

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

3 DECEMBER 2013

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

Also present: Inspector Dent, Hertfordshire Constabulary (item 18)

Officers: Community Safety Manager (item 18)
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)

15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Meerabux.

16 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2013 were submitted and signed.

18 COMMUNITY SAFETY ENGAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES

The Task Group received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer introducing the results of the community safety engagement questionnaires which had been circulated earlier in the year.

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer described the timing of the consultation and asked the Task Group to consider any actions and conclusions.

Councillor McLeod highlighted that community events were among the most effective ways for the Police to communicate with residents. She asked for more information about the Police's involvement in these events.

Inspector Dent responded that the Police attended all the events that they were invited to. Normally, they would require at least a couple of weeks' notice to ensure that staff were available.

She noted that it was important for councillors to highlight to organisations planning events that an invitation to the Police should be considered.

ACTION-All councillors

Councillor Aron highlighted the opportunities provided by regular meetings with councillors' local Safer Neighbourhood Sergeant.

The Chair noted that 95% of councillors who responded to the survey felt that communication between residents and authorities could be improved and he referred to the use of social media. The Community Safety Manager questioned whether councillors were aware of the extent to which social media was used by the Police.

Councillor Joynes reported that the Police were always in attendance at the residents' association meetings in Leggatts. She felt the responses reflected the change in the ways that people communicated. Inspector Dent reported that anyone who reported a crime or antisocial behaviour received a letter from the Police.

The Task Group agreed that the question of communication did not only apply to the Police but other organisations who were part of the Community Safety Partnership.

Councillor Martins underlined that communication was a two-way process. He was disappointed that a number of councillors had not responded to the survey. He suggested that the Chair send out a note to all councillors outlining details of the different agencies involved in community safety and their contact details.

ACTION – Councillor Khan and officers

Following a question from Councillor Martins, Inspector Dent advised that the Police found that attending events such as coffee mornings in Central ward was the best way of meeting residents.

Responding to the Chair about communication with hard to reach communities, Inspector Dent explained how the interaction with young people was carried out.

Inspector Dent advised that the Police were always looking for new contacts to help them to engage with different parts of the community. She asked if councillors were aware of people in their communities who were interested in particular issues or represented the different strands of the Equality Act to let her know.

ACTION – All councillors

Councillor Aron suggested that councillors be sent details of contacts required to pass on to residents' associations.

Following a question from Inspector Dent, the Task Group outlined the ways that councillors engaged with residents.

Councillor Joynes asked when the Safer Streets project would come to Leggatts Ward. Inspector Dent responded that these were monthly and were responsive to the issues faced by different wards.

The Community Safety Manager drew councillors' attention to the campaign to prevent theft from vehicles. She suggested that this was a message everyone could help disseminate. The Chair asked how councillors could help share information about these campaigns with their networks. Inspector Dent replied that she could ensure the Sergeants informed Councillors. She added that there was a current campaign relating to elderly people being targeted by phone scams. Additional contacts in the community would help share information about these campaigns.

The Chair highlighted some ways that elderly residents could be assisted in communities.

The Community Safety Manager said that partnership working was very effective in Watford and where authorities could work together they did.

RESOLVED – that the results be noted and the actions agreed.

19

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT - LEARNING POINTS

All members of the Task Group had received a briefing on Drug and Alcohol Treatment in Hertfordshire. The Task Group felt that this had been a very valuable briefing and they expressed their gratitude to the organisations which attended.

The Chair commented that it had been very informative and highlighted that two key issues that came out of the briefing were communication and partnership working with councillors.

Councillor Martins raised the issue of housing for people with drug and alcohol problems. He added that a strategy needed to be developed if one was not already in place. The Task Group discussed the issue and Councillor McLeod noted that the Housing Policy Advisory Group should consider it.

It was agreed that the Task Group should write to the Housing Section Head and the Portfolio Holder for Community and Customer Services to ask for more information about the Council's approach.

ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

It was agreed that the presentations from the meeting should be circulated.

ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

RESOLVED –

That the actions be noted.

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WORK PROGRAMME AND UPDATE ON ACTIONS

The Task Group reviewed the draft work programme until the end of the 2014/15 municipal year.

The Task Group discussed the changes that were taking place in the Probation Service. It was agreed that the Probation Service should be invited to the meeting and October 2014.

The Chair noted that ASBOs were being replaced by a new scheme and he suggested that a briefing for all Members be organised with an overview of the changes.

The Task Group agreed which actions could be signed off as complete.

RESOLVED –

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

That the action list be updated.

That a briefing be organised to inform Members about the changes to the ASBOs.

ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.30 pm
and finished at 7.35 pm