information. Supt Purcell confirmed that he would be very happy to attend another meeting in future or another suitable council meeting to update Members further on the policing arrangements in Redditch and West Mercia.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

67. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE AND OPTIONS FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

Officers provided an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP). This gave a summary of the work of the NWCSP to date, a list of the shared community safety priorities and also Redditch's own local priorities, and what activities it had planned to meet these priorities. The Panel was also referred to a performance summary for North Worcestershire and Redditch. This explained that the recorded levels of crime had decreased in both locations by around twenty per cent during the previous three years.

In addition, Members were provided with the terms and reference and operating protocols for the NWCSP, and also its agreed three year plan for 2013-16. This tied in with the wider community safety strategies which eventually linked all the way up to the West Mercia Police & Crime Plan.

Members were very encouraged by the reduced levels of recorded crime. They were informed that this mirrored a reduction in crime across the country which was principally attributed to excellent partnership working across several agencies in the previous few years.

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Members were also advised that drug related offences had significantly reduced in the previous three years, although this was not listed as a specific crime type. In particular, it was reported that alcohol related crime had reduced considerably.

There had been a very slight recent increase in robbery offences in Redditch. Officers had therefore been looking to introduce effective preventative measures. One example included encouraging residents to register their technological devices, including mobile phones and tablets, online to help deter potential theft.

Elsewhere, Members heard that Community Safety Officers were working in collaboration with Worcestershire Regulatory Services to encourage local residents to report cases of premises and shops selling alcohol illegal to anyone underage, including proxy alcohol sales to anyone underage.

Community Safety Officers were also working with other partners to tackle domestic abuse. It was suggested that any victims could be referred to their relevant ward councillor if they required any support from the Council.

The Panel was advised that no further meetings had been scheduled for the remainder of 2013/14. Members were encouraged to inform Officers if there was any pressing issue they wished to scrutinise in the meantime.

Finally, Members wished to place on record their gratitude to Michael Craggs for all his work for the council on what was his final committee meeting. Councillor Hartnett gave his own personal thanks as Leader of the council.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

68. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MINUTES

The Panel received the confirmed minutes of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) meeting on 11th June 2013.

Members were advised that Sue Hanley, as NWCSP Chair, had since issued a written request to Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to reconsider alternative preventative measures to help reduce suicides from Musketts Way footbridge over the A441

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Bromsgrove Highways beyond the caging of the railing. This request had been unsuccessful. However, WCC was currently leading a consultation on a Worcestershire Mental Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention Plan with key local partners. Members would therefore have the opportunity to provide their own input via this route.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.00 pm
and closed at 7.45 pm