

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 6 JULY 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Simson (Chairman); Carden (Opposition Spokesperson), Barnett, Duncan, Hyde, Janio, Morgan and Watkins

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Bartlett; Sergeant Castleton

Communities of Interest: G Brooker SCLAT; T Harmon; SCLAT; Mrs S Howell, Bevendean LAT; Councillor Mo Marsh, Bevendean LAT; Councillor Melanie Davis, Clarendon LAT; J Stevens, City Council Tenants Representative; Mrs F Matyzak MBE, Racial Harassment Forum and Whitehawk Community Project ; C Cooke, St James' Street LAT; Mr B Gandey, Bevendean LAT; Georgie Sanders, Brighton & Hove Independent Mediation Service; C El-Shabba, Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum; P Tilley CUSF and Francis Tonks Older People's Forum.

Officers: Linda Beanlands (Head of Community Safety), Jennifer Knight (Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator), John Pleasance (Head of Drug Action Team), Simon Court (Senior Solicitor) and Penny Jennings (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1A. Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 There were none.

1B. Declaration of Interests

1.2 Councillor Carden (OS) declared a personal interest in Item 12 by virtue of his position as a representative of the City Council on the East Sussex Fire Authority this did not however constitute a prejudicial interest.

1C. Exclusion of the Press and Public

1.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("The Act"), the Community Safety Forum considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it

was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press or public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in Section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in Section 100(1) of the Act).

1.4 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 Whilst it was agreed that the minutes be signed by the Chairman as a true record of the proceedings reference was made to a number of action points arising from them. These are referred to below.

Information Stored in Respect of Individuals

2.2 Councillor Watkins reiterated his concerns in respect of this matter (paragraph 42.8). Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that a response was being prepared providing detail in relation to all of the matters raised in Councillor Duncan's original letter, it was anticipated that a response would be provided to him by 23 July. In relation to the point raised by Councillor Watkins it was explained that photographs were taken of those attending such demonstrations. The amount of information held in respect of individuals would depend on how they were categorised. The Chairman agreed to pursue the matter with a view to a report being prepared for the information of Forum Members if appropriate.

Scrutiny of Community Safety and Older People

2.3 The Head of Community Safety explained in relation to Councillor Barnett's point (paragraph 44.3), that it not proved possible to hold a further public meeting in Hangleton. However, further successful and well attended meetings had been held Chaired by Councillor Marsh. Once the scrutiny process has been completed a copy of the final report would be forwarded to the Forum for their information.

Information Provided to Local Action Team Members

2.4 Councillor Carden stated that there had been changes to the membership some of the Local Action Teams (LAT's) seeking assurances that the membership information held was up to date. The Head of Community Safety confirmed that the information held had been updated and measures were in place to ensure that all LAT members received information packs and their relevant newsletters. It was anticipated that an update on the work of the LAT's would be provided to the Forum's next scheduled meeting in October 2009.

2.5 **RESOLVED** - That the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2009 as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Welcome to Local Action Teams (LAT's)

- 3.1 The Chairman welcomed those present on behalf of the Lat's. She explained that an "Open Forum" meeting had been held two weeks previously. It was envisaged that similar events would be held in future.
- 3.2 Mr Harmon, SCLAT, explained that a number of wide ranging issues had been discussed and attendees had considered it to be a productive meeting.

Community Payback Scheme

- 3.3 It was noted that work was progressing and that it had made a positive contribution in local communities across the City. Available data suggested that those engaged in such schemes were 30% less likely to re-offend. LAT Chairmen had been requested to nominate projects for funding.
- 3.4 **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 4.1 There were none.

5. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

Police Pledge

- 5.1 Mr Stevens, City Councillor Tenants Representative requested a colour copy of the "Police Pledge" in large font and the Head of Community Safety agreed to facilitate this.

Portslade Cricket Club

- 5.2 Councillor Carden stated that he had been received a number of e. mails notifying him of attempted break-ins and acts of vandalism which had taken place at Portslade Cricket Club. He enquired regarding any measures in place to address these problems.
- 5.3 Sergeant Castleton stated that the Police were aware that these premises were extremely vulnerable and that measures had been put into place to address these problems. Bushes and shrubbery surrounding the building had been cut back and arrangements were in place to provided surveillance cameras and metal shutters. Councillor Barnett was able to confirm that she was aware that some of this work had already been carried out.
- 5.4 **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE AND SCRUTINY PROCESS

- 6.1 The Forum considered a report of the Acting Director of Strategy and Governance forwarded to it from the Environment and Community detailing arrangements put into place to establish a Crime and Disorder Committee (CDC) (for copy see minute book).
- 6.2 The Lawyer present for this item, Mr Dixon explained that under the new legislation which had come into force in April 2009, all local authorities were required to establish a CDC to scrutinise the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and to consider relevant Councillor calls for action. The Governance Committee had subsequently proposed that the Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee (ECSOSC) be designated the Council's statutory CDC; full Council had endorsed that on 30 April 2009. The ECSOSC had agreed that recommendations set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- 6.3 Councillor Morgan stated that the CDC would need to encompass a number of complex issues and that its work programme was in the process of being finalised. Councillor Marsh referred to the Scrutiny and Community Safety of Older People Committee which she had Chaired, stating that this had provided a practical illustration of how such bodies could work. The Head of Scrutiny, Mr Hook confirmed that it was intended that the Scrutiny process would continue to be cross cutting.
- 6.4 Councillor Duncan expressed disappointment that the report had been passed to the Forum for information considering that a more pro-active involvement and role would have been welcomed. The Head of Scrutiny explained that a number of meetings would be held to which open invitations would be issued and that contributions to that process would be welcomed. Members of the Forum could be co-opted as/if appropriate onto the CDC to contribute on specific issues. The agreed protocol as to the separate roles of the Forum and CDC in relation to scrutiny of the CDRP was fluid and would be subject to review six months after the ECSOSC first performs its role as CDC. Future reports would also be forwarded to the Forum to ensure that they were kept fully apprised of progress.
- 6.5 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be received and noted.

7. WELCOME TO LOCAL ACTION TEAMS AND PROGRESS

- 7.1 The Head of Community Safety gave a presentation detailing progress made by the Local Action Teams (LAT'S) and provided Information Packs to those present. She detailed measures which were in place and were being put into place to support the LAT's and seek to identify how its work would fit dovetail with that of the Crime and Disorder Partnership and with the overarching responsibilities of the Forum itself.
- 7.2 In answer to questions it was explained that LAT's were not intended to service crime reduction initiatives although they would be kept fully informed regarding such work in their respective areas. In answer to further questions, Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that funding arrangements which could be put into place were being assessed; it was possible that a funding pool could be established.
- 7.3 In answer to questions by Councillor Duncan regarding the role of the planning process in factoring in a "safe" built environment to new developments, it was explained that the

Environmental Improvement Team had been working with Planning Officers to look at measures which could be sought when drawing up Section 106 obligations.

7.4 **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

8. CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE

- 8.1 The Forum considered a report of Assistant Director, Public Safety describing crime trends to May 2009 and reporting them against key crime targets relating to Community Safety Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy, 2008-11 (for copy see minute book).
- 8.2 Sergeant Castleton explained that most targets had been met although some fluctuations could be seen, which were due primarily to the seasonal nature of some types of crime.
- 8.3 Overall the total number of crimes had reduced by 8.6% in 2008/09 compared with the figures for 2007/08 this exceeded the 5% reduction target. Incidence of criminal damage and assaults with less serious injury, both high volume crime types had shown good reductions compared with 2007/08. It was noted, that serious violence offences, although much lower in number than the recorded figures for other types of crime had shown an increase at the year end. This figure had however been influenced by a review in recording practices.
- 8.4 Mr Harmon, SCLAT enquired whether the figures for vehicle theft included incidence of theft of motor cycles and scooters.
- 8.5 Councillor Morgan referred to the recorded figures for crimes against the LGBT community asking whether these figures accurately reflected the true level of such crimes. Sergeant Castleton stated that whilst it was difficult to be certain that such crimes were always reported all the indications were that significant progress had been made in ensuring that the victims of such crime were supported and felt able to report such crime and that the data received was accurately captured.
- 8.6 The Head of Community Safety referred to the role her team played in liaising with community groups and in seeking to ensure that they were aware of means by which they could access information and advice. Information was disseminated through the LGBT press and the "Pride" events due to take place during the first weekend in August would also provide an opportunity to provide information. A number of agencies including the Council and the Police would have stalls at Preston Park.
- 8.7 Councillor Duncan referred to queries raised by Councillor Kennedy at the previous meeting of the Forum (9 March 2009) in respect of problems reported regarding the reliability of the recorded data for domestic violence. Sergeant Castleton explained that although he was confident that the data now produced was robust inconsistencies in previous reporting had impacted on the figures carried forward in the short term.
- 8.8 A Member of the Forum referred to the reported figures for race crime stating that he was aware of two incidents which had taken place recently. It was noted that all attacks

were reported but that measures were in place to seek to encourage victims of such crimes to come forward.

- 8.9 LAT's had been instrumental in ensuring that crimes were reported. Recent initiatives carried out in the Duke's Mound area in concert with the LAT and the local community had proved very successful in combating vandalism to vehicles and indicated the positive benefits that of such cooperation. Progress achieved as a result of initiatives carried out by NCP in conjunction with the Police was also welcomed. Reference was also made to the highly successful community led initiatives carried out in the Turner and Bevendean areas of the City.
- 8.10 Councillor Marsh, present in her capacity as a LAT representative referred to the impact certain types of crime could have on older residents in the City, particularly on their perceptions of the vulnerability to crime. The LAT's had a key role to play in working on these issues with the Police and other agencies.
- 8.11 Councillor Watkins referred to the reported incidence of criminal damage enquiring whether this tended to rise during the school summer holidays. In response it was explained that although this could not always be easily quantified figures for types of crime could show an increase when more readily reported by the public.
- 8.12 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

9. BRIGHTON & HOVE DRUG & ALCOHOL ACTION TEAM- COMMUNITIES & FAMILIES PLAN 2009 - 11

- 9.1 The Head of the Drug Action Team, Mr Pleasance gave a presentation detailing the Brighton & Hove DAAT Communities and Families Plan 2009-11 (for copy of slides see minute book).
- 9.2 It was explained that the Team used as its premise the concept that individuals could make a difference, that issues were manageable, that there had to be an understanding of your starting point, understanding of the agenda and a willingness to invert traditional structures. The staged process used in supporting individuals and those affected by another's substance misuse were outlined as was the linkage and dovetailing between local and nationally driven initiatives. A commissioning process was in place to seek to fill any "gaps" identified.
- 9.3 Councillor Janio sought more detail regarding the strategies used referring to the on-going debate as to whether it was appropriate to legalise some categories of drug. Mr Pleasance responded that a pragmatic rather than legalistic approach was taken which sought solutions by working together cross agency.
- 9.4 Mr Tonks ,Older People's Forum, referred to his role as a school governor and to his experience of the excellent "Under 19" strategy which was in place and to the outreach work taking place in the City's schools. He was sure that arming young people with information could help to ensure less likelihood of dependency in later life.

9.5 Councillor Morgan referred to the work carried out in Whitehawk which had given quantifiable tangible results, which had seen a knock on effect in the reduction of dependency related crime. Councillor Watkins commended the presentation referring to the importance of using a dual diagnostic approach and to addressing mental health issues which were often associated with substance misuse. A report detailing the benefits of dual diagnosis was due to be considered by Cabinet in the near future.

9.10 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the presentation be noted.

10. CLOSURE OF PREMISES PROTOCOLS ASSOCIATED WITH PERSISTENT DISORDER OR NUISANCE AND CLASS A DRUG PREMISES

10.1 The Forum considered a report Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator setting out details of the updated protocols for the Closure of Class A Premises and for the Closure of Premises Associated with Persistent Disorder and Nuisance (for copy see minute book).

10.2 The Solicitor to the Forum and the Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator Mrs Knight gave a presentation detailing how the protocols were applied in practice citing examples of the positive outcomes which had been achieved as a result of the positive outcomes achieved as a result

10.3 Members commended the report and the Protocols themselves which appeared to be effective and robust. Councillor Barnett referred to the threats and fear of violence to which neighbouring residents were often subjected. She enquired whether residents of closed down houses / establishments returned subsequently. It was explained that this had not happened to date. Mrs Knight explained that when such measures were invoked Officers sought to work with housing providers / other agencies as appropriate to help individuals to "own" their problems and to have measures in place to move on to next stage as appropriate.

10.4 Mr Harmon, SCLAT sought that in instances where there were animals were present, the appropriate animal welfare organisation(s) were contacted. It was confirmed that was the case

10.5 **RESOLVED** - That the proposed protocols for use within Brighton & Hove be accepted and approved and it be noted that they are to be submitted to Cabinet for consideration and approval by that body at their meeting scheduled to take place on 9 July 2009.

11. EAST SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 APRIL 2009

11.1 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes be noted.

12. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2009

Fire Safety in High Rise Blocks

12.1 Mr Peacock and Mr Stevens referred to the need for accurate risk assessments to be made in relation to the Council's own and other high rise residential blocks to ensure that all necessary fire prevention/delay measures were in place and that residents were aware of what these were. Councillor Carden enquired as to the procedures used where a fire had taken hold and access for fire fighters was difficult. It was noted that a decision would be taken in each case but that comprehensive response mechanisms were in place. A detailed response on these matters could be provided to the next meeting of the Forum.

12.2 **RESOLVED** - That the minutes be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.25pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of