

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Wednesday, 25 September
2019

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Jennifer Wheeler (Chair), and Councillors Gareth Prosser and Mark Shurmer

Officers:

Bev Houghton and Judith Willis

Committee Services Officer:

Jess Bayley

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Wanda King and Pattie Hill. Councillor Mark Shurmer attended as a substitute for Councillor King.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday 26th September 2018 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 on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Redditch from September 2018 to August 2019.

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Chair

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

- The partnership worked to resolve community safety issues in Redditch Borough, Bromsgrove District and Wyre Forest District.
- There were a number of sub-groups of the partnership which addressed specific community safety themes.
- The Safer Redditch Group was in the process of being reviewed as there had been some capacity issues in terms of providing support to the group following the departure of an experienced member of staff.
- There was an Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Complex Cases Group which provided problem solving solutions to many community safety issues. Many of the issues addressed by this group involved neighbour disputes.
- There was also a Multi-Agency Targeted Enforcement (MATE) group which was being piloted in Redditch and was addressing many of the issues that would previously have been handled by the Safer Redditch Group.
- The strategic assessment outlining key issues for the three districts had been presented in draft form at the latest meeting of the partnership board. Once the document had been signed off the partnership would enter a planning stage.
- The West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was not a member of the partnership. However, there was a statutory duty for the partnership to work closely with the PCC and for there to be a cross reference between the partnership's and the PCC's plans.
- The PCC's terms of office were due to come to an end shortly and all of the PCC's grant funding had now been spent. The partnership, which had received some of this funding, needed to ensure that all funds, which were paid in arrears, were spent.
- There was a new public health duty to prevent and tackle serious violence. This had been subject to Government consultation.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed a number of points in detail:

- The focus of the partnership and the extent to which it delivered projects in the community. Members were advised that the partnership was not just strategic and got involved in matters such as resolving specific ASB cases.
- The review of the Safer Redditch Group and the timescales for completing this review. Members were advised that there

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were no timescales for this, however, if the MATE was retained then the ASB and Complex Cases Group would also be retained and it was unlikely that the Safer Redditch Group would then be required.

- The potential for the officer who had left the organisation to be replaced. Members were advised that a new Officer would be recruited using grant funding.
- The PCC's funding of a CCTV upgrade and how this scheme was progressing. Members were advised that the partnership was confident that this scheme would be delivered as scheduled.
- The Government consultation in respect of the new legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to preventing and tackling serious violence and the implications locally. Members were informed that the partnership had submitted a response as part of this consultation exercise and the preferred option locally would be for Community Safety Partnerships to assume responsibility for this duty.
- The home security assessments that had been undertaken and which properties these could be applied to. The assessments could be undertaken in cases where the police had made referrals, for example for victims of domestic violence. Assessments were also frequently undertaken of Council houses as well as housing association properties.
- The number of residents participating in the Nominated Neighbour Scheme, which protected vulnerable residents from doorstep crime. Officers explained that 90 residents had participated since the scheme was established two years previously.
- The information packs that were issued to participants in the Nominated Neighbour Scheme. Officers confirmed that copies of these packs could be sent to Members and that referrals to this scheme would also be accepted from Members.
- The methods used to advertise the Nominated Neighbour Scheme. Members were informed that Officers tended to promote the scheme to vulnerable groups that were most likely to benefit from participation, including through attending Residents Association and older people's forum meetings.
- The Community Trigger/ASB Case Review process and the standard timescales for resolving each case. Officers explained that this process presented challenges, particularly as the partnership had received five such cases in close succession, though all had been addressed within the required timescales.
- The workload of the Community Safety Officer working in Redditch and the potential for further support to be provided to him. The Panel was informed that once recruited the new

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officer would provide support, though additional help was also available from partner organisations.

- The process for handling ASB cases and the difficulties with addressing these cases when none of the parties involved were Council tenants. Members were informed that the Council could address such cases where at least one party was a Council tenant. Officers had also worked with housing associations and private tenants to resolve such issues. The biggest challenge was resolving a neighbour dispute where both parties were owner occupiers and there was no illegal activity that would justify the involvement of the police.
- The ASB that could arise from people begging and the fact that not all of the people who were begging were homeless.
- The involvement of the Council's various housing teams in the work of the partnership and the support that these teams could provide in terms of housing homeless people.
- The difficulties that could be encountered with housing people who had been homeless for some time and the need for ongoing support to be provided to people in this position.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Nominated Neighbour Scheme information packs be circulated for the consideration of Members; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

5. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR - UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE PARTNERSHIP

The Community Safety Manager presented an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership since the previous meeting of the Panel to address ASB in the Borough. This report had been provided at the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In presenting the report the Community Safety Manager highlighted a number of points for Members' consideration:

- The data provided in the report compared ASB incidents reported to the police in 2017/18 to those incidents that had been reported in 2018/19.
- ASB was not a crime and therefore was recorded on the police database as an incident rather than a crime.
- The data only reflected incidents that were reported by the public or organisations to the police. There would potentially be cases of ASB that were not reported.

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- An analysis of the data revealed that there had been a reduction in most types of ASB incident reported to the police.
- The exceptions to this reduction were neighbour disputes and fights and arguments where there had been a slight increase.
- An analysis by season revealed that reported ASB incidents were higher in the summer months than in the winter months. However, there was a downward trend in the rates of reporting over recent years.
- The ASB data per ward for 2017/18 compared to 2018/19 had been provided for comparative purposes. This revealed that ASB incidents were higher in Abbey and Greenlands wards, which contained the town centre and the hospital respectively.
- There had been a significant decrease in the number of ASB incidents reported in some wards, including Batchley and Brockhill, Matchborough and Winyates.
- ASB levels in the Borough compared well to Wyre Forest District but were higher than in Bromsgrove District. However, the reductions in ASB over the last 12 months were slightly higher in Redditch than in the other two districts.
- The Community Safety team had provided two days of training recently in respect of ASB and environmental crime. This training had been well received and a housing association had requested further training on the subject.
- The Council had drafted one community protection order since new powers were introduced in 2014. This had not been used as the Council's Legal Department had advised that Officers should serve notice in that instance. However, the draft order could be used as a future template if needed.
- More data in respect of ASB at a ward and neighbourhood level could be accessed by Members on the police website.

Following the presentation of the report Members discussed the reasons for the decrease in reports of ASB incidents over the years, including when comparing the summer season in 2018/19 to the previous year. Officers explained that there would be no single reason though specific incidents, such as a football World Cup, in one year could lead to a spike in incidents being reported.

At the end of the discussions in respect of this matter the Chair noted that there tended to be one meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel to review the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Redditch each year and questions were raised about whether this was sufficient. Officers advised that it was standard practice nationally for one meeting to take place a year of the scrutiny Committee designated with responsibility for reviewing the work of the local Community Safety Partnership. When one meeting took place a year the

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Community Safety Partnership could provide clear information for a 12 month period as well as any additional information requested by Members when reporting to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel. There had been two scheduled meetings of the Panel for the previous two years but the second meeting had always been cancelled due to lack of business. One meeting a year would therefore appear a sensible option to adopt in future.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 6.45 pm
and closed at 7.28 pm