

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM**

**4.00pm 7 OCTOBER 2013**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor J Kitcat (Chair); Simson (Opposition Spokesperson), Morgan (Opposition Spokesperson), Barnett, Carden, Kennedy, Mac Cafferty, Pidgeon, Robins and Wakefield

**Sussex Police:** Chief Superintendent Nev Kempes, Sergeant James Davidson and Joe Ball.

**Statutory Services:** Mark Rist (ESFRS) & John Foules (PCC rep)

**Communities of Interest:** Francis Tonks (Older People's Council), Charlie Gibbs (Victim Support), Robert Brown (Bevendean LAT), Councillor Bowden (Queens Park LAT), Christine El-Shabba (Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum)

**Officers:** Linda Beanlands (Commissioner – Community Safety), James Rowlands (BHCC PCST), Simon Court (Senior Lawyer) and Ross Keatley (Democratic Services Officer)

**PART ONE**

**13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**13a Declaration of Substitutes**

13.1 Councillor Kennedy was present in substitution for Councillor Phillips.

**13b Declarations of Interest**

13.2 There were none.

**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 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).

13.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public are not excluded from the meeting.

**14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

14.1 **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Community Safety Forum meeting held on 10 June 2013 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

**15. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

15.1 The Local Action Team's Chair's meeting was due to be rearranged for November, to suit availability. At that meeting the issue of additional support to the network of Local Action Teams would be discussed.

15.2 The London Road Local Action Team had played a key role in providing evidence to the Council and Police in its decision making about the best way to achieve change in the practices of a licensed retailer in York Place, who had been consistently selling high strength alcohol to street drinkers and those who were inebriated. Given the evidence, the Licensing Panel had decided to revoke the licence which was an important step forward in dealing with the anti-social behaviour in the area. Thanks were extended to the expertise and support of London Road LAT

15.3 Following on from that, the Licensing Team were to shortly launch a campaign 'Sensible on Strength' which would set out good management practices for off licenses, in particular to reduce the sale overall of super strength alcohol . Information would come out to Forum members about the campaign.

**16. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

16.1 There were none.

**17. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT**

17.1 There were none.

**18. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES**

18.1 The Chief Superintendent, Nev Kemp, noted that at the previous meeting an issue had been raised in relation to Police Community Support Officer not having a mobile phone, and there had been some concerns that their phones had been removed. It was confirmed that this had been an isolated incident and there had been no blanket removal of phones.

**19. NATIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES WHICH IMPACT LOCALLY:  
STANDING ITEM**

19.1 There were none listed for this meeting.

**20. LOCAL ISSUES: STANDING ITEM****20A CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE FIGURES**

- 20.1 The forum considered a report of the Commissioner for Community Safety describing recent activities and progress relating to priority areas in the Brighton & Hove Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2011-14. Graphs showing monthly crime data from April 2009 to August 2013 were provided which set recent data in the context of both longer term trends and seasonal crime cycles.
- 20.2 Councillor Morgan asked specific questions in relation to Domestic Violence, and was confirmed that the work of the Police & Crime Commissioner's Office in relation to the needs of victims and witnesses would focus on historic cases.
- 20.3 Councillor Simson asked about Drugs Misuse, and in particular what work was undertaken to monitor and work with the Universities and their student populations. In response it was explained that there was no specific monitoring of the student population in relation to level of drug use; however, as far as possible the data was broken down and analysed in terms of age groups. Reference was also made to the work of the Drugs Commission, and it was explained that Officers were now leading a working group which was considering the implications of the all recommendations; both local universities and City College were part of the working group and had given evidence to the Drugs Commission.
- 20.4 Councillor Simson also made reference to the recent revocation of a licence prompted by the evidence submitted from the London Road LAT; she asked what would be done to ensure all LATs were equipped with the necessary knowledge and tools to undertake similar action where necessary in their communities. In response it was explained that the Chair of the London Road LAT was due to present to the next meeting of the LAT Chairs to profile what had happened and advice on best practice. It was requested that any LATs with similar problems in their areas were specifically targeted to attend the meeting.
- 20.5 In response to a query from a member of the Forum it was confirmed that the Drugs Partnership was involved in the support centre, and a Senior Officer attended the meetings.
- 20.6 In response to a query from a Member of the Forum it was confirmed that since the Level has reopened, following improvement works, with the new Police Hub in situ there had a been a very significant decrease in crime in the immediate area following an increase of local reporting of problems and improved coordination of responses.

**20B REPORTING OF CRIME AND INCIDENTS AND RESPONSE BY SUSSEX POLICE**

- 20.7 An introduction was given by the contact centre manager, Joe Ball, and she explained that she managed the centre in Lewes which took calls from the new national 101 non-emergency number; the service was currently being reviewed with a mind to bringing the 999 emergency call function into the centre. The centre was tasked with answering 75% of calls to the 101 number within 60 seconds, compared with 90% of the 999 calls in 10 seconds. The volume of calls varied seasonally, but there was an expectation that

the wait would be longer on the non-emergency number. It was explained that problems with the length of call waiting times earlier in the year had been due to training following the introduction of a new crime recording system. Since the end of August the situation had improved; further recruitment exercises had been undertaken and the performance rate had increased. It was also noted that there had been a general shift seeing more incidents reported online; with approximately 65,000 incidents a year reported in this manner; there was also a live web chat.

- 20.8 Councillor Simson referred to incidents where the manner of the call handler was not satisfactory, and alleged incidents of the handler trying to discourage an incident from being recorded. Ms Ball responded that calls were monitored by duty supervisors, and confirmed that it was not the role of the call handler to query the nature of the incident.
- 20.9 In response to queries from Councillor Morgan it was explained by Ms Ball that there had been analysis and mapping in relation to the different emergency and non-emergency calls; particularly looking at how the role of the call handlers could be merged. It had been shown that combining the roles provided a better service and efficiency; however, the work in relation the emergency calls would be protected through any change to the service.
- 20.10 Councillor Daniel asked about the resilience of the service, and in response it was explained that there were fall back locations to operate from in the area, and if there were service issues the calls could be diverted and taken by colleagues in Guildford working for Surrey Police.
- 20.11 It was confirmed for Councillor Simson that 96% of emergency calls had been consistently answered within 4 seconds; if the caller waited for longer than 10 seconds it would be diverted and answered at the nearest centre with capacity. Councillor Daniel went on to ask about the shift to more digital reporting, and asked how some of this work would progress; in response it was explained that there were not currently any targets, but further work was anticipated in relation to these matters.

## **20C DEALING WITH VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN & GIRLS: PRESENTATION**

- 20.12 By way of introduction it was confirmed that the Strategy and Action Plan related to domestic violence; rape; trafficking; forced marriage; sexual mutilation and honour crimes; the vast majority of reported crimes and incidents also related to female victims and male perpetrators. The work had taken a lead from some of the language used by the United Nations, and Central Government had a particular focus on health. The challenge was moving from high end case work to trying to produce a preventative strategy, and work taking place within schools. Work was being undertaken with Sussex Police and the PCC to best use existing services; commonalities were pulled together to identify themes and these had been put into four more manageable areas. There would be provisions in place across the partnership, and communication to help raise awareness; the structure would be that of a programme Board with strategic leads.
- 20.13 Councillor Morgan asked specific question in relation to the sentencing policy in the courts; in response it was explained that there was specific work going on in this area in a national scrutiny group which would be feeding back on the matter.

- 20.14 Councillor Wakefield asked about the impact on school performance of children who had mothers that were victims. In response it was highlighted that this was a key issue, and there was a programme that worked with identified children; attention was also drawn to the early help strategy which was currently the subject of consultation. The Commissioner for Community Safety also highlighted the link between domestic violence and the work of the Safeguarding Board.
- 20.15 Councillor Robins asked for more information in relation to the offender management side of the issue. In response it was explained there were two programmes in the city: the first worked with those sentenced and or those instructed to go to help them build better relationships. The second focused around living without violence, but was aimed at those currently involved in the Criminal Justice System. The programmes were normally 26-32 weeks in length, and worked to address patterns of negative behaviour. It was noted that there was no provision for LGBT men or men who were in relationships without children.
- 20.16 Councillor Simson noted the high levels of domestic violence in the city, but queried if some of the other forms of violence against women were less reported and Police were less aware of them. In response it was acknowledged that some of this had been the subject of some high profile media attention; with issues in relation to human trafficking and forced prostitution receiving particular attention – it was hoped some of the work in relation to Criminal Investigation Department would explain the gap.
- 20.17 In response to queries from Councillor Bowden it was explained that there was ongoing work to raise awareness of what constituted a healthy relationship to help prevent those who had been victims going on to become offenders. It was acknowledged that it was necessary to provide sustainable solutions; particularly by working closely with schools.
- 20.18 Councillor Mac Cafferty asked specific questions in relation to the benchmarking work that was undertaken, and in response it was explained that there was not always the data available to undertake proper benchmarking due to the very small number of cases. Some comparisons were made with both East and West Sussex County Councils.

**20D MODERNISED CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT**

- 20.19 The Chief Superintendent, Nev Kemp, explained that the department had approved changes to create two Detective Chief Inspector roles: one would focus on children, adults and domestic protection; whilst the other would target priority case burglary and illegal drugs in the city. Part of the remit in relation to the organised crime and trafficking had been to set up a multi-agency group to look at the picture in the city. Part of these changes would consider special investigators with an area of expertise into issues such as rape or other sexual offences. It was noted that currently victims of rape would have to repeat the story to seven or eight professionals, and the view was that there should be specially trained officers to link in with the victim at the very beginning.
- 20.20 Councillor Simson noted this was a good step forward, and suggested that a special service could be more cost effective in the long term. In response it was acknowledged that this could be the case, and highlighted that the Crown Prosecution Service wanted to co-ordinate prosecutions more, and create good liaison much earlier in the process.

20.21 Councillor Wakefield asked if the specialised officers were women, and what work had been undertaken to look into best practice. In response it was explained that not all of the specialised officers were women, but it was accommodated when victims asked for a specific gender of officer. It was acknowledged that in the past the level of training had not always achieved the desired level of consistency. Work had been undertaken to look at 15 other Police forces, and the national police recruitment agency had been asked to undertake a review and make recommendations.

## **20E NEW APPROACHES TO SUPPORT THE STREET POPULATION**

20.22 By way of introduction the Commissioner for Community explained that the rising street population in the city had been indentified as a risk to the city; in response a new group had been set up by the Police and the Council to co-ordinate all the initiatives that were taking place for the street population, and work to safely reduce their numbers. A representative from Sussex Police went on to explain that the numbers of the street population were second only to Westminster nationally, and the first pop up hub had been successfully targeted. The hub sought to target the most entrenched members of the street by offer all services in one place for one night. Sussex Police had used powers to target 20 individuals who did not engage, and used the hub to reconnect them with services. It was stated that the hub had been a success and further events were planned.

20.23 In response to Councillor Barnett it was explained that the event focused on reconnecting individuals with services in a permanent solution. The hub could accommodate and reconnect 12 individuals each night, and at the very least act as stepping stone to engagement with services. The next event was planned to take place in the next six weeks, and providing the funding was available it would continue to run through the winter; the hub had also been received very well from members of the street community.

20.24 In response to a query from a member of the forum the Commission Community Safety explained that national changes to the prison system would see Lewes Prison become a local prison. This meant it would take a much higher proportion of local people, and help to properly plan their release.

20.25 Councillor Wakefield asked about involvement with the Royal British Legion, and in response it was explained that there was a strong link them in the city, and work was being undertaken to identify why members of the street community came to the city specifically to develop an understanding of what factors drew people in.

20.26 In response to a query from Councillor Robins it was explained that there was partnership working with the Border Agency to help people return to their home countries when they had become homeless in the country, and there was a Sussex wide operation to look at where migrant workers came from.

## **21. SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2013**

21.1 The minutes were noted.

**22. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES**

22.1 The Borough Commander provided an update in relation to the potential strike activity and explained that the industrial dispute was ongoing with Central Government. There had already been one short strike for four hours, and there had been a reduced level of cover in this period. There had to be seven days notice before any strike could be called, and it was believed that potential dates would come forward in the next few days. If the situation were to draw out for a longer period further consideration would have to be given to the approach taken. Thanks were extended to the support provided by Sussex Police and the Council.

**23. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

23.1 The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting concluded at 5.49pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of