

Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel: Chair's report of Panel meeting held on Tuesday 19th July 2011.

This was the Panel's first meeting of the municipal year. Inspector Ian Joseph of West Mercia Police had been invited to present an overview on performance and statistics for community safety in Redditch over the past 12 months.

Also in attendance were Cllr Sheila Blagg, Chair of the West Mercia Police Authority, and Mr Michael Collins as an independent member. The Panel was grateful that the local press was again in attendance.

During discussion on the previous meeting's minutes, Cllr Blagg commented that she had been informed that the Panel was supportive of funding allocations to Community Safety Partnerships being based on need rather than size of population. Cllr Blagg advised the Panel that in future it was likely that the Police Commissioner (if and when appointed) would distribute funding more widely across the West Mercia Force area. It was likely that funding would be reduced.

Cllr Blagg also informed the Panel that the SARC (Sexual Assault Referral Centre) that was being set up in Worcester City to serve the West Mercia area was expected to be operational by April 2012.

Inspector Joseph gave his presentation which was split into several sections: crime overview; anti-social behaviour (ASB); partnership working; police operations and strategies; drugs; and concerns for the future.

Inspector Joseph provided the following details against 7 key crime types in Redditch:

Category	2010 April - Mid July	2011 April – Mid July	Net figure
Assault (all)	506	486	down by 20 incidents
Sexual Offences	32	50	up by 18 incidents
Robbery	13	20	up by 7 incidents
Burglary (Dwelling)	55	79	up by 24 incidents
Burglary (Other)	86	86	no change
Theft from shop	638	669	up by 31 incidents
Criminal Damage	320	379	up by 59 incidents.
Anti-Social Behaviour (Divisional figures for Redditch, Bromsgrove and Kidderminster)	6092	4588	down by 1504 incidents

Partnership working and the community safety partnership / tasking groups

The Panel heard that strong partnership working was taking place locally, despite concerns about job security in some of the agencies.

Tasking was reported to still be working well. It now met every six weeks rather than each month as before.

Some of the projects that had recently been undertaken across the Partnership included:

- Operation StaySafe which involved taking young people found to be intoxicated or at risk of harm to a place of safety before contacting parents or guardians.
- A bin fire project was established in response to a spate of bin fires that had taken place in a residential area of Church Hill. The design and introduction of bin nodes had resulted in the reduction of these fires.
- Operation Straight Line focused on educating young people on the dangers of excessive drinking. It was reported that the Operation had so far been effective.
- The fire service had worked with the Police and other agencies to arrange neighbourhood action days in areas of Redditch that were particularly affected by crime and anti-social behaviour in recent years. This involved listening to residents concerns and offering advice on fire safety and crime reduction. The local media had picked up on the success of these events.

The Panel heard that two pro-active police operations, Operation Wizard and Operation Magenta had led to an increased number of drug detections in the town. However, it was not felt that Redditch had a particular problem with drugs and the Panel welcomed the positive approach of the police.

Other issues

When asked if PACT attendances had declined in recent times and whether the meetings were still effective, Inspector Joseph commented that numbers had reduced but different strategies were now being adopted to raise attendance. This including taking PACT meetings to the local community, for example local supermarkets.

The Community Safety Partnership was working to ensure that longer-term planning took account of likely funding and staffing changes caused by decreased funding of public sector agencies.

The Panel thanked Inspector Ian Joseph for his report and hoped to invite him back again at the beginning of next year for a similar session.

Update on Community Safety Partnership

In the confidential section of the meeting the Panel discussed two sets of Community Safety Partnership Minutes. It was suggested that it would be beneficial if the agency which is represented is indicated against the persons name in the list of attendees and apologies. The Panel was informed that some agencies attended more regularly than others.

Councillor W. HARTNETT
Chair, Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.
20th July 2011