

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel, 29th October 2014 – Chair’s Update

The Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel considered two key items during the meeting. It was not possible to receive a presentation on the third substantive item. A more detailed update is provided below.

1. Domestic Abuse

I asked for this item to be placed on the agenda because I feel that domestic abuse is a really important subject that needs to be addressed in our society. At the start of the meeting I drew Members’ attention to an article in The Times (September 2014) which noted that according to the Crime Survey for England and Wales more than 30 per cent of women have experienced domestic abuse since the age of 16 and seven women a month are murdered by men with whom they have had a relationship. Unfortunately the Panel was advised that there were 744 recorded crimes and incidents linked to domestic abuse in Redditch in 2013/14 (it is important to note that this refers to the number of reports not necessarily the number of victims).

We were pleased to learn that a lot of action is being taken by the Community Safety team to address the issue of domestic abuse in the Borough. There are some key projects that the team are working on including:

- The Sanctuary Scheme, providing security advice and cost-effective improvements to the homes of people at risk of domestic abuse.
- The CRUSH programme, a session for children and young people to educate them about healthy relationships.
- The White Ribbon Campaign, which aims to encourage victims of domestic abuse to seek support. Participants in the campaign can demonstrate their opposition to domestic abuse by wearing a white ribbon during the period of the campaign, which will run from 25th November to 10th December 2014.
- The Worcester Heels Walk, whereby men walk a mile around Redditch town centre wearing women’s shoes in order to demonstrate solidarity in opposing domestic violence. This year the walk will take place on Friday 28th November.
- The Diamond Club for Black and other Minority Ethnic Communities. The aim of this project is to provide support to women from minority ethnic communities who are experiencing or are at risk of domestic abuse.

2. Support Available to the LGBT Community

We were interested to learn more about the work of the Community Safety team to support the LGBT community, particularly in light of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s agreement to launch a Task Group review of the support networks available to the community.

We were informed about quite a lot of work undertaken by partners to support the LGBT community. This includes:

- The Worcestershire LGB&T Hate Crime Forum, which meets every month to discuss community support activities, campaign opportunities and community safety concerns for the LGBT community.
- North Worcestershire Hate Incident Partnerships and Reporting Centres. The partnership supports victims of hate crimes including support to people from the LGBT community who have been harassed due to their sexuality or perceived gender status.
- The Respect! community safety schools programme involving hate crime awareness sessions.
- Redditch night club – gay night pilots, which were social activities provided at local nightclubs in the town.
- A youth club group being established at the instigation of RSA Academy Arrow Vale, which will be open to children and young people from other schools to attend.

3. Adult Safeguarding

The Panel had been due to receive a presentation on the subject of adult safeguarding but this had to be cancelled due to a family emergency for lead Officer on the date of the meeting. The Panel has asked for a report to be circulated for our attention. If we have any concerns we will ensure that the topic is brought to Committee for discussion.

**Councillor Jane Potter,
Chair of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel**