

Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel: Chair's report of Panel meeting held on Thursday 14th April 2011.

The Panel received apologies from Councillor Anita Clayton, co-opted member Councillor S Blagg (West Mercia Police Authority) and Ken Hazeldine (Redditch Anti-Harassment Panel).

Michael Collins was in attendance in his capacity as a local magistrate (also Vice-Chair Redditch Standards Board).

The Panel was updated on outstanding actions from previous meetings. This included a letter the Panel had sent regarding hospital related admissions for underage drinkers to Anne Milton MP, Under Secretary of State for Public Health. The Panel was also updated on the success of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) that was to be opened in Worcestershire.

The main item of business was a presentation from the Chair of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership, Sue Hanley. The Panel had sent five written questions in advance of the meeting. A brief question and answer session followed after each question.

Q1. Was about the how the budget cuts would impact on the partnership.

In reply, the Chair of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership said the 2011/12 cut was around 20% county wide down from £707,000 to £644,338.

The good news was that the posts that the partnership funds were being retained, however, next year 2012/2013 was said to be "dire" with around 60% cut in budget allocation.

The Panel was advised that Redditch had fared quite well due to the change in budget formula allocation now being based on "need" as opposed to an equal distribution between the six districts. The Panel was further advised that the new Police Crime Commissioner (when appointed) would be distributing the budget in future years. The Panel requested to Sue Hanley that its approval of the new formula of needs based distribution be passed on to the county's Safer Communities Board and that its view be also communicated to the new commissioner when in post.

Q2. Was about how well the partnership was performing against agreed targets.

In reply, the Panel was advised that the Partnership was hitting, and in some cases exceeding, its targets. The Partnership was also said to be performing well compared against the British crime survey figures and also with the family of partnerships they are in.

One of the figures which will be of interest is that when the local population was asked in a survey that if in their perception that they feel more or less safer than last year the figure had gone up from 24.8% to 31.5%.

Q3. We asked what the aspirations of the chair for the partnership were.

In reply we were advised that delivery of the Community Safety Partnership plan themes would be the priority. This includes Secure Homes, Safer Streets and Public Places, Protecting Communities and Reducing Re-Offending/ Restorative Justice. The Panel felt that Restorative Justice was seen to be a great success.

Q4. We asked for progress on the establishment of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).

This question was not really required as the Panel had already been made aware of the success of a SARC being established in Worcester. Sue Hanley agreed this was good news and felt that the publicity and campaign that the Panel had launched had helped in bringing about this welcome outcome.

Q5. We asked if the partnership wished to raise anything with the panel.

Sue said that if the Panel would consider taking on the task of scrutinising any future proposals on the current Partnership arrangements which would include a range of options including consideration of a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. The Panel agreed to do this, as and when any proposal comes forward.

Also the Panel were asked if they would consider taking on the overview of the performance management of the partnership, the Panel agreed to this as long as some training was given to the panel by the appropriate officers from the partnership, it was agreed that this would be given.

The Panel thanked Sue Hanley chair of the partnership for her report and we asked that our congratulations and thanks was passed back to the partnership for all the good work they carry out and for the high level performance they are achieving.

The Panel then had an "end of the year review" which was both looking back on what had went well and looking forward to what if any changes the panel wished to see next year,

The Panel said they thought that the presentations from west Mercia police on SARC and from DAAT on alcohol related admissions went well and that as and when appropriate should continue next year, the Panel also concluded for our first year we had performed quite well, meeting at least four times a year with the flexibility for extra meets to be called as it did when replying to the governments consultation paper policing in the 21st century.

In conclusion the Panel was content with the current arrangements,

Councillor W. Hartnett, Chair panel
17th April 2011