

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

Agenda Item 38
Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 14 DECEMBER 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Bartlett; Sergeant Castleton

Communities of Interest: I Spall, Queen's Park LAT; Mrs S Howell, Bevendean LAT, Councillor Marsh, Coombe Road, LAT; J McPhillips, Turner Safety Action Group; D Peacock, St James' Area Action Team; Mrs F Matyzak MBE, Racial Harassment Forum and Whitehawk Community Project; Mrs P Weller, Community Action, Hangelton & Knoll and Mr D Standing, YMCA

Officers: Judith Macho, Assistant Director; Public Safety ;Linda Beanlands, Head of Community Safety; Simon Court, Senior Solicitor and Penny Jennings, Senior Democratic Services Officer

PART ONE

24. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

24A. Declaration of Substitutes

24.1 Councillor Fryer was in attendance in substitution for Councillor Kennedy.

24B. Declarations of Interest

24.2 Councillors Carden (OS) and Marsh (present as a representative of Coombe Road LAT) declared a personal interest in Item36 by virtue of their positions as representatives of the City Council on the East Sussex Fire Authority; this did not constitute a prejudicial interest.

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 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).

24.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded from the meeting.

25. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

25.1 The Head of Community Safety stated that she had prepared a detailed response to the question raised at the last meeting of the Forum in relation to Drugs Education, which had been circulated to those present. It was intended to report further during 2010.

25.2 **RESOLVED** - That the Chairman be authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2009 as a correct record.

26. CHAIRMAN'S COMMUNICATIONS**LAT Chairman's Meeting**

26.1 The Chairman stated that the LAT Chairman's meeting held in central Brighton recently had been well attended. A further programme of meetings was planned for the New Year and it was hoped that as many Chair's or their representatives as possible would be able to attend.

Successful Partnership Bid – Young Offenders Project

26.2 The Chairman was pleased to be able to report that due to a successful partnership bid an increased budget would be available to assist young offender's projects across the City during 2010/11.

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

27. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

27.1 There were none.

28. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

28.1 There were none.

29. CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

- 29.1 The Forum considered a report of the Assistant Director, Public Safety describing crime trends to October 2009 and reporting against key crime targets relating to Community Safety, Crime reduction and Dugs Strategy, 2008/11 (for copy see minute book).
- 29.2 Sergeant Castleton stated that since April 2009 there had been an overall reduction in crime of 1.8% compared to the same period the previous year although that figure was still below the 3% target which had been set. This represented a continuation of the long term downward trend which had been experienced over the past 10 years.
- 29.3 Following the request made at the previous meeting figures for sexual offences were set out for the first time. There had been an increase of 11% on the number of offences the previous year. It was considered that the increase probably reflected greater confidence of victims in being prepared to come forward and report such crimes. Public to awareness campaigns had been undertaken highlighting the link between the risk of sexual assault and drinking to excess. In addition to existing referral routes to the Sexual Assault Referral Centre which provided support to men and women who had been the victims of sexual assault, the SARC was also now accepting self referrals. It was important to note that whilst instances of such crime were taken very seriously, the overall figure was small.
- 29.4 The Chairman stated that provision of information relating to sexual offences was timely as there a Scrutiny Panel would be considering this issue in 2010. It was also encouraging to note that victims including those from the LGBT community were coming forward to report these crimes.
- 29.5 The increase in relation to domestic burglaries was largely attributable to a group of youths who had been carrying out organised crime across the city during the summer months.
- 29.6 Councillor Barnett referred to the incident of crimes to the elderly stating that she considered that although the reported figure was not considered to be very high it constituted too many. It was explained that whilst any crime was considered to be too many the incidence of such crime was very low. Perception of such crime was far greater than the actuality, as had been borne out by the recent scrutiny, campaigns were planned to address this.
- 29.7 In answer to Councillor Barnett's request that all types of crime also be broken down by the victim's age, it was explained that this would entail a great deal of work, which would ultimately underline the fact that incidence of such crime was very low. Those who were under 25 were at the highest risk of violent crime.
- 29.8 Mr Peacock, St James' Street Area LAT stated that following a "Spectrum" meeting at the Friends meeting house recently Chris Cooke a Member of the Forum, had been asked to sit on a new task group which had been set up to deal with BME hate crime, this was seen as a very positive step. The Chairman thanked Mr Peacock for his feedback.

29.9 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

30. SUPPORTING THE NETWORK OF LOCAL ACTION TEAMS

30.1 The Head of Community Safety referred to the recent very successful LAT Chairman's meeting at which LAT representatives had been provided with their personalised guidance manuals. These documents were not intended to be prescriptive but to provide a user-friendly framework, relevant contact information etc. It was intended that the information contained in the manuals would be updated regularly. Further scheduled meetings would be put into place during 2010.

30.2 Councillor Marsh who was present as a representative of Coombe Road LAT commended the meeting which had been very informative. The Chairman stated that if any Chairman was unable to attend these meetings it was acceptable for them to send any other member of their LAT as a substitute.

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

31. WORK OF THE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

31.1 This item was withdrawn, it was anticipated that it would come forward to the next scheduled meeting of the Forum in March 2010.

32. OPERATION PARK : MANAGING YOUTH DISORDER

32.1 Sergeant Castleton gave a presentation detailing the work which had been carried out across the city in relation to "Operation Park" referred to nationally as operation "Stay Safe". The scheme had been set up initially to address the concerns of residents of East Brighton to address problems caused as result of large numbers of young people congregating in an area. The scheme operating in the city of Brighton & Hove had been commended as being one of the best in the country.

32.2 Sergeant Castleton explained that following an interview with the young people concerned a letter was sent to their parents. The attitude response by parents to this initial contact was often integral to the success of any follow up action. Overall, positive outcomes had been achieved and partnership working was taken place with the anti - social behaviour team, the hate crime team and work was in train with health partners to share and gather data on health and other related issues. In instances where behaviour was drink related follow up action was tracked in concert with the relevant health agencies.

32.3 Councillor Janio sought information regarding how incidents were recorded and followed up and in relation to targeting of certain areas of the city.

32.4 Councillor Fryer enquired regarding intervention of and the point at which other youth services were involved.

32.5 Councillors Morgan and Watkins welcomed the joint agency approach which was being adopted.

32.6 Councillor Duncan enquired regarding how provision of services could be effected by budgetary cuts. Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that whilst there would on-going budgetary pressures the need for this work was recognised and would be supported and as with other areas of policing ways in which services might be delivered more effectively would be assessed.

32.7 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the presentation be noted.

33. COMMUNITY PAYBACK SCHEMES

33.1 Mr Berry of the East Sussex Probation Service gave a presentation detailing work associated with the Community Payback scheme (for copy see minute book).

33.2 Mr Berry explained that in line the powers provided under the Criminal Justice Act 2003 Community Orders involving unpaid work (Community Payback) was one of 12 possible non-custodial sentences which could be used. An offender was required to complete work for the benefit of the community for a period of between 40 - 300 hours. The scheme had been applied sensitively and had led to significant decreases in re-offending rates. An offender who had worked on a Community Punishment order was 40 % less likely to re-offend in the next two years and an offender serving a prison sentence was 75% less likely to re-offend in the next two years.

33.3 Mr Berry explained that over the last year in Brighton varied work had been carried out including Brighton EIT projects, makeovers in schools, community halls, and volunteer centres, making good the damage caused by vandalism and anti-social behaviour, litter clearance, community clean up days, vandalism repairs and graffiti removal.

33.4 Councillor Morgan referred to the works that had been completed on the Bristol Estate within his Ward, although he explained that works carried out needed to fall outside the responsibilities of the local authority for repair/maintenance work. Mr Berry re-iterated that this was the case and in answer to questions of Councillors Barnett and Young stated that great care was taken when placing offenders either individually or as part of a small team. An assessment was made and certain types of offender would not be placed in situations where they or the community into which they were placed could be vulnerable or allocated to certain projects/ tasks.

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

34. THE PARTNERSHIP RESPONSE TO DEALING WITH SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ABUSE

34.1 The Head of Community Safety presented a report relating to dealing with sexual violence and abuse (for copy see minute book).

34.2 The Head of Community Safety explained that reducing sexual violence and abuse was a priority within the Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2008–2011. The section of the Strategy which set out the outcomes being sought and the actions being taken to achieve them was appended to the covering report. The purpose of the report was to inform the Forum about the action currently being taken to

deal with sexual violence and abuse and to provide an opportunity for questions about this area of work. Details of the definitions used by Central Government were also set out.

- 34.3 Mr Peacock referred to the various definitions and to the agency approach being adopted.
- 34.4 In answer to questions by Councillor Janio it was explained that a number of related incidence related to the night time economy and that targeted initiatives were being out into place to address this.
- 34.5 Councillor Duncan referred to the scrutiny to be carried out and it was confirmed that the Forum would be updated and kept informed regarding progress of that piece of work.
- 34.6 Mr Standing YMCA referred to the recent Comic Relief initiatives with the LGBT community which in his view represented positive progress.
- 34.7 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted.

35. EAST SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 SEPTEMBER 2009

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

36. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 OCTOBER 2009

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

The meeting concluded at 5.55pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of