

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

Agenda Item 15
Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 5 JULY 2010

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Bartlett; Inspector P Castleton

Communities of Interest: Mr D Peacock, St James Street LAT; Mrs P Weller, Hangleton & Knoll Community Action Team ; Mrs C El-Shabba, Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum; Mrs F Matyzak MBE Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum and Racial Harassment Mediation Forum; Mr B Gandy, Moulsecoombe and Bevendean LAT; Councillor Marsh, Moulsecoombe and Bevendean LAT; Mrs S Howell, Moulsecoombe and Bevendean LAT; Mr J McPhillips, Turner LAT; Mrs J Brookes, Portland and Clarendon Forum; Ms C Summers, London Road Area LAT; Mr B Copelin, Patcham LAT; Ms J Taylor, RISE; and Ms E Butler, Brighton & Hove Domestic Violence Forum

Officers: Linda Beanlands, Head of Community Safety; Linda Anglin, City Parks Projects and Penny Jennings, Democratic Services Officer

PART ONE

1. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1a. Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 There were none.

1b. Declarations of Interest

1.2 There were none.

1c. Exclusion of 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 and public were present during that item there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as Defined in Section 100(1) of the Act).
- 1.4 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item on the agenda.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

- 2.1 The Democratic Services Officer referred to proposed amendments to the minutes which had been notified to her by Christina Summers, London Road LAT in relation to her presentation given at the previous meeting as follows:

Paragraph 43.4: The first sentence to be amended to read as follows:

"Both commended the support given by the Community Safety Team and the Police in terms of set-up and on-going support."

Paragraph 43.4: The final sentence should read:

"The London Road Traders Association (which had previously been dormant) was reformed in response to the increasing problems of street drinking and anti-social behaviour and brought these issues back onto the agenda for the Police and Council. As a result of that, the London Road Area LAT was newly set up as a group with an official mandate to deal with these problems and, in turn the London Road Traders Association naturally folded."

- 2.2 John Stevens, Leach Court Resident's Association stated that he had been present at the meeting.
- 2.3 **RESOLVED** – That subject to the amendments set out above the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2010 as a correct record.

3. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

Anti Social Behaviour

- 3.1 The Chairman stated that minimum standards had been agreed to ensure that a consistent service was provided. The Council was working in partnership with the Police and a launch would take place in the near future.

Closure Orders

- 3.2 The Chairman stated that a Closure Order had been issued on an address in Kemptown. These powers were in place and would be used in appropriate cases.

Street Pastors

- 3.3 The Chairman explained that the first Street Pastors had been commissioned and were working from St Paul's Church in West Street. Their presence was welcomed, as they were a tremendous asset in that they helped to keep vulnerable people safe in the city centre late at night.

LAT Chair's Meeting

- 3.4 The Chairman confirmed that the next scheduled LAT Chair's meeting would be held on 16 July 2010. The Head of Community Safety would ensure that details of the meeting were circulated. In the event that any Chair was unable to attend any other member of the LAT was welcome to attend in their stead.

Letter Received from John Stevens

- 3.5 The Chairman referred to a letter received from John Stevens, Leach Court Residents Association. The Head of Community Safety explained that the letter encompassed a number of complex issues, in consequence it had not been possible to respond to the letter prior to that days meeting. A response would be sent however as soon as it was possible to do so. The response could also be forwarded to the next meeting of the Forum for information if that was Mr Stevens wish.

- 3.4 **RESOLVED** - That the content of the Chairman's Communications be noted.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 4.1 There were none.

5. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

- 5.1 Mr Cooke, Whitehawk LAT, enquired whether the existing reporting networks remained in place. Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that the contact point was dependent on the issue, that this was in the process of being reviewed and that the principles of local policing remained.

- 5.2 **RESOLVED** – That the position be noted.

6. CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

- 6.1 The Forum considered a report of the Head of Community Safety setting out crime trends in Brighton and Hove up to March 2010.

- 6.2 Sergeant Castleton explained that in consequence of new Home Office directives some of the targets previously imposed had been removed, the Crime Trends and Performance Team were therefore revisiting the way in which targets and trends could be reported forward to future meetings in a meaningful way.

Total Recorded Crime

- 6.3 The Forum were pleased to note that in 2009/10 there had been a reduction in overall crime of 3.1% compared to 2008/09 and that this had exceeded the target of 3% which had been set. This represented a continuation of the long term downward trend experienced over the last ten years. The main crime areas contributing towards this reduction were violent crime, criminal damage and theft.
- 6.4 Councillor Morgan (OS) welcomed these figures which were very good news, however, he sought clarification of how these figures would be measured and sustained in the context of proposed funding cuts. Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that whilst it was known that there would be reductions to all public sector funding there remained a commitment to protect front line services and to explore ways in which it might be appropriate to extend current levels of collaborative working, the most effective means by which this could be achieved were under active discussion.

Sexual Offences

- 6.5 The figure of 293 referrals from Brighton and Hove to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre was queried and it was subsequently notified that the second sentence of paragraph 3.6 should read as follows:

“During 2009 there were 293 referrals to the Sexual Assault Centre of whom 29% (85) were from Brighton & Hove More than a quarter of all SARC referrals were under 18 years and a further percentage were identified as vulnerable adults with mental health needs also identified.”

- 6.6 In answer to questions, the Head of Community Safety explained that notwithstanding that the SARC was based in Crawley this had not presented any problems in cases being referred as effective inter-agency liaison procedures were in place. In the current economic climate the need to have good third sector services in place had been identified as a priority, this new service had established itself rapidly, it had been set up and was running effectively within a year. An amended copy of this report was circulated subsequently to Members of the Forum.

Motor Vehicle and Cycle Theft

- 6.6 It was noted that the theft of two wheeled motor vehicles continued to present a problem and had made up 42% of all vehicle thefts during March. In addition to work with a trap scooter to assist detection of crimes, the possibility of providing securing points in motorcycle parking places was also being explored. The Chairman stated that such initiatives were welcomed.

Domestic Violence and Hate Incidents and Crime

- 6.7 It was noted that the number of domestic violence incidents reported to the Police was 6% higher than for the previous year. It was considered however that this was due in part to the on-going work which had taken place to increase reporting. Improved support for victims had resulted year on year in increases in the percentage of successfully concluded DV cases; this had reached 72% in 2009/2010.

- 6.8 Mr Stevens, Leach Court Residents Association referred to the incidence of disability hate crimes and asked what was being done to highlight this issue and to ensure that attacks were properly reported. The Head of Community Safety stated that as this was a “new” category of reported crime how it was defined was complex. Measures were in place to address this by launching common reporting forms.
- 6.9 Councillor Janio also referred to the current financial situation noting that notwithstanding the removal of some targets the commitment to local policing for local people remained as did a commitment to deliver the forces’ stated priorities. In answer to questions by Councillor Bartlett it was confirmed that all of the agreed targets would remain in place for the current year.
- 6.10 Councillor Duncan stated that as a Council appointee to the Police Authority he was happy to feed in and support these stated needs on that body. Councillor Watkins referred to the fact that the financial situation could change rapidly citing the importance of bodies such as the Forum.
- 6.11 Mr Harmon, SCLAT stated that he hoped that the priorities set out in the “Policing Pledge” would still be maintained. Mrs Weller, Angleton Community Project stated that she hoped that local community organisations would be notified of any changes at an early stage.
- 6.12 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

7. IMPROVEMENTS TO CITY PARKS AND ROLE OF LOCAL ACTION TEAMS

- 7.1 The Projects Manager, City Services Ms Anglin gave an oral report detailing the improvements made to City parks in concert with local communities and those e.g., LAT’s representing them. She explained that the play builder scheme had set up by the Department of Education a few years previously in order to focus on the identified needs of 8 -13 year olds. As the scheme had rolled forward a lack of facilities for those with disabilities had emerged and measures had been put into place to address this. A design led programme had been encouraged in partnership with other agencies including the police and third sector representatives.
- 7.2 In answer to questions she explained that in detailed preparatory work was necessary and cited three schemes in Whitehawk which had recently come to fruition. The form any scheme took would differ dependant on the differing needs of local communities. One of the drivers for schemes was to seek to design out low level anti-social behaviour. Mr Gandy, referred to the increasing number of elderly residents across the city and to the need to prepare for their needs too. Ms Angelin referred to equipment which had been provided in Hove and Vale Parks respectively.
- 7.3 The Chairman thanked Ms Angelin for her informative presentation. Councillor Morgan stated that the information provided highlighted the success that could be achieved as a result of co-operative working.
- 7.4 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

8. FEEDBACK FROM SCRUTINY REVIEW ON SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

- 8.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy and Governance detailing the findings of the Scrutiny Panel into support services for victims of sexual violence.
- 8.2 Councillor Watkins had chaired the Panel and was invited to present the report and its findings to the Forum. He explained that this area of work could by its very nature be emotionally challenging and that the Panel had been impressed by the level of professionalism and dedication shown by those working in this difficult area, all of those interviewed by the Panel had shown focus and commitment to achieving a common purpose with other agencies; one of the key factors in carrying forward this important piece of work was to seek to ensure that co-ordinated joint strategic commissions were put into place. This would be important in ensuring the future stability and funding of the support services available in the city for those affected by sexual violence.
- 8.3 Councillor Duncan a Member of the Forum and also a Council appointee on the Police Authority agreed that he would be happy highlight the content of the report and to raise this matter at an authority meeting.
- 8.4 The Chairman, Councillor Simson thanked the Panel for their report and commended the in depth analysis which had taken place into a difficult and sensitive issue.
- 8.5 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Forum note the content of the scrutiny panel’s report (Appendix 1) which will be referred to the Council’s Executive and to appropriate partner organisations; and
- (2) That the Forum also note a proposal that was not agreed by ECSOSC for an additional recommendation as recorded in the extract from the draft minutes of the 21 June ECSOSC meeting (Appendix 2).

9. DEALING WITH SERIOUS VIOLENT CRIME

- 9.1 Chief Superintendent Bartlett gave an oral presentation detailing how serious violent crime was categorised and then proceeded to set out the key challenges for the Police in this area of their work.
- 9.2 Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that the public often found that the way different crime types were categorised was confusing. There was a new area “attempted gbh” and “attempted assault” Examples were given of the types of crime which fell into each of these categories. Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that about 3 such incidents occurred in the city each week. Although this number was small the impact on victims of such crime could be significant, injuries sustained could be life changing if not life threatening.
- 9.3 Key challenges for the Police were around alcohol and domestic incidents. Whilst alcohol did not necessarily make individuals violent a significant proportion of those who drank to excess had a propensity for violent behaviour. In addition to the work carried

out by the neighbourhood policing teams to build up trust and to establish pathways to help, there were a number of visitors to the city, some of whom had a tendency towards violence or other alcohol related crime; this was one of the challenges presented by a vibrant city. Generally, young people's conflict management skills were not good and lots of targeted work was carried out with young people.

- 9.4 There had been national recognition for the inter-agency work carried out in managing the night time economy and for the red/yellow card system operated in conjunction with door supervisors. If a situation was deemed severe enough, powers could be used, requiring individuals to leave an area, in such circumstances it was an offence not too. Significance was attached to ensuring that premises were properly run and in response to repeated offences at licensed premises in Bevendean had been closed down for a fixed period recently.
- 9.5 Additionally, there was a focus on dealing with domestic incidents, these could have a number of route causes and were not necessarily alcohol related. A multi agency approach had been adopted which sought to ensure that victims were given access to the appropriate wrap around services. Whilst not complacent the structures in place had helped to ensure serious violent crime in city had been reduced and contained and had not seen the level of increases which had occurred elsewhere in the country although further reduction of such crimes remained a target.
- 9.6 Councillor Barnett sought confirmation that it was illegal to sell alcohol to anyone who was already drunk and it was confirmed that it was. Councillor Barnett referred that a number of individuals could be observed around the city that was under the influence of alcohol enquiring as to the level of sanctions taken where offences occurred. It was noted that whilst the Police sought to work with licensees to effect any necessary improvements licences could be reviewed if that was considered appropriate. The Chairman cited the recent premises closure as an example of this.
- 9.7 Councillor Morgan enquired whether a number plate recognition system was used and Chief Inspector Bartlett responded that systems were in place to follow through in cases where such intelligence was received.
- 9.8 Councillor Watkins referred to instances elsewhere in the country where savage dogs were used for purposes of attack/as a weapon, it was confirmed that this had not been a prevailing trend in Brighton & Hove.
- 9.9 Mrs Matyzak referred to the weapons including on occasion live ammunition sometimes turned up at markets, /boot fairs and it was confirmed that trading standards and other agencies were aware of and took a pro-active approach in relation to this matter.
- 9.10 Mr Stevens referred to the sale of alcohol to street drinkers and those who were under age by supermarkets, it was explained that proportionate action was taken and that alcohol sales would not cease in the case of isolated incidents. A penalty notice would be served on the individual member of staff who had sold the alcohol; if this was a regular occurrence a review of the licence could be sought.
- 9.11 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the report be noted.

10. REDUCING RE-OFFENDING BY PROLIFIC OFFENDERS

- 10.1 The Chief Probation Officer, Mrs L Rogers gave an oral presentation detailing the initiatives in place to reduce the level of re-offending by prolific offenders.
- 10.2 Mrs Rogers explained that the Police had been working with the Police and other agencies since 2005 in order to target those individuals responsible for high levels of crime in the city. Individuals were supported and monitored through a twelve month period either as part of a community order or on release from prison. The scheme was designed to support these individuals in a consistent and comprehensive way. In appropriate instances drug testing /support for those with alcohol related problems was used. Improvements were seen year on year and the cohorts of individuals in the scheme changed as individuals moved on to other provision and new individuals joined.
- 10.3 This programme had been successful nationwide and during the coming year it was intended to roll the scheme out to involve a wider group of partners e.g., women's sector services to prevent people falling through any "gaps" in the system and to work with offenders aged 25 and below. Short term intervention work was also carried out with those who had no other formal support and had lost their homes/jobs as a result of a custodial sentence. Advice was given on benefits and other issues relevant to their circumstances.
- 10.4 Councillor Duncan stated that whilst he was very pleased to hear about these "intelligent" measures to help to reduce crime he enquired whether secure funding was in place to ensure that valuable resource could continue. Councillor Watkins concurred stating that funding was a key issue. Mrs Rogers explained that whilst difficult financial times were ahead some matched funding was in place. The key to continued success lie in working information sharing and working collaboratively with other partners. Whilst the probation service could not do it all it was well placed to work with the third sector in sharing their expertise and providing guidance to agencies dealing with those at the higher end of offending.
- 10.5 Mr Peacock referred to the available funding streams and to whether/if any under spend could be carried over to successive years and to the number of cohorts going through the system in any one year. It was explained that there were usually three cohorts within any one year and that this work carried forward year on year as a rolling programme. Dependent on the individuals within each cohort the level of intervention used would differ.
- 10.6 The Chairman welcomed the presentation and was pleased to note that this work was being carried forward in an integrated and supportive way. It was also that a presentation be given at a future Forum meeting detailing the work carried out by INSPIRE.
- 10.7 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the report be noted.

11. FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS AND SAFETY MEASURES IN HIGH RISE BLOCKS OF FLATS

- 11.1 The Technical Fire Safety Officer, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, Mr Combs gave a presentation setting out how Fire Risk Assessments were carried out in High Rise Blocks of flats.
- 11.2 He explained that the service worked pro-actively with Planning Officers and Building Control Officers as part of the planning process when new developments were considered. He referred to the historic position stating that whilst different measures applied in different types of block and dependent on their age, generally in all modern blocks or those above 7 storeys in height the presumption was against all residents leaving the event of a fire as it should be possible to compartmentalise areas of the building and to contain a fire so that only those in the immediate vicinity would need to be evacuated.
- 11.3 It was important that residents were aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire and work was undertaken to ensure this was so. Works/ obstructions to common parts of a building give rise to problems. Councillor Marsh referred to works undertaken with Council tenants recently to ensure the removal of plants, pictures etc which could result in a fire hazard/obstruction.
- 11.4 Mr Stevens referred to the measures applicable to council owned properties and the importance of all residents being made aware of the procedures applicable to the particular block where they lived.
- 11.5 **RESOLVED** –That the contents of the report be noted.
- 12. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 20 MAY AND 3 JUNE 2010**
- 12.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.
- 13. EAST SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 JUNE 2010**
- 13.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6.25pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

