

Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel: Chair's report of Panel meeting held on Wednesday 26th October 2011.

All Members of the Panel were present along, with Michael Collins (Independent Vice-Chair of the Standards Committee). An apology for absence was received from Ken Hazeldene (Redditch Anti Harassment Partnership).

Officers from the Community Safety team gave an informal training session on the Community Safety Partnership's newly incepted Performance Management Framework to help Members scrutinise and interpret the report.

The Panel received a good overall picture of the Partnership's performance, and noted the trend in crime over the previous twelve months was generally downward. It was especially pleasing to read that night time economy (NTE) related violence and public order offences was down from 241 during 2009/2010 to 198 for 2010/2011. The Panel subsequently requested that our congratulations be passed onto the Partnership for its performance. The Panel also acknowledged that Redditch in the national context was a low crime area and was a safe place to live.

However, Members noted recorded figures for the following areas of crime were higher than at the same position twelve months earlier: serious acquisitive crime; harassment offences; racially or religiously aggravated offence; and crime with vulnerable adult interest marker.

The Panel requested that it be updated on protocols for young people attending hospital with alcohol or drug related conditions. This was due to be received by the Community Safety Partnership at its forthcoming meeting on 2nd November 2011.

Upon being asked to explain what difference the Partnership had made to make Redditch a safer place, Officers sighted the introduction of the following examples: of a mural outside the railway station to compliment the work of the Town Centre Partnership to re-model and improve the area; of attractive artwork in underpasses that were previously drab and dark; and of practical safety and security measures in to the homes of particularly vulnerable residents. The Panel agreed that, in the absence of the press at the meeting, a press release would be prepared based on the Officer's answer.

The Panel considered the Work Programme and noted that at our next meeting in January we would need to propose questions for the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership ahead of her appearance at the following meeting in January.

Members heard that the Partnership was to consider at its next meeting on 2nd November the proposal to merge with the Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnerships to form a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership. We were advised that the respective Wyre Forest and Bromsgrove Partnerships had already approved the proposal.

The Panel agreed by a majority vote that it did not agree with the proposal and to communicate this to both the parent Overview and Scrutiny Committee and to the Redditch Community Safety Partnership. It was felt that Redditch as a Borough could lose its identity and the focus of a merged partnership would not be solely on Redditch.

The Panel RECOMMENDED that:

Redditch Borough Council does not approve the merger of Redditch Community Safety Partnership (RCSP) with Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) and Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership (WFCSP) resulting in the creation of a North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP).

Bill Hartnett.
Chair, Redditch Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel.
26th October 2011