

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

18 FEBRUARY 2014

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

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

21 ELECTION OF CHAIR

The Chair, Councillor Khan, had advised that he was delayed.

After 10 minutes it was agreed the meeting should start and the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer sought nominations for Chair.

RESOLVED –

that Councillor Joynes be elected Chair until Councillor Khan arrived.

22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received from Councillor McLeod.

23 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013 were submitted and signed.

25 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTIONS UPDATE

The Task Group received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer explained that the work programme set out the topics covered in 2013/14 and she asked whether the Task Group had any suggestions for future items.

Councillor Meerabux expressed his concern that the PCSOs were now based at Shady Lane and had to walk to reach their beats and he felt this was not a good use of time. He wondered whether this was something for the Task Group to consider. The Community Safety Manager explained that the Chief Inspector was keen for the PCSOs to spend less time in the office and he had therefore brought in the changes. It was suggested that this topic was more operational than strategic.

Councillor Martins suggested that the Task Group look at the use and effectiveness of CCTV. He questioned whether it was being used in the right areas. Councillor Meerabux also asked whether the use of CCTV was pushing problems to other areas. The Community Safety Manager agreed that this would be an interesting topic and she noted that the CCTV control room was moving to Shady Lane. This would allow faster monitoring of footage due to upgraded infrastructure. She suggested that the meeting could take place at the Police Station to allow the Task Group to see the new office.

Councillor Aron referred to the briefing that the councillors had had on antisocial behaviour and proposed that the Task Group consider the impact of the Crime and Policing Bill on Watford and the Police following its introduction.

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer said she would circulate the topic suggestion form to capture these ideas. The follow-up on the Crime and Policing Bill might be best as an all-member briefing rather than a meeting of the Task Group.

ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

The Community Safety Manager advised that the Chief Inspector may be interested in coming to one meeting to talk about the community engagement policy; a particular emphasis of the Police. This could be part of the first meeting of the year when the Partnership's performance and priorities were on the agenda.

It was agreed that the work programme should also be reconsidered at the beginning of the new Municipal Year.

The Task Group considered the actions update.

The Chair, Councillor Khan, advised that the Police and Crime Commissioner had expressed an interest in visiting Community Safety Partnership Task Groups in the county.

Councillor Joynes noted that there would be a meeting at the County Council to scrutinise the Police and Crime Commissioner and she invited councillors to send her questions they wished her to ask.

The Community Safety Manager reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner would be coming on 11 July 2014 to visit Watford. It had been

suggested that he could come into the town centre later in the evening to see the night time economy. An invitation could be extended to the Task Group to accompany him. Councillor Meerabux added that he had attended a previous walk-through the town centre and found it to be helpful.

ACTION - Community Safety Manager to consider how to include this in the plan for the visit in July.

It was noted that, due to a reorganisation, the invitation to the Probation Service was on hold until they were able to attend.

With regard to the action relating to vulnerable residents, the Task Group was informed that the Legal and Democratic Section Head had advised that in order to comply with data protection law, any referrals of vulnerable people to the Police required the resident's consent.

Referring to the action related to the housing of vulnerable people, the Chair advised that this was included on the risk register reviewed by Audit Committee. He felt there was a need to monitor the situation. Councillor Martins also felt this was an area of concern and he wanted to be sure that a strategy was in place.

It was agreed that this topic should be referred to Overview and Scrutiny who were also monitoring this area. The Task Group noted that they would be interested in the outcome of the discussions.

ACTION – The Chair to write to the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny setting out the Task Group's concerns and attaching the written response from the Housing Section Head to ask if the Committee wanted to take up the Task Group's concerns.

Further actions were agreed to be signed off.

RESOLVED – that the action list be updated as agreed.

ACTION: Committee & Scrutiny Support Officer

Councillor Khan took the Chair after the Task Group finished considering the work programme.

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ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND SCAN NET

Members of the Task Group had received a briefing on the changes to the antisocial behaviour regime as well as the ID scanning system used in the town centre, Scan Net.

The Task Group discussed learning points and conclusions.

Councillor Aron reiterated her suggestion that the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator be invited to give an update on the Bill in early 2015.

Councillor Meerabux reported that he had spoken to young people who were also very grateful for the Scan Net system. He added that he had a concern that implementing systems such as these would lead to a reduction in police numbers. He questioned whether the introduction of Scan Net had led to a decrease in disorder outside the premises in the High Street. He reiterated the importance of seeing police officers on the streets. The Chair responded that this issue could be considered in July when the Police and Crime Commissioner visited Watford.

The Chair advised that his view was that Scan Net was an excellent system but he had concerns related to the use of data. He had questions related to how it was collected and who could access the data. He wanted to be sure that appropriate policies were in place.

The Community Safety Manager advised that PubWatch had a protocol to follow. The questions could be put to the Police. She responded to a query from Councillor Meerabux about crime levels and advised that there had been large drops in crime but more analysis was needed. The Police's intelligence was that people who were intent on causing trouble had stopped coming to the town because of Scan Net.

ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to contact Sergeant Mason and Chief Inspector Wheatley to raise the Task Group's concerns.

ACTION – The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to add an update on Scan Net to the work programme for early 2015.

The Chair commented that the changes to antisocial behaviour would bring about a change in the vocabulary and approach.

Members felt it had been an extremely useful briefing and expressed their thanks to Sergeant Mason and the Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator for their time and input.

RESOLVED –

That the actions be noted.

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CONTRIBUTION TO SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer explained that the Annual Scrutiny Report would go to July Council. There would be a contribution from the Community Safety Partnership Task Group and a commentary from the Chair.

The Task Group agreed to review the draft circulated by email.

RESOLVED –

That the draft report be circulated to the Task Group by email.

ACTION Committee & Scrutiny Support Officer

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.40 pm
and finished at 7.25 pm