

# COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

21 OCTOBER 2015

Present: Councillor S Williams (Chair)

Councillors R Martins, B Mehta, S Bashir, K Collett and  
J Dhindsa

Also present: Inspector Nick Lillitou, Hertfordshire Constabulary

Officers: Head of Community and Customer Services  
Corporate and External Communications Section Head  
Senior Communications and Engagement Officer  
Anti-social Behaviour Co-ordinator  
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (AG)

## 1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED –

That Councillor S Williams be elected Chair for the municipal year 2015/16.

## 2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were two changes of membership for this meeting: Councillor Collett replaced Councillor Bolton and Councillor Dhindsa replaced Councillor Mills.

## 3 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

## 4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2015 were submitted and signed.

## 5 REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE - CSP ACTION PLAN 2015/16

Inspector Lillitou introduced the report on the review of performance in relation to the CSP Action Plan 2015/16.

He provided a crime update explaining that the latest crime figures indicated that overall crime had risen by 4.0% in the previous year – this slightly less than the 4.6% discussed in the report. He discussed the statistics in relation to various crime types including burglary (dwelling), theft from motor vehicle, violent crime against the person and criminal damage and the activities being pursued to tackle these offences. He also outlined the activities undertaken in respect of the local policing priorities (that were determined following extensive consultation with local residents) of:

- Dealing with, and managing anti-social behaviour criminal damage and drug dealing.
- Dealing with road safety concerns including speeding and cycling.
- Protecting vulnerable people, including the elderly, and keeping people safe.

During the presentation, a number of questions were asked by Members.

The Chair made reference to heat seeking equipment (discussed at the last meeting) to identify possible cannabis factories and asked whether this was still used by the police. Inspector Lillitou explained that it was and outlined how it helped to provide supporting indicative evidence. The Chair complemented PCSO Fielding for information he had provided on the law in relation to cyclists on pavements and asked whether this could be circulated more widely. Inspector Lillitou undertook to arrange for the officer to do so.

**ACTION:** Inspector Lillitou

Councillor Dhindsa asked whether the use of police stop and search powers were recorded and monitored in Watford. Inspector Lillitou explained the process for recording the details (including the objectives and grounds of searches) and confirmed that the use of the powers was monitored. He also outlined how individual stop and searches were supervised by sergeants. Councillor Dhindsa raised an issue in relation to the recording of the details of a person stopped and whether officers acted appropriately. Inspector Lillitou reassured the Task Group that officers acted with integrity in relation to the conduct of searches. He informed Members that officers and PCSO's wore body cameras that could record how a stop and search was conducted and people searched could request that these be switched on. He also advised Members that if there were complaints about the usage of stop and search they should be referred to him at Watford Police Station. He added that instances of stop and search had reduced in Watford; as they had nationally.

Councillor Dhindsa welcomed the recent drugs raids in the Queens Road area of Watford. He made reference to possible drug misuse in the Rapinda Road, Park Avenue to Five Ways corner area and asked whether CCTV could be introduced to help combat the problem. The Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator explained that this was an area of interest and that he would be happy to look in to the suggestion as a project.

**ACTION:** Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator

Councillor Dhindsa asked, in relation to registered door staff for licensed premises, whether they received training to ensure they let patrons in to premises correctly. The Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator explained how the Scan Net system had resolved this personal choice issue and that Licensing Enforcement Officers monitored conduct through this system. He outlined how people could complain to the Watford Borough Council Licensing Section if they felt aggrieved about being refused entry.

Councillor Dhindsa asked whether officers received training around diversity issues. Inspector Lillitou explained that they should get training on joining as he did and that he had not personally dealt with many complaints in relation to officers conduct in this respect. However, the Hertfordshire Police Professional Standards Department would be best placed to advise.

Councillor Bashir complimented the police on the Watford Safer Streets campaign and the visibility of officers. However, he expressed concern that crime had risen; particularly in relation to violent crime. He was concerned about the Watford Custody Suite closing and wondered whether this was permanent. He said that taking those detained to Hatfield or Stevenage would remove officers from policing the Night Time Economy in the town centre for extended periods. There was general concern about the matter by Members. Councillor Bashir then made reference to possible alcohol misuse on the corner of Durban and Haringey Roads; with the stench of alcohol being very strong. Inspector Lillitou explained this was an area that had been highlighted and he would re-visit the issue.

**ACTION – Inspector Lillitou**

Members asked whether police officers had concerns about the closure of the custody suite. Inspector Lillitou explained that there were concerns about having to take prisoners elsewhere and that these had been raised at relevant levels internally. He confirmed that his understanding was that the custody suite would remain closed and outlined the police Night Time Economy staffing arrangements in the town centre. In response to a further question from Members, he explained that the decision to close the suite would have been made by senior staff probably at chief officer level. The Chair suggested that the Panel's concerns be raised with the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner as Watford had the largest Night Time Economy in the county and that police operational effectiveness and the community would be adversely effected. Members felt this appropriate and Councillor Bashir reiterated his concerns about the issue. Councillor Martins proposed that the Mayor be asked to send a letter on behalf of the Task Group and also raise the matter in any personal contact she had with the Police and Crime Commissioner. This was agreed by the Task Group.

**ACTION: Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer**

Councillor Martins asked whether officers received any training on diversity issues in relation to carrying out stop and searches. Inspector Lillitou explained

that this was provided during initial training and that he could arrange for speakers to attend locally arranged training days. Councillor Martins discussed the Metropolitan Police Service approach to this training and asked whether there were many complaints in Watford in relation to the use of stop and search powers. Inspector Lillitou said that he had dealt with very few complaints and that the Professional Standards Department also had a role in such matters. The Chair asked whether figures could be provided to the Task Group on the number of complaints (Councillor Dhindsa commented that the Hertfordshire level should have the data). Inspector Lillitou undertook to investigate the matter.

**ACTION – Inspector Lillitou**

The Chair commented that the police twelve and twenty four hour suspension orders were operating very well in the town. Inspector Lillitou thanked the Chair for his comments and outlined the legislation governing the powers.

The Chair encouraged Members of the Panel to participate in the Watford Safer Streets campaign and this was echoed by Councillor Dhindsa. The Chair suggested that the police also took people who could speak other languages to improve communication with minorities. Inspector Lillitou explained how written material was provided in foreign languages and that finding people who spoke foreign languages would be more problematical; although some volunteers may be able to assist.

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## **REVIEW OF COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP'S COMMUNICATIONS PLAN**

The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer introduced a presentation on the community safety partnership's communications plan. The presentation outlined:

- The Safer Watford Communications Strategy 2015-16
- The communications objectives
- Communication audiences
- Key messages
- Channels of communication
- The launch campaign (including a video promulgated on various types of media)
- Communications post launch
- Complementary communications
- Evaluation
- Next steps

During the presentation Members asked a number of questions.

Councillor Mehta asked how many views there had been of the launch video. The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer explained that this was measured in respect of 'reach' and not 'views'. Fifteen thousand had been

reached through Facebook; although the You Tube channel had not been as strong. Furthermore, the police Facebook site had twenty nine thousand followers. She explained that the strategy would continue to be promoted through a range of mediums. She outlined how the initial campaign was conducted using various advertising methodologies; resulting in a wider impact. She thanked partners for their assistance.

In response to a question from Councillor Dhindsa, the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator discussed an aggressive begging case that resulted in a 12 month custodial sentence.

The Chair commented that he had seen Woodside on the web and asked what preventative messages would go out in the media in relation to sexual assault and violence leading up to the festive season. The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer explained that these would be a matter for the police but support would be given through magazine articles, tweets and other social media channels.

Councillor Dhindsa asked whether the Watford Town Magazine would be used to indicate that alcohol would be taken off those under age in the holiday season. The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer explained that these messages would be best promoted on social media in order to reach a younger audience.

Councillor Mehta asked whether messages would go out in relation to annual events in the High Street and Kings Street and also whether Hertfordshire wide coverage was being pursued. The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer outlined the range of methodologies being used; including articles in Time Out magazine and the Evening Standard newspaper promoting the town. In response to a further question from Councillor Mehta, the Senior Communications and Engagement Officer agreed to look in to community safety partnership wide communications.

**ACTION – Senior Communications and Engagement Officer**

Councillor Mehta discussed the issue of publicity surrounding the promotion of Watford Football Club to the Premiership and asked how messages around such issues as the increased traffic were managed. The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer outlined the 'Big Sports' scheme and how this had assisted with communications; such as the use of banners. She explained that other mediums were also being examined. Councillor Mehta outlined a number of communication methods that could be considered for big events.

Councillor Collett suggested that there should be signs at Watford Junction Station demonstrating how good Watford was as an experience (similar to those already at Charing Cross Station in London that promoted Watford). She also suggested that safety and how to stay safe should be advertised. The Senior Communications and Engagement Officer confirmed that outdoor advertising had a big impact provided it was pitched correctly. She thanked Councillor Collett for her suggestions.

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## **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Task Group received a proposed work programme for consideration and were asked by the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer to consider a themed item for the next meeting.

Councillor Collett felt that two meetings a year was insufficient and Members discussed a number of options. It was agreed that a further meeting be arranged for the end of January 2016.

**ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer**

Councillor Martins considered that other agencies should be invited to meetings. Following further discussion, the Task Group agreed that the Fire Service be invited to the January meeting to outline their work with communities and with young people. The Task Group also asked that a report be provided for the January meeting by the local Pubwatch on matters relating to the festive period and that a representative of registered door staff be invited to attend the meeting.

**ACTION – Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator**

The Task Group discussed the value of the Member's Briefing provided by the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator prior to the meeting and agreed that a further briefing be given to Members before the March meeting in relation to anti-social behaviour end of year data, child exploitation and an update on the 'Prevent' agenda.

**ACTION – Member Development and Civic Officer**

The Chair explained that he would like to involve local communities in Task Group meetings and inviting suitable representatives. The Panel felt this to be a sound approach and it was agreed that a number of representative from local residents associations be invited to the March meeting; with details of the relevant associations provided to the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer at the January meeting so that invitations could be sent.

**ACTION – Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer**

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## **ACTIONS AND QUESTIONS UPDATE**

The Task Group received a report of the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer updating Members on outstanding actions from previous meetings.

It was agreed that all of the actions could be signed off.

RESOLVED –

that the update report be noted and all of the actions be signed off.

The meeting concluded with Inspector Lillitou being formerly congratulated by the Task Group for his receipt of the Hertfordshire Public Service and Community Focus Award – having been presented with this by the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and Chief Constable.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.45 p.m.  
and finished at 9.10 p.m.