

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 19 OCTOBER 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Bartlett ; Sergeant Castleton

Communities of Interest: T Harman, SCLAT; Mrs S Howell, Bevendean LAT; Councillor Mo Marsh, Bevendean LAT; J Stevens, City Council Tenants Representative; J Mc Phillips, Turner Safety Action Group; Mrs C Summers, London Road LAT; Mrs F Matyzak MBE, Racial Harassment Forum and Whitehawk Community Project; C Cooke, St James Street LAT; C El-Shabba, Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum; D Murtagh, Moulescoomb LAT; Mrs J Brookes, Portland Road and Clarendon Forum; Mrs P Weller, Community Action, Hangleton & Knoll and B Salter, West Saltdean LAT.

Officers: Linda Beanlands (Head of Community Safety); Ruth Condon (Research and Performance Monitoring Officer); Simon Court (Senior Solicitor) and Penny Jennings (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

PART ONE

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13A. Declaration of Substitutes

13.1 Councillor Oxley was in attendance in substitution for Councillor Alford.

13B. Declarations of Interest

13.2 Councillors Carden (OS) and Marsh (present in her capacity as Chair of Coombe Road LAT and Scrutiny Chairman) declared a personal interest in Item 22 by virtue of their positions as representatives of the City Council on the East Sussex Fire Authority; this did not constitute a prejudicial interest.

13C. Exclusion of the Press and Public

- 13.3 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 100(1) of the Act).
- 13.4 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 14.1 **RESOLVED** - That the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2009 as a correct record.

15. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

- 15.1 The Chairman stated that she was glad to have the opportunity to highlight that a number of initiatives had been undertaken to deal with underage drinking and the risks associated with that and to target those adults who purchased alcohol for young people. Money for all of the services referred to below had come from the Home Office and from The Department of Children, Families and Schools.

“Kicks” Project

- 15.2 The Chairman referred to the “Kicks” Project to train staff to recognise the risks associated with young people drinking to excess and to offer advice and support to the young people. She explained that it had been possible to allocate a small amount of money to purchase tee shirts for their “Winter League” which provided a message on their back on where to get advice etc.

“Big Mistake” Poster Campaign

- 15.3 A poster had been produced which gave a clear message that buying alcohol for underage drinkers put them at risk. The poster and accompanying campaign had attracted a great deal of media attention. The poster had been displayed on bus shelters across the City and had been delivered to licensed premises and other appropriate establishments. A series of leaflets had also been produced highlighting that it was an offence for any adult to purchase alcohol for underage drinkers.
- 15.4 In answer to questions By Mr Stevens, the Head of Community Safety explained that any adult purchasing alcohol for those who were underage could be liable to prosecution, not just their parents. Although this represented a difficult and challenging area, a lot of cross cutting inter-agency work had been and was continuing to be undertaken.
- 15.5 In association with the campaign an “enforcement pathway” had been drawn up to ensure that when a young person was picked up by emergency services (one had

been recently and had nearly died), there were systems in place to identify where he/she had obtained the alcohol from and to enable enforcement action to be taken. Money had also been allocated to the Police and Trading Standards for extra hours to do this work.

Safe Space

- 15.6 Additional funding had been put into place to enable the “Safe Space” project to stay open for 9 more weekends in the run up to and after Christmas. This project based in West Street provided a service to those people who could otherwise come to serious harm and supported the work being carried out by Street Pastors. A small amount of money had also been provided to the Taxi Forum to purchase some additional taxi marshals.

Purchase of “Body Worn” Cameras

- 15.6 The Head of Community Safety explained that three body worn cameras had been purchased to help apprehend and detect offenders on the streets on Friday and Saturday nights.
- 15.7 Whilst expressing support for all of these initiatives Councillor Barnett considered that use of such equipment in other more outlying areas of the City would also be welcomed. Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that “Operation Park” operated citywide at weekends.
- 15.8 Mr Harmon stated that significant problems emanated from two liquor stores located in his area. The Police did not seem to be aware of the problems associated with these establishments as a Police presence was not seen in the vicinity. It was agreed that this matter would be discussed further outside the meeting. Mr Stevens also enquired regarding the Council’s policies when licensing premises.
- 15.9 The Chairman explained that all licensed premises had to meet requirements under their conditions not to sell alcohol to those who were under age. Test purchases could be made and licences could be subject to review if repeated offences were identified. If persistent offences were proven a premises could lose its licence for up to three months. All premises were required to meet clear licensing objectives but applicants’ did have the right of appeal to the Magistrates Court who could overturn a decision of the licensing authority.
- 15.10 **RESOLVED** – That the position be noted.

16. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 16.1 There were none.

17. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

- 17.1 There were none.

18. CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE

- 18.1 The Forum considered a report of the Assistant Director, Public Safety describing crime trends since April 2009 (for copy see minute book).
- 18.2 Sergeant Castleton referred to the covering report provided for the first time to this meeting; this provided a commentary to the statistics and would continue to be provided to subsequent meetings. Overall, there had been a reduction in crime of 1.2% compared to the same period the previous year. Although this figure was 3% below target it represented a continuation of a positive trend with total crime reduction being at its lowest for 10 years.
- 18.3 The figures set out for violent crimes overall included a wider number of offences and had reduced considerably over the past four years by 24% with the central area of the City seeing a reduction of 30%. This was directly attributable to inter agency work to manage and support safety around operation of the night time economy. In recognition of this work, the city had gained “beacon” status.
- 18.4 Councillor Morgan welcomed the work that had been achieved as a result of “Operation Marble” and the positive image of the City which had resulted from the “Beach Patrol” programme appearing on Chanel 5. He requested details regarding initiatives to seek to reduce thefts from cars particularly bearing in mind that the City’s car parks were not manned 24hours. Sergeant Castleton explained that although a number of car parks were not in the Council’s ownership strategies had been between the Police and NCP to ensure that adequate signage was provided and that stairwells and other areas were well lit.
- 18.5 Councillor Oxley referred to this area of crime and to the initiatives being carried forward to combat it. Any increases would represent a worrying trend.
- 18.6 Councillor Barnett referred to incidence of domestic violence and mugging of the elderly and it was noted that whilst incidence of such crime was low, fear of crime could be powerful in informing public perceptions.
- 18.7 Councillor Watkins stated that it was important to monitor figures relating to domestic violence and how they were arrived at. Increases in these figures were often not a consequence of greater numbers of crimes being committed but as a result of greater public confidence in reporting such crimes.
- 18.8 Chief Superintendent Bartlett confirmed that whilst reductions were pleasing on-going initiatives were in place to seek to build on the results achieved to date. The Head of Community Safety stated that rigorous structures were in place for inter-agency working between the Police Victimisation Unit, the courts and the Crown Prosecution Service. This was especially strong in relation to child protection and protection of vulnerable individuals. Meetings took place on a monthly basis to consider appropriate actions in relation to those deemed to be most at risk. Whilst figures for reporting of such categories of crime had increased figures for repeat crime(s) had reduced.
- 18.9 **RESOLVED –** That the contents of the report be noted.

19. COMMUNITY SAFETY, CRIME REDUCTION AND DRUGS STRATEGY 2008-2011

- 19.1 The Head of Community Safety referred to the strategy document which had been circulated to Members that afternoon and gave a presentation outlining the key areas and priorities identified within it (for copy of presentation see minute book).
- 19.2 In answer to questions the Head of Community Safety explained that this document represented work in progress which would be updated periodically and then "refreshed" annually. One large area of work being covered was to identify individual priority crime areas and how these were to be addressed by an effective and holistic partnership approach. A key area was to tackle public perceptions and confidence to combat fear of crime.
- 19.3 Councillor Barnett referred to issues relating to drug abuse and enquired whether there was a co-ordinated approach to this work across the city's schools. The Head of Community Safety stated that she believed that this work was led by the schools team via the Children and Young People's Trust (CYPT); she undertook to confirm the position and to provide that information to Councillor Barnett and to Forum Members.
- 19.4 Councillor Marsh stated that she believed that this work formed part of the PSE curriculum in schools. She stated that fear of crime particular amongst older and more vulnerable members of society could be powerful. This had been borne out by the work carried out by the Scrutiny Panel on Older People and Community Safety which she had chaired. Although a stronger focus on the needs of the elderly had begun to emerge further work was necessary, for example in relation to the increased vulnerability of those with dementia. Such individuals could be vulnerable to abuse either from family members or those charged with caring for them. Fear by the elderly of crimes committed by young people was disproportionate and also needed to be addressed.
- 19.5 It was noted that the contributions of a number of partners had been omitted, for example the work carried out by the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service (ESFRS). The Borough Commander, Mr Ring confirmed that the ESFRS played an important role in this programme. As well as giving practical advice via school visits work was also carried out with young offenders.
- 19.6 The Reverend Terry referred to work carried out by the Interfaith Forum suggesting that it could have a valuable role in helping to carry some of this work forward.
- 19.7 Mr Gandey referred to the work of the Bevendean LAT which had evolved over a five year period and to the key role that LAT's had to play.
- 19.8 Councillors Duncan and Watkins commended the document which contained a lot of information communicated in a way which was accessible and easily understood.
- 19.9 Councillor Simson, the Chairman welcomed all of the comments that had been made and invited Forum members to provide feedback to the Head of Community Safety regarding any omissions/additional information they would like to be incorporated into the document.

19.10 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the circulated strategy document be received and noted.

20. SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF LOCAL ACTION TEAMS

20.1 The Head of Community Safety referred to the “draft” document which had been circulated to Forum members that afternoon. Following the meeting the text would be finalised and copies sent to all LAT’s.

20.2 The Chairman welcomed the document and referred to the meeting which had been arranged and to which all LAT Members had been invited. She hoped that as many representatives as possible would be able to attend.

20.3 The Head of Community Safety stated that this document was not intended to be prescriptive but to provide a useful framework and guidelines. She explained that the final documents would be “personalised” to each individual LAT.

20.4 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the document be received and noted.

21. SCRUTINY REPORT ON OLDER PEOPLE AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

21.1 Councillor Marsh (Chairman of the Panel) presented the report of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Panel on Older People and Community Safety. She explained that the scrutiny review had been set up to investigate how older people viewed community safety, what were the main issues from an older person’s perspective and how older people could be helped to feel safer (for copy see minute book).

21.2 The panel had heard evidence from the community safety services and initiatives provided by the Council and partner organisations for all age ranges. Older residents had also given their views. Members had identified a need for well co-ordinated community safety messages, purpose designed for older people and recommended further consultation and engagement, plus support for schemes developing resilience and social inclusion for older people.

21.3 Councillor Marsh went through each of the recommendations made by the Panel together with the key issues raised and findings made and proposals to carry this work forward. The Panel had focused primarily on Community Safety issues which were an integral part of the cross-cutting work carried out by the Forum itself.

21.4 In answer to questions, Mr Hook, The Head of Overview and Scrutiny explained that having endorsed the ECSOSC panel’s report and reported to the Forum the report would be taken forward to Cabinet for consideration and then to full Council for information. He explained that a framework was in place to revisit the recommendations after a period of 6 months, then after a year and then as part of an on-going process.

21.5 Councillor Watkins echoed the points made by Councillor Marsh explaining that in identifying the key areas it had been intended that they would be given greater

prominence and that issues could be addressed which arose as a consequence of the isolated circumstances in which some older people found themselves. This section of the community was growing in number and therefore rigorous structures needed to be put into place for the future.

- 21.6 Councillor Morgan welcomed the report which he also considered represented a valuable tool for future use.
- 21.7 Mr Gandey welcomed the report stating that it was very encouraging when a body such as the Council authorised a piece of work such as this and then carried it forward that represented democracy in action. He considered that it was important now this piece of work had been completed to approach those who had been consulted by the panel determine whether there were areas where they as community partners could also carry this work forward.
- 21.8 Mr Stevens enquired whether there had been any changes to the way in which older people accessed services. The Head of Community Safety explained that how services were accessed depended on the issues involved. The focus was on getting clarity of information into the public domain. Councillor Watkins responded that the panel had picked up on the fact that there appeared to be a number of points of contact for services and that a booklet entitled “Keep it Simple” was being produced in order to address this.
- 21.9 Mr Harmon referred to the need for there to be a neighbourhood police presence in localities across the city and for any apparent gaps to be addressed. Chief Superintendent Bartlett confirmed that each area did have its own dedicated neighbourhood team; these were currently up to strength and were tasked with spending the majority of their time on duty within their designated areas.
- 21.10 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the report of the Older People and Community Safety Panel be received and noted as are the comments raised by the Forum itself.

22. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2009

- 22.1 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the minutes be noted.

23. EAST SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY 2009

- 23.1 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the minutes be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.35pm

Signed

Chairman

