

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 18 JANUARY 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Bartlett and Sergeant Castleton

Communities of Interest: Gail Grey RISE; Jess Tylor RISE; Francis Tonks, Older People's Council; Bernard Copelin, Patcham LAT; Councillor Mo Marsh, Coombe Road LAT; Roy Pennington, Craven Vale LAT; Faith Matyzak MBE, Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum and Racial Harassment Mediation Forum, Philip Wells, London Road Area LAT; Bill Ganley, Bevendean LAT; Sylvia Howell, Bevendean LAT; John Mc Phillips, Turner LAT; Ted Harman SCLAT; Eileen Oliver, Moulsecoomb LAT and Chris Cooke, Kemptown LAT

Officers: Linda Beanlands, Lead Commissioner Community Safety; Matthew Easteal, Public Safety Team; Jenny Wright, Community Safety Team; Simon Court, Lawyer and Penny Jennings, Democratic Services Officer

PART ONE

24. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

24a Declaration of Substitutes

24.1 There were none.

24b Declarations of Interest

24.2 There were none.

24c Exclusion of the Press and Public

24.3 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 an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature 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 100I of the Act).

24.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items on the agenda.

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

25.1 Councillor Watkins referred to paragraph 16.6 (Hate Crime Vigil on 23 October 2010). It was an excellent night and was extremely well attended.

25.2 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Community Safety Forum meeting held on 18 October 2010 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

26. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS

26.1 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Deane to her first meeting of the Community Safety Forum. She had replaced Councillor Duncan. This would mean that there would be no representative of the Sussex Police Authority on the Forum. The Democratic Services Officer had written to Councillor Duncan to regarding this matter. He had written back to say that if invited he would make an effort to attend.

26.2 The Chairman welcomed Eileen Oliver to the Forum. She would be representing Moulscroomb LAT.

26.3 The Chairman welcomed a representative of the Noise Abatement Society to the meeting. They would be giving a presentation on late night on-street noise disturbance later on the agenda.

27. PETITIONS:SAVE OUR FRONTLINE POLICING

27.1 The Forum considered a report of the Director of Strategy and Governance detailing joint paper and petitions which had been submitted via the council's website and had previously been presented, noted and received at a meeting of the Full Council of 21 October 2010.

27.2 Mr C Cooke, the Lead petitioner presented his petition.

27.3 The Chairman Councillor Simson referred to a recent letter received from the Home Office by the Chief Executive in response to a Notice of Motion which had been considered at Full Council, copies of this were circulated to those present and it was agreed that it would also be appended to the minutes of that afternoon's meeting and would be included with the subsequent response to the petitioner. The letter received from John Bowland dated 7 January 2001 stated as follows:

“Dear Mr Barradell

I have been asked to thank you for your letter of 1 November to the Home Secretary, about Neighbourhood Policing and the work of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), and to reply. I am sorry that you have had to wait so long for this reply.

In recognition of the essential role of the PCSOs play in delivering visible and available policing for communities, the Neighbourhood Policing Fund (as announced to Parliament on 16 December) will be maintained over the next two financial years (to 31 March 2013) before being devolved to directly elected Police and Crime Commissioners.

Though the Home Office provides, in the Neighbourhood Policing Fund, a substantial part of the salary costs of PCSOs, there is no intention that central government should be the only source of funds for this purpose. Police authority revenue from local taxation and partnership funding by local authorities are also important means of providing these salary costs. The Government is clear that forces should be focusing on finding efficiencies in back-office and support functions to protect frontline policing.”

- 27.4 Councillor Morgan (OS) stated that he was very concerned that whilst indicating that the work of the Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) was considered to be valuable, no commitment had been given to seek to protect their role in future years.”
- 27.4 Councillor Marsh, (Coombe Road LAT) stated initially she had been cynical that PCSO's were intended to “provide policing on the cheap”, however she freely acknowledged that that they had been very successful and were valued within their individual local communities where they provided a “bridge” between the Police and the communities they served. These Officers were visible, approachable and provided reassurance; their role should be protected.
- 27.5 Chief Superintendent Bartlett, noted all that had been said and in responding agreed that the role of PCSO's was valuable and confirmed that it was fully recognised. Whilst undoubtedly there would be rigorous constraints and cuts in spending over future years, it was not intended there would be any cuts to this area of the Police's service without serious prior consideration of other available options.
- 27.6 **RESOLVED** – That the content of the petitions be received and the responses given noted.

28. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 28.1 There were none.

29. MEMBERS QUESTIONS

- 29.1 The Forum considered a report of the Strategic Director of Resources setting out a question received from Councillor Lizzie Deane who was a Member of the Forum.
- 29.2 The Lead Commissioner for Community Safety responded to Councillor Deane's questions on the Chairman's behalf. The questions put by Councillor Deane and the Lead Commissioner's responses them are set out below for ease of reference.
- 29.3 How widespread is this issue (confirmed and estimated cases)?

Over the last four years we have had three confirmed cases of trafficked women in Brighton and Hove and no cases involving children. Those three cases involved

complex and protracted investigations involving potential victims from Sierra Leone, Hungary and Romania.

29.4 Is there a dedicated team assigned to finding/tackling trafficking criminals?

Within Brighton and Hove we have staff whose role specifically includes dealing with trafficking. These include a Detective Inspector who operates as a Senior Investigating Officer when we have potential trafficking offences and a Police Constable who works within our intelligence unit as an Intelligence Development Officer. Within Neighbourhood Policing Teams we have two PCSO's whose area includes established premises used for selling sex. Part of their role is to visit and monitor these premises. Other staff will be used as necessary in the investigation and development of intelligence regarding trafficking.

Using the latest information and intelligence the police regularly visit premises in Brighton and Hove where sex is being sold. These visits are made together with City Light, an agency specializing in providing support to trafficked women and who can make referrals into the appropriate national services. These visits are part of what is known as Operation Thames. Six operations were conducted last year. Trafficked women are also assisted by the Sex Worker Outreach Project at OASIS.

The council, the police and partner agencies (including those named above) meet regularly as the Sex Workers Steering Group to ensure that we work together to ensure that sex workers remain safe and to support sex workers to exit the industry, if this is what they want.

29.5 How many prosecutions have there been?

Of the three complex investigations we have had recently one resulted in successful prosecution of traffickers. The offenders were given 7 year sentences.

29.6 What support is available for victims from the time they seek help and being officially determined as a victim?

The police work closely with OASIS and City Lights who support women in the sex industry and will offer them routes out.

Where sexual offences are disclosed the police have specially trained Sexual Offences Liaison Officers who work with the victim to secure the best evidence. Brighton and Hove uses the Sexual Assault Referral Clinic in Crawley to support this work. Victims will be given strong support from specialist Independent Sexual Violence Advisers.

The council also has a specialist Young People's Asylum Service which has social work expertise in working with vulnerable young people who enter the country without a parent or carer if they present in the city. This team liaises with the police when necessary. Some of these young people could be described as "trafficked" in that their arrival to the UK is facilitated but then they present to social services for support.

29.7 What support is available for child victims during court proceedings?

There have been no cases reported to the police in Brighton and Hove of trafficked children. If there were, special measures would be considered at court as necessary.

- 29.8 The Chairman asked Councillor Deane whether she had a supplementary question and she sought detailed information regarding the case where a successful prosecution had been obtained and in relation to the two where it had not. Sergeant Castleton responded stating that although he did not have that information available at the meeting it would be provided to Councillor Deane. He stressed that these cases had been very complex and had involved a number of agencies and collaborative working with Police forces in other countries including visits by officers to Eastern Europe.
- 29.9 Councillor Watkins referred to the report which had been published by “Barnardo’s” that week. Among other a number of issues relating to vulnerable children it included definitions of “trafficking” and also contained recommendations in relation to tackling sexual abuse of children and young people.
- 29.10 The Lead Commissioner explained that the Community Safety were aware of the report and its content and that it would form the subject of a special inter agency meeting in order to discuss its implications. It was suggested that this could form the subject of a further report to the Forum and Members agreed this would be appropriate.
- 29.11 **RESOLVED** – That the response to the question be noted and that a further report on this matter detailing how the implications of the Barnardo’s report would be carried forward will form the subject of a report to a future meeting of the Forum.

30. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

- 30.1 Councillor Morgan (OS) stated that he had been informed that there were plans to remove the traffic base from the Hove Police Station which was located in Holland Road, he enquired regarding the current status of such plans.
- 30.2 Chief Superintendent Bartlett responded that no definitive decision had assessed in relation to the its need to access the strategic road network. Teams responded to incidents from where they were booked on, not in relation to where they needed to respond to. In view of the savings that needed to be made, the police were looking carefully at their estate and, how it could be most efficiently utilized. Hove Police Station was being assessed as a site and a consultation exercise was being carried out, the Council was included in that process. The issue of whether neighbourhood policing could be delivered more effectively from the site was being examined.
- 30.3 Superintendent Bartlett stressed that any move from the site by any part of its policing operations would not occur until or unless a robust and workable solutions were found.
- 30.4 Councillor Watkins stated that Councillors/Members of the Forum had been unaware of this situation, and as such communications needed to be improved, this was an issue on which the Council’s Police Authority representative needed to be informed and one on which he needed to ensure that other members were informed.

30.5 Councillor Janio referred to the fact that Councillor Duncan appeared to no longer be a member of the Forum, there had been a number of items on that afternoon's agenda on which his input would have been helpful to the Forum. This was also likely to be the case in relation to future meetings. The Democratic Services Officer explained that she had contacted Councillor Duncan at the Chairman's behest indicating that his presence at meetings of the Forum in his capacity as the council's representative on the Police Authority would be welcomed. Councillor Duncan had been unable to attend that afternoon's meeting but had indicated his intention to attend future meetings. Arrangements had been made for copies of all papers to be sent to him.

30.6 **RESOLVED** – That the position be noted.

31. DEALING WITH ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

31.1 The council's "Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator" gave a presentation detailing the collaborative inter agency approach adopted by the Community Safety Partnership in order to tackle anti-social behaviour in the city. It was explained that the PCST Anti Social Behaviour Team included police and officers of the council and worked with Sussex Police, the Council Housing Management/Anti Social Behaviour Team, Registered Social Landlords and the Targeted Youth Support Service.

31.2 Details were given regarding how complaints of ant-social behaviour were dealt with and progressed and how the team worked with the police by:

- Sharing information on perpetrators and victims;
- Referrals from Sussex Police officers to the ASB casework;
- Referrals from the ASB Team to PCSO's who act as the point of contact for victims of anti-social behaviour, undertaking regular patrols and home visits;
- Regular meetings to agree actions to deal with perpetrators and support victims;
- Joint analysis of police and council data to identify hotpots and emerging issues;
- Joint evidence gathering and legal action to tackle perpetrators.

31.3 Details of three anonymised case studies were given in order to illustrate the different types of problems the team dealt with and how by working with the relevant parties they were able to find solutions to those problems.

31.4 Councillor Morgan (OS) stated that he had attended a tenants meeting the previous week at which there had been discussion regarding the fact that problem tenants could be evicted. Whilst supportive of this work he considered that those who caused problems because they were vulnerable often needed additional support and that it was important to ensure you didn't port "problems" from one part of the city to another. The Legal Adviser to the Forum responded stating that it was a question of balance, sometimes of a number of conflicting responsibilities.

31.5 Councillor Watkins referred to the case had been reported in the "Argus" newspaper where legal action had been taken, after a mature student had been forced from their home by noisy fellow student neighbours.

- 31.6 The Chairman, Councillor Simson stated that there were a number of measures open to LAT's in dealing with anti-social behaviour and that the team gave inter-agency support in order to secure successful outcomes.
- 31.7 Councillor Janio was pleased to note that effective measures had reduced the incidence of anti-social behaviour he was of the view that as well as respecting the human rights of perpetrators it was important to respect the rights of neighbours too, otherwise there was a danger of vigilantism.
- 31.8 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

32. CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE FIGURES

- 32.1 The Forum considered a report of the Lead Commissioner of Community Safety setting out crime trends in Brighton and Hove to the end of October 2010.
- 32.2 Sergeant Castleton explained that during the first seven months of 2010.11, there had been an overall reduction in crime of 3.8% compared to the same period I 2009/10; this had exceeded the 3% target which had been set. This had continued the long term downward trend experienced over the last ten years.
- 32.3 Councillor Janio referred to these consistent reductions and wondered whether it that was sustainable. Sergeant Castleton stated that no one was resting on their laurels and targeted initiatives were continuing in relation to areas identified. For instance in seeking to encourage the reporting of incidence of domestic violence.
- 32.3 Councillor Phillips stated that care should be taken when referring to the relatively low figures for sexual violence as such statements could be misleading.
- 32.4 Ted Harman (SCLAT), referred to crimes against the elderly and how those were recorded. The Lead Commissioner Community Safety referred to the Scrutiny into elderly/hate crime which had indicated that this group were actually less likely to be victims of crime, although perceived fear of crime could not be understated and initiatives needed to be put into place to address that. The Lead Commissioner undertook to see whether it would be possible to break down domestic violence and other types of crime by age/gender (i.e., "older people") in future reports. She agreed that she would also see whether it would be appropriate to re-examine any of the recommendations arising from the scrutiny report.
- 32.4 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

33. LATE NIGHT ON-STREET NOISE DISTURBANCE

- 33.1 The Chairman, Councillor Simson introduced Gloria Elliott and Lisa Lavia of the noise abatement society who were present to detail the initiative that they would be engaging in with the council I order to seek to address late night on street noise. The Chairman explained that the presentation would mirror that which had bee give at a recent LAT Chair's meeting.

33.2 Gloria Elliott introduced herself as the Chief Executive of the Noise Abatement Society and gave an overview of the work of the society and the issues on which they gave advice and input. Lisa Lavia was then introduced and explained the ethos behind recent initiatives in greater detail the methodology that would be used in the pilot scheme across Brighton and Hove. Ms Lavia stated that this was the first pilot that they had undertaken with a local authority and that the opportunity to work in such close co-operation with a local authority was welcomed.

33.3 Ms Lavia explained that the emphasis was on a pragmatic approach as understood by those in the area and was in the context of its surrounding. It was about impact, tolerance levels and areas where change was possible and how you designed out the possibility of noise nuisance as far as possible. It was not about legislation. The purpose of the exercise was to map the city and to obtain a picture of the qualitative impact of noise across the city. It was explained that a presentation would be given to members of the Council setting out the pilot in detail.

33.4 The Chairman and Forum welcomed the presentation and stated they looked forward to receiving the presentation.

33.5 **RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

34. COMMUNITY RESOLUTION AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

34.1 Sergeant Castleton gave a presentation explaining how a Community Resolution system would be introduced across Sussex. It gave police officers and police community support officers the option of dealing with some types of incidents, usually low level ones, without having to go through the Criminal Justice System. This would only be done when it was in the best interests of the victim, where they chose to take part in Community Resolution and if it was the most effective way of dealing with the incident given all the circumstances.

34.2 Sergeant Castleton explained that Community Resolution could be applied to a wide range of offences but it was most likely to be used to deal with lower level crime and anti-social behaviour. Evidence indicated that such behavior could have a significant impact on people's quality of life. Often the criminal justice process was not the most appropriate tool for dealing with such situations. The use of Community Resolution and bringing together all parties involved to talk through a problem could help both sides to find a long-term solution.

34.3 The Chairman and Members thanked Sergeant Castleton for his informative presentation.

34.4 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the presentation be noted.

35. EAST SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES

35.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

36. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES

36.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

The meeting concluded at 5.55pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of