

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP**

**9 JULY 2013**

Present: Councillor A Khan (Chair)  
Councillors J Aron, R Martins, A Joynes, A Lovejoy, K McLeod  
and M Meerabux

Also present: Chief Inspector Wheatley (for minute numbers 1 to 5)  
Inspector Dent (for minute numbers 1 to 5)

Officers: Head of Community and Customer Services  
Community Safety Manager  
Licensing Manager (for minute numbers 1 to 5)  
Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator (for minute numbers 1 to 5)  
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)

### **1 ELECTION OF CHAIR**

RESOLVED –

That Councillor Asif Khan be elected Chair for the municipal year 2013/2014.

### **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

There were no disclosures of interest.

### **4 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 were submitted and signed.

### **5 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

The Community Safety Manager introduced the officers present to the Task Group. She advised that the Managing Director was now the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and that the Head of Community and Customer Services was his deputy. She highlighted the other changes that had affected the CSP including the addition of a representative from the NHS on the

Watford Responsible Authorities Group (WRAG) and the changes in the probation service.

Chief Inspector Wheatley introduced himself and outlined his prior experience in policing before starting his new role. He described some of his priorities for the Borough; this included a particular emphasis on vulnerability.

Councillor Meerabux outlined his concern for vulnerable groups who could be excluded from engagement through a lack of internet access. Chief Inspector Wheatley responded that he would wish to identify the leaders of these groups at the strategic level and would also be keen to make use of councillors' contacts within their wards. He added that he recognised the gap in internet access and would be prepared to knock on doors to reach vulnerable groups. He outlined the Safer Streets campaign that he had run in Welwyn Hatfield.

Councillor Martins welcomed the new Chief Inspector to Watford. He asked about his approach to preventative work for the Night Time Economy and asked about ratios of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). Chief Inspector Wheatley responded that he would undertake a review of the Night Time Economy to consider the demand placed on the Police. There was a concern that other issues could be missed elsewhere. He reiterated that he would not necessarily change the way the Night Time Economy was policed. He outlined the recent success in the use of Scannet which had resulted in a number of arrests.

In response to the question about officer ratios, Inspector Dent outlined the new structure for neighbourhood policing. For the outer Watford area there would be six Police officers and six PCSOs, for North Watford there would be six Police officers and six PCSOs and for the town centre there would be seven Police officers and two PCSOs present. Watford General Hospital would also be part-funding two PCSOs this year. Chief Inspector Wheatley noted the importance of flexibility among Police officers; he would want to send his resources to areas where there had been problems, to flood the area with preventative messages.

Councillor Aron asked about the Police resources for Nascot Ward. Chief Inspector Wheatley replied that there would not be any imminent changes to the structure of the Safer Neighbourhood Team. Chief Inspector Wheatley advised councillors that if they wanted a Police Officer to attend a community meeting an officer would be in attendance.

Following a question from Councillor McLeod, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator highlighted the recent email from the local neighbourhood Sergeant which provided contact details for the local policing team.

**ACTION** – The North Watford Sergeant to forward the email in question to the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer.

Inspector Dent outlined the system that was in place to identify and appropriately equip vulnerable residents. Inspector Dent asked members to email their local

sergeant identifying vulnerable residents to enable them to be visited by a PCSO.

ACTION – All members.

Councillor Joynes suggested that the local officers made direct contact with the secretaries of the residents' associations. Inspector Dent identified that a problem with engaging with these meetings was that they were often informed at very short notice. She asked if Councillors could inform her when meetings were planned and an officer would be invited.

ACTION – All members.

Inspector Dent drew the Task Group's attention to the 2012/13 action plan and highlighted and explained some of the successes.

Councillor McLeod asked about the differences in policing priorities across wards. Inspector Dent responded that the priorities tendered to be quite similar.

Councillor Aron asked about the Safer Neighbourhoods newsletters and asked whether they were continuing. In response, Inspector Dent said that these were being revamped by Communications, linked with the introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioner. In the response to a further question from Councillor Aron, Inspector Dent responded that quarterly good news stories were sent to the Joint Action Group and were often sent to the Watford Observer as press releases.

Councillor Lovejoy asked about the Immobilise programme, which recorded details of mobile phones on a database to prevent thefts, and asked how this affected Watford pupils who attended schools outside the Borough. Inspector Dent replied that it was advertised regularly and the media van often was positioned either in the park or in the town centre. She added that it was possible to register on the Immobilise web site.

The Chair suggested that the policing teams used social media to encourage people to sign up to Immobilise and to promote OWL messages to enable younger people access to them. Inspector Dent replied that each neighbourhood team used Twitter and she would encourage them to highlight Immobilise again.

Councillor Meerabux asked about the use of stop and search and referred to an incident that had taken place in Park ward. Inspector Dent responded that stop and search was used to target problematic areas at certain times of day. She was not aware of the details of the incident that the Councillor was referring to. Chief Inspector Wheatley added that stop and search was a very effective deterrent, and he was clear that officers should only be doing it for the right reasons and in an ethical way. He added that samples of stop and search incidents were taken to monitor the reasons for each one. He outlined the daily briefings he received on hotspot areas to enable him to target Police resources most effectively.

The Chair asked about the checks and balances in place to monitor the stop and search activity. Chief Inspector Wheatley replied that every person who was subject to stop and search had the power of recourse; all stops were recorded and samples were considered in detail.

Inspector Dent introduced the action plan for 2013/14. She highlighted some of the targets for crime reduction and the accompanying strategies.

The Licensing Manager introduced the action plan for 2012/13 and 2013/14 for the alcohol strategy. He commented that there was a continuing focus on creating the right policy environment to reduce alcohol-related crime. This had included discussions around the governance of the town centre. He also referred to the data collection project with Watford General Hospital which looked to identify victims of alcohol-related crime when they presented to Accident and Emergency. This would allow the Partnership to identify the patterns in these sort of crimes.

The Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator provided the Task Group with a summary of the year and the action plan. He outlined the level of success seen in the reduction of antisocial behaviour and the work undertaken to ascertain the reasons for this. He described the successes of Safetynet, a victim-centred system which managed cases of antisocial behaviour in collaboration with the Police. The Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator issued an open invitation to Members to attend the Antisocial Behaviour Action Group (ASBAG) to see Safetynet in action, and he asked that they notify him in advance if they planned to attend.

In response to a query from Councillor McLeod, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator explained that last year a reduction in antisocial behaviour of 5% meant approximately 200 incidents. The Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator explained that the targets came from the PCC and were considered to be realistic in Watford's context.

In response to a question from Councillor Aron, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator explained how calls to 101 were handled and how callers could best communicate with the Police. Inspector Dent outlined how reports of ASB were followed up, this included letters with crime prevention advice.

Councillor Martins referred to the Thriving Families initiative and asked about the Partnership's capacity. In response, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator advised that there was a capacity to manage more than the current caseload of 22. The Community Safety Manager added that she felt that this would be a useful area for the Task Group to consider later in the year.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator confirmed that the Thriving Families initiative included families which included young people who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS).

Following a question from Councillor Meerabux, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator highlighted the strategic nature of his work and how Safetynet had improved its effectiveness. The Community Safety Manager underlined the importance of this strategic view. The Partnership was about ensuring that all partners were involved and that community safety work was mainstreamed in all the organisations.

The Chair welcomed the focus on community engagement. The Chair asked the Licensing Manager about the proactive and reactive work that took place in licensing. The Licensing Manager explained that Licensing was both reactive and proactive; the proactive aspect was in the Council's setting of Licensing policy, and where issues arose these would be dealt with reactively through reviews and closure powers for disorderly premises. There was a balance to be struck between developing economic prosperity and the impact of licensed premises on the town.

Following a question from Councillor Aron, the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator explained how cases were dealt with by the ASBAG and what happened when a case was not being progressed as it should. He confirmed that all the Registered Social Landlords in Watford were part of the ASBAG. New developers in Watford would be invited to the meetings.

The Chair thanked all the officers for attending and updating the Task Group.

The Chair asked the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator to pass details of the ASBAG meetings to the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer.

**ACTION:** Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator

Councillors were asked to contact the Chief Inspector's PA to arrange a meeting with him if they wished.

**RESOLVED** – that the actions be noted.

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## **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY ENGAGEMENT WORK**

The Task Group received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer outlining work that had been undertaken to produce surveys for different groups since the last meeting. Three different surveys had been circulated; one to residents and community groups, one to the Police and one to Councillors. The survey was due to close on 26 July 2013.

**ACTION** – The Committee Scrutiny Support Officer to send a reminder to all councillors about the survey.

**ACTION** – The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to forward the community survey to the Task Group to send on to residents and community associations in their wards.

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer drew the Task Group's attention to the financial implications comment that had been circulated.

RESOLVED –

That the update report be noted

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## **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Task Group received a proposed work programme for consideration. The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer noted that after discussions with officers, it was suggested that the Probation Service be invited to a future meeting to discuss areas raised in the scrutiny suggestion by Councillors McLeod and Lynch.

The Task Group agreed that they would be interested in looking at the Thriving Families programme. The Community Safety Manager suggested that this would be appropriate for the meeting in September as a half-year report was due to be published. She suggested that the lead officer for Watford be asked to produce a report, though this could be included in the same meeting as the survey feedback.

It was agreed that the Probation Service would be invited to the meeting in December.

It was agreed that the Strategic Assessment would be considered at the meeting in February 2014.

The Task Group confirmed that they would like to invite the PCC to give a briefing to all Watford Councillors when possible. The Community Safety Manager advised that a representative from the PCC's office now attended WRAG meetings.

The Task Group considered the action list that was attached to the agenda.

It was agreed that the drug and alcohol treatment agencies be invited to give a briefing to all Watford Councillors, perhaps followed by a meeting for the Community Safety Partnership Task Group to consider learning points.

RESOLVED –

That the updates to the work programme and action list be noted.

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## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

30 September 2013

The Meeting started at 6.30 pm  
and finished at 8.30 pm

Chair