

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 5 July 2012

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Andrew Brazier (Chair), and Councillors Joe Baker, Pattie Hill and Roger Hill

Also Present:

Sheila Blagg (co-opted as Chair of the West Mercia Police Authority)

Officers:

Angie Heighway and Judith Willis

Committee Services Officer:

Michael Craggs

31. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies were received from Councillor Brandon Clayton.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

33. MINUTES

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on Wednesday 11th April 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

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Chair

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34. REDDITCH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK - QUARTER FOUR

The Panel received an overview of the 2011/12 quarter four performance tables for the Redditch Community Safety Partnership Framework. It was explained that the Framework had been developed as part of the Partnership's remit to develop an annual strategic assessment. The Framework therefore had been operating as a rolling assessment and was split into the Partnership's four priority areas: protecting communities; reducing re-offending and restorative justice; safer streets and places; and secure homes.

The Panel were led through the crime figures for each of the four priority areas:

Protecting Communities

The number of recorded offences within this priority area was generally mixed between the different crime types. There was, however, some concern over the rise in recorded offences for racially or religiously aggravated offences since the previous quarter and compared to the same point the year before. While it was thought that this could perhaps be attributed to some unrest in some of the minority ethnic communities, it was felt that the figures also suggested that there was increased confidence amongst affected residents in reporting these incidents to the police.

For forthcoming meetings, Members requested a further breakdown of hate crimes that had been reported to local authorities to enable them to develop a greater appreciation of any underlying trends. Officers explained that victims of crime would sometimes turn to their local authority if they felt unsure about going to the police, especially if they feel that there could be any repercussions. The Council can therefore help the victim where they can but are under legal obligation to refer any serious matters to the police.

In terms of rising figures for crimes with vulnerable adult interest marker, the Panel heard that a new specific group had been set up to focus on this and to help ensure that, not only were the figures reduced, but that no appalling cases that had occurred in other parts of the country would also take place in Redditch.

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Regarding the highlights under this priority area, Members heard that Operation STAYSAFE was working successfully in terms of keeping vulnerable young people safe from harm.

Reducing Re-offending and Restorative Justice

Again, the crime figures for this priority area were generally mixed. The Partnership was obligated to look at this area of crime hence it was one of the four partnership priority areas.

Officers understood that a 'unique offence' referred to a crime committed by a first-time offender, although clarification on its exact definition would be provided for Members information.

Responding to Members concern that there was a consistent number of offenders who committed four or more offences in twelve months, Officers explained that a Prolific Offenders Group had been set up to address this.

Safer Streets and Places

Crime figures under this partnership priority area were generally improving compared to the same quarter in 2010/11, although criminal damage figures were consistently worsening each quarter. This was part attributed to the large open design of the town. A local tasking group had recently been established to tackle this ongoing problem.

Under the associated projects, Officers informed the Panel that they were finding it difficult to obtain data, particularly from the health service, which would explain exactly where incidents alcohol related violence was taking place. Members felt it was crucial that the police had the necessary information on incidents of crime that were taking place in the hospital setting for them to identify patterns, although it was reported that data sharing was slowly improving.

Elsewhere, Members requested that a more detailed breakdown of figures under interpersonal violence and criminal damage be provided at forthcoming meetings.

Secure Homes

Members again expressed concern about the criminal damage figures having noted that these were consistently higher quarter

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on quarter compared to the previous year. Elsewhere, figures were lower under this priority area.

In terms of the highlights, the Panel was informed that there had been a substantial increase in referrals for the Home Security Project during 2011/12. Also, the Community Safety and Housing teams were working together to secure communal entrances in multi-occupied blocks, with a new project forthcoming in Batchley. This scheme applied to both Council and private properties.

Moving forward, the Panel heard that the shadow North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership were still to agree how crime data would be presented in future as it was still in the process of developing its strategic assessment, although it was anticipated that separate action plans would be created for each of the three districts and that issues and data would continue to be specific to each area.

However, it was uncertain to what extent future funding and structure changes following the election of the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) would impact on crime data collecting and priority setting. It was commented that the more local community safety partnerships worked together along shared priorities, the more likely that the PCC would commission funding to support this when elected.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers provide a detailed breakdown of the hate crime reports that had been received by the Council for future meetings; and**
- 2) the report be noted.**

35. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MEETING - 3RD JULY 2012

The Panel was informed that Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive of Redditch Borough Council and former Chair of the Redditch Community Partnership, had been elected as the new Chair of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) at its inaugural meeting on 3rd July 2012. Linda Collis, Director of Community Wellbeing and Environment, Wyre Forest District Council, had been elected as Vice-Chair.

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The NWCSP received a presentation updating them on the development of the new Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at Bransford, near Worcester. The Panel was praised for its earlier role in supporting this development. Officers agreed to circulate the presentation amongst the Panel.

Members heard that draft terms of reference had been circulated amongst the NWCSP membership for consideration. Once agreed, the final terms of reference would be sent for Home Office approval for final ratification.

Regarding the future scrutiny arrangements, the NWCSP was informed that it would be expected to feedback to the individual Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panels. The reporting mechanisms were still to be agreed.

The NWCSP was informed that it was to be made responsible for advising the public on the PCC elections that were due to take place in November.

Overall, the first meeting of the NWCSP was described as very positive.

RESOLVED that

the reported be noted.

36. NOTES OF THE REDDITCH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS

Members received the minutes from the Redditch Community Safety Partnership meetings of 21st March and 29th May 2012, of which the latter was the Partnership's final meeting.

Regarding the meeting of 21st March, Officers explained that Worcestershire Regulatory Services had taken over responsibility for licensing arrangements in Redditch. Members requested further information on the areas which these responsibilities covered and whether there were any community safety implications.

The Panel was very interested in what was being done to protect all vulnerable young people in Redditch from sexual exploitation. They were informed that the police had been struggling to obtain up-to-date information for a number of years on exactly where potentially vulnerable young people might be located, especially when private care homes did not previously have to inform local authorities that

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they were operating. However, this was soon expected to change following the release of a cross party Parliamentary report. It was therefore expected that the police could be more proactive in protecting vulnerable young people in the coming years.

On a related issue, Members held concerns about Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks for people wanting to work with young people as it was felt that these could often become out of date and therefore invalid.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Redditch Community Safety Partnership Board meetings on 21st March and 29th May 2012 be noted.

37. REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

38. WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Panel's Work Programme and noted that there were currently no agenda items scheduled for future meetings. However, the Panel was informed that it would be able to receive the minutes from future meetings of the NWCSP. This would give Members a much clearer idea of the Partnership's priorities moving forward.

Members expressed an interest in having an in-depth look at the rise in reported figures for criminal damage at their next meeting. Officers agreed to facilitate this and suggested that this should take place under confidential session.

It was suggested that Members contact Officers if they had any further items to be included on the Panel's work programme. Members were also invited to head out with the Community Safety Officers to see for themselves what was being done to help ensure that Redditch remained a safe place to live.

It was confirmed that future meetings would start at 6.30pm.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Officers to provide a detailed breakdown on the figures for criminal damage in Redditch for the next meeting;**

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- 2) The minutes of North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership meetings be included on the Work Programme as a regular item and
- 3) The Work Programme be noted.

The Meeting commenced at 7.00 pm
and closed at 8.15 pm