

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 10 DECEMBER 2012

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Duncan (Chair); Morgan (Opposition Spokesperson), Bowden, Mac Cafferty, Marsh, Meadows, Shanks, Pidgeon and Simson

Sussex Police: Graham Bartlett & James Davidson.

Statutory Services: Katy Bourne (Police & Crime Commissioner), Dr Tom Scanlon (Brighton & Hove Primary Care Trust), Mark Rist (East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service), Leigh Rogers (Surrey & Sussex Probation Trust).

Communities of Interest: Ray Freeman, Alan Cooke, Colin Tribe, Clare Tikly, Dave Murtagh, Nicloas De Conde, John McPhillips, Clive Gross, Francis Tonks, Charlie Gibbs, Mr Asaduzzaman, Asmat Roe, Ahmad Jamee, Mr Chowdhury, Geogry Havi and Dr Yagoub.

Officers: Linda Beanlands (Commissioner, Community Safety), Peter Castleton (Community Safety Manager), Simon Court (Senior Solicitor), Nahida Shaikh (Community Safety Manager – Cohesion) and Ross Keatley (Democratic Services Officer).

PART ONE

22. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

22a Declaration of Substitutes

22.1 Councillor Marsh was present in substitution for Councillor Carden.

22b Declarations of Interest

22.2 There were none.

22c Exclusion of the Press and Public

22.3 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).

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

23. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

23.1 It was noted that Mr Freeman's name had been omitted from the minutes.

23.2 **RESOLVED** – That, with the above addition, the minutes of the Community Safety Forum meeting held on 8 October 2012 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

24. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

24.1 The chair noted that the Sussex Police Authority had now been abolished and replaced with the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC); there was now a Police & Crime Panel that would be able to scrutinise the PCC who had already met, but it was too early to update on budgets and initiatives.

25. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

25.1 There were none.

26. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

26.1 There was none.

27. ATTENDANCE OF POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER: INTRODUCTION AND OPEN SESSION

27.1 The Police & Crime Commissioner, Ms Katy Bourne, gave a brief introduction and stated that her role would be to set the strategic policy for police and crime in Sussex; she was currently working on writing the budget, and there would be more information on budget specifics later in the month. Ms Bourne highlighted that part of electoral campaign had been around supporting community safety partnerships, especially in relation to their local knowledge; however, she would be writing to Council Leaders explaining that next year all community safety partnerships would be asked to justify the funds they received and prove they were working. Ms Bourne stated that in Sussex a lot of funding had been used to tackle drugs related crime, and she felt that alcohol related crime had been neglected; which was an important local issue for the city.

Open Session and Questions

27.2 Councillor Meadows asked a question in relation to the '101' non-emergency number, and explained that residents had been reporting low level to crime, but the operators would not record or report it further. Councillors Meadows highlighted that this type of low level crime could build up. In response Ms Bourne asked Councillor Meadows to

email her with further details so that she could look into the matter further. Councillor Bowden added that he would be grateful for more details in relation to this matter.

- 27.3 Mr Chowdhury of the Sussex Bangladeshi Community highlighted criminal activity targeted against the community he represented; he stated he had called the office of the PCC but had not had a response. Ms Bourne stated she was aware of the request, and her office would arrange a meeting shortly.
- 27.4 Dr Yagoub of the Racial Harassment Forum highlighted problems reaching communities due to financial restraints, and noted that a lot of the problems related to the reporting of crime; Ms Bourne noted that this was something that could be considered in the future.
- 27.5 Mr Gross of the Brighton & Hove Mediation Service asked how early intervention would be addressed at a strategic level. In response Ms Bourne explained that she considered early intervention and prevention the key to addressing crime, and it would be part of her agenda going forward; she wanted to talk to community safety partnerships groups about how this could be tackled at a local level.
- 27.6 Mr Peacock of the Sussex Police Independent Advisory Group asked about measures that could be taken to address the fear of crime; Ms Bourne replied that there were no straight forward answers to this question, but she felt the Police Authority had not engaged well with the public and she wanted to see these relations improve.
- 27.7 Councillor Simson spoke about the night-time economy in the city, and in particular highlighted that the management of the licensed trade was often difficult due to the restrictions of the Licensing Act and asked if pressure could be put on Central Government to overhaul the Act. In response Ms Bourne noted these problems, and highlighted some of the new powers local authorities would have in terms of Licensing.
- 27.8 Mr Gandy of Bevendean LAT asked how Ms Bourne would provide an effective service across such a large area; and in response she explained that she had eight full-time staff as well as a CEO and CFO. Ms Bourne also encouraged local groups to stay in operation and to communicate with her office; a member of her team would also regularly attend the Forum.
- 27.9 Mr De Conde of Moulsecoomb LAT asked question in relation to improving communication through social interaction, and in response Ms Bourne explained that she would be undertaking volunteer work in communities and would encourage her team to do the same. The Commissioner: Community Safety also added that the Community Safety Team already did a lot of this sort of thing through its own initiatives.
- 27.10 Dr Yagoub noted he felt racial crime had recently fallen off the main agenda, and Ms Bourne noted that she had been elected on a promise to put victims, and asked that any community feedback racial crime.
- 27.11 A member of the public also noted that more time should be taken to address the emotional concerns of some women in ethnic minority groups; she said that currently there was lack of funding, but the situation also needed full supports from partnerships who worked in this area. Ms Bourne stated that he would be very happy to come and

discuss this with some of the groups, but she highlighted that community had to be proactive themselves in these matters.

- 27.12 Councillor Morgan stated that funding was an issue for many of the local groups, and some policing services were shared with neighbouring forces, and asked how would Ms Bourne ensure Sussex received its 'fair share'. In response she explained that she would be working hard at Central Government level on behalf of Sussex; but also noted she hoped more working could be done with Surrey where it would be cost effective and promote best practise.
- 27.13 A representative of the Youth Offending Service asked about young people and alcohol and drug abuse, and stated the importance of keeping these matters high on the priority for the PCC. In response Ms Bourne noted these concerns and highlighted she would be spending a day with the team soon.
- 27.14 Mr Scott, a local resident, expressed his concern about the high specification of Police vehicles and the potential cost implications of this. In response Ms Bourne explained that this could be considered, but it would form part of her immediate programme.
- 27.15 Mr Tonks of the Older People's Council asked question about protest groups in the city and the potential to ban them. In response Paul Betts of Sussex Police was able to clarify that Mr Tonks was referring to 'March for England', and this could be discussed further on the agenda at the appropriate item.
- 27.16 The Chair thanked Ms Bourne for attending, and speaking to the Forum.

28. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

- 28.1 Mr Chowdhury explained an incident in relation to a break in his sister's house; the initial response of the Police had been very good, but highlighted the poor service that had been subsequently received. In response Chief Superintendent Bartlett apologised for this, and stated that he would take this matter further and ensure he was in receipt of the full details.
- 28.2 Mr Rise of East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service highlighted an increase in deliberate fires in the city centre; the service had given out advice to traders, but Mr Rist also wanted to raise this at the Forum and highlight that advice that could be given from the service.
- 28.3 Ms Zahmed from the Ladies Multi-Cultural Group discussed robberies targeted at the Bengali community in the Hangleton area, and highlighted that one of their main concerns was the lack of CCTV cameras in the area. Chief Superintendent Bartlett said that he would ensure an Officer attended the next meeting of the group to discuss appropriate measures and ways forward.
- 28.4 Mr Chowdhury discussed the issue of taxis blocking access to Brighton Railway Station for deliveries; and the Chair agreed this could be taken up with the Head of Regulatory Services to be discussed at the next taxi forum.

- 28.5 Councillor Simson highlighted that fear of crime was often made worse by areas looking untidy and scruffy; she noted that graffiti had increased generally which made people feel unsafe. The Chair agreed to report back on this matter at a future meeting of the Forum.
- 28.6 Mr De Conde asked what measures were being taken to address gambling in the city, and in response Councillor Duncan explained that this was a licensable activity regulated by the City Council.
- 28.7 Mr Gandy discussed the 'Alley Cats' scheme where local residents had acted as sponsors to monitor the condition of their local area, and the Chair agreed this could be raised at the next LATs Chair's meeting.

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

- 29.1 There were none.

30. LOCAL ISSUES: STANDING ITEM

30A CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE FIGURES

- 30.1 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; statistical updates relating the first five months of 2012/13 – April to October 2012 were also highlighted. Graphs showing monthly crime data from April 2008 to October 2012 were provided which set recent data in the context of both longer term trends and seasonal crime cycles. An explanatory note was also circulated on Domestic Violence following an action from the previous meeting.
- 30.2 Councillor Morgan noted that there were some areas of good news in the report; he asked if there was any evidence to suggest that the increase in acquisitive crime was related to funding drug misuse or any other motivations that could be quantified. In response it was explained the big concern was in relation to theft from person. Action had been taken by the large pubs and clubs and this had helped to address the rates; as well as measures by phone manufactures such as tracking of devices.
- 30.3 Councillor Simson asked about better use of language in relation to domestic violence crimes, and went on to state that she was pleased to see that graffiti was classified as criminal damage. In response Chief Superintendent Bartlett clarified some of the language used in relation to domestic violence, and stated that although the Police would normally know who the person responsible was they needed sufficient evidence from the victim to put the person before a court. Despite this there was always ongoing casework and support services for victims.
- 30.4 Councillor Bowden asked what measures could be taken in relation to the underreporting of LGBT hate crimes. In response The Commissioner: Community Safety explained that there changes in the Casework Team to recognise that some people would not want to report a crime to a Police Officer; there would be Civilian

Officers in place working closely with the Police for partnership approach; there would also be dedicated LGBT Officers.

- 30.5 Mr Crooke of Craven Vale LAT asked if budget cuts had contributed to increases in crime, and in response Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that budget cuts had not affected the operational work of the Police.
- 30.6 Councillor Marsh highlighted the importance of preventative measures and a policy of zero tolerance, and it was suggested some benchmarking could be undertaken with other similar authority to get an idea of over or under reporting of crime. It was also noted that although there were approximately 275k residents in the city; there were 8 million visitors each year.
- 30.7 Mr Haki from the Sudanese Coptic Community noted that a number of taxi drivers had problems with late night customers who refused to pay fares, but stated that they received good responses from the Police. Mr Haki went on to state that taxi drivers were often not supported by SIA security staff who were on duty at licensed premises; in response it was explained that incidents where other people in 'guardian' positions were not assisting should be reported, and that SIA staff were a regulated and licensed workforce.
- 30.8 Mr Peacock pointed to a spike in crime in September and asked if this had been linked to Pride; he also pointed to reports in local papers that added to the fear of crime. In response it was acknowledged that sensationalised reporting could add to the fear of crime, and work was undertaken with the local media in relation to this.
- 30.9 Councillor Bowden asked for information on attacks on homeless people, and it was explained that a lot of work had been done around this area and there was a lead to address vulnerable members of the street community. Measures were also being taken to increase reporting of these crimes where people were fearful to do so. It was agreed that Officers could come to discuss this matter at a future meeting. The Commissioner: Community Safety emphasised the amount of work that was done to help protect homeless people. It was also agreed that the provision of a free phone number for homeless people to report crime to could be considered.

30B PROTEST LIAISON

- 30.10 A presentation was given, and it was stated that there was a dedicated Protest Liaison Team in the Planning Events Team with two Officers. There were 15 nationally trained protest liaison Officers, and the city was the second biggest protest location nationally after London, and it was important that the Police build up long-term relationships. Officers sought to engage with groups to facilitate peaceful protests for all people, and it was important to balance the rights of groups to protest against the need to protect against unlawful behaviour. Negotiation was key to providing a link between the commanders and the protestors, and they worked proactively to initiate changes. From the outset Officers would operate in a clear and transparent manner, and would act as operational Police Officers during the protests. The Officers had received a lot of good feedback, and helped to reduce threat levels during protests.

- 30.11 The Chair highlighted the positive feedback he was aware of from protest groups, and that the City Council would work to facilitate protests wherever possible.
- 30.12 Councillor Morgan commended the work of the Police in this area, but drew a distinction with potentially dangerous protests that could create fear and distress. Officers agreed that some protests were much more challenging; they had no powers to 'ban assembly', but could apply to ban procession. It was important to note that whilst many people may not agree with the views of some groups they still had a right to protest.
- 30.13 Councillor Bowden asked what work could be done with the licensed industry in the city to prevent protestors arriving in the city and going straight to premises to get intoxicated. It was confirmed that this type of work was already undertaken, and steps had been made that year to ban alcohol at a protest using by-laws.
- 30.14 Mr Peacock asked if a special case could be argued for the city for better financial provision to manage protests due to the high numbers. In response it was explained that this had been successful for the management of Political Party conferences in the city, but this had been unsuccessful on other occasions.
- 30.15 Mr Gandy asked about the potential hidden effects of protests, and highlighted that some elderly people would not leave their homes during such events. It was agreed that this could be fed back into the work of the team.
- 30.16 A local resident stated that despite all the work undertaken there was still a minority of people that would not feel comfortable leaving their homes when certain protests were taking place, and they would have to plan their day around this in advance. The Chair noted that it was important to take a balanced view, but neither the Police nor the City Council had the power to ban the protests. Officers confirmed that they were limited by legislation, but would work to protect groups by adding conditions to protests; for example to prevent them from entering areas that could be considered sensitive.

30C DEALING WITH PARTY HOUSES

- 30.17 This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Forum for a full report.

31. SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES

- 31.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

32. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES

- 32.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

33. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 33.1 The date of the next meeting was Monday 25 February 2013.

34. EAST SUSSEX FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE - MEDIUM TERM PLAN

- 34.1 The Chair asked that members of the Forum take the time to respond to the consultation via the website or the freepost address.

The meeting concluded at 6.40pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of