

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

20 October 2016

Present: Councillor R Martins (Chair)
Councillors S Bolton, S Cavinder, J Dhindsa, A Grimston, M Mills
and M Turmaine

Also present: Inspector Nick Lillitou (Hertfordshire Constabulary)

Officers: Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head
Community Safety Coordinator
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (AG)

1 **Election of Chair**

RESOLVED that –

Councillor R Martins elected Chair for the municipal year 2016/17.

The Chair advised members of the role of the task group and of its statutory function

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 22 March 2016 were submitted and signed.

5 **Watford Community Safety structure and priorities**

The Task Group received a presentation by the Community Safety Coordinator.

The Community Safety Coordinator outlined the overseeing role of the One Watford Strategic Partnership. This comprised of a range of senior individuals and partners including the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner, the Mayor, the Watford Borough Council (WBC) Managing Director, Intu, the Chamber of Commerce and other groups with a strategic interest.

The task group were informed that the role of the Joint Authorities Group was to monitor performance in relation to the partnership's action plans and to conduct gap analysis on community safety issues. The group comprised of Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue, Hertfordshire County Council, WBC Licensing, Watford Community Housing Trust, Clinical Commissioning Service, Trading Standards, the Probation Service and Youth Connexions.

The Community Safety Coordinator explained the function of the Community Protection Group – the group was an operations level forum with significant problem solving capability. It comprised of representatives from the police, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue, Street Angels, Community Mental Health, Watford Community Housing Trust, the night time economy and security organisations. He explained that in the future the Watford Community Housing Trust would take over the Chair of the group; this was seen as an innovative and effective approach.

The Community Safety Coordinator provided an overview of the previous year's community safety priorities and how these had evolved in to the focus for 2016/17.

He outlined the strands of the 'Protect our Communities' and 'Reassure and Inform' priorities for the current year.

In response to questions from members, the Community Safety Coordinator:

- Clarified that a focus on human trafficking was as a result of a national drive on the subject resulting from a change in population demographics.
- Informed the task group that there were 42 known rough sleepers in the WBC area. If necessary he could provide figures as to a break down of the sleepers in to the various categories – however, there were 15 'hard core' individuals.
- Advised that parking on the pavement was dealt with by the police and that members should provide him with any car registration numbers of offending vehicles.

The Community Safety Coordinator informed members that a vigorous campaign was to be conducted to address begging in the town to deal with the most prevalent and predatory individuals. This could lead to the arrest and imprisonment of the offenders.

In response to a question from Councillor Grimston, the Community Safety Coordinator explained the steps taken to deal with drug misuse in the town and of the response to two knife crime incidents – which included the use of police stop and search powers, CCTV and covert operations (resulting in a number of arrests). In response to a further question from Councillor Grimston, the Community Safety Coordinator explained the action being considered to combat inappropriate behaviour in Garston Park – including the use of an injunction.

The Chair reminded members of the strategic role of the task group.

RESOLVED that –

the presentation be noted.

6 **Progress with the CSP Community Protection Plan 2016/17**

The Community Safety Coordinator introduced the updated plan. He outlined progress in relation to the following tasks:

- Develop an understanding of the needs of existing and emerging communities now and over the next 4 years.
- Focusing on the protection of the most vulnerable in our community.
- Extend the remit of the Community Protection Group improving the co-ordination with key agencies such as the multi-agency protection arrangement (MAPPA) and the National Crime Agency.
- Maintain the Prevent strategy; preventing vulnerable people being drawn in to or supporting terrorism.
- Work with partners at the Community Protection Group to identify and address issues of vulnerability due to homelessness or mental health.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head informed the task group that funding had been secured to enable a Hertfordshire County Council analyst to conduct work to determine the demographics of the Watford community now and in the next four years – this should be completed by January 2017. The product would then enable research to be conducted within communities to identify their needs. The pilot could then be rolled out across Hertfordshire.

The Community Safety Coordinator explained that research was being conducted in to sex worker issues with further funding being provided in the future. A communications campaign would also be carried out in relation to sexual exploitation – including a focus on young people and the change of profile.

The Community Safety Coordinator explained the MAPPA arrangements and how single points of conduct were identified in the various agencies; such as in WBC Housing. Members discussed the efficacy of the single point of contact approach and the Chair suggested that this may be work that the task group should take forward in the future.

The Community Safety Coordinator discussed how a Prevent e-learning package would be rolled out across WBC. He informed the task group that a workshop to raise awareness on Prevent would be provided to members across the Council on 8 December 2016 (with further sessions to follow if necessary).

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head advised the task group that a new County Prevent Group; including local authorities, the Probation Service, police, the Fire and Rescue Service had been instigated to share best practice and action plans. A generic action plan would then be developed which could be shared with the task group.

In response to a question from Councillor Cavinder, the Community Safety Coordinator informed the task group that a list of community safety acronyms would be available to members in the next few months - and that he would circulate a list pertinent to this presentation following the meeting.

The Community Safety Coordinator discussed how mental health issues were dealt with when avenues such as prosecution were not considered appropriate; with Watford having access to particular expertise in this regard.

He concluded that the outcomes of the Community Protection Plan would be ratified by the One Watford Strategic Partnership group in March 2017.

RESOLVED that –

the update be noted.

the action requested be undertaken.

7

Work programme

The task group received a proposed work programme for consideration.

Members discussed the programme and agreed that a meeting on the 26 January 2017 was necessary. It was also agreed that members forward the Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer three suggested items for discussion at

the meeting (emanating from the topics raised that evening) by Friday 28 October 2016 in order that the Chair could then formulate a suitable agenda.

RESOLVED that–

the work programme be noted.

8

Update on the CSP Managing Crime Plan 2016/17

Inspector Lillitou introduced the item and provided members with an updated plan.

He explained that overall crime in Watford had risen by 3.5% this year (an increase of 138 offences). However, this was the slowest rate in Hertfordshire. He explained issues around the historic recording of crimes. He said that there had been success in tackling criminals coming from outside of the Watford area and he discussed the Safer Streets preventative campaign conducted outside Watford Junction Station. He clarified that Safer Streets had now been rolled out in all wards – with the higher crime areas focused on in the first instance. The campaign would be refreshed next year.

Inspector Lillitou discussed the reduction in criminal damage offences (11 fewer offences than last year). This had been achieved by focussing resources on the problem areas and by the implementation of Operation Catapan. He informed the task group that there had been 30 fewer thefts from motor vehicle offences this year (although this remained an ongoing issue). He discussed how the risks were managed - including the recent arrest of a prolific offender.

He explained how the automatic number plate reader (ANPR) technology assisted in tracking offender's vehicles and he asked if members were content that ANPR was used to identify these vehicles. The task group was supportive of ANPR provided it was used with proper safeguards. Inspector Lillitou raised matters in relation to insecure vehicles and the theft of tools and number plates and how these crimes were tackled.

In response to a question from Councillor Grimston, Inspector Lillitou explained that the police had conducted a lot of work around number plate safe operations in North Watford – with sponsorship obtained. In excess of 600 vehicles had been target hardened across the CSP. He undertook to ensure that local communities were informed of the nature of police follow up inquiries when reports of theft from vehicles were received.

He went on to explain how various tactics were employed to arrest offenders and how the 'Choices and Consequences' scheme operated in relation to convicted

offenders; with the aim of reducing re-offending. Councillor Dhindsa discussed how a multi-agency approach was important to deal with offenders.

In response to a question from Councillor Dhindsa, Inspector Lillitou explained how fingerprints were retained on police records and of the associated legislative issues. The Chair commented that this may be a matter the task group should take forward in the future.

Inspector Lillitou discussed how instances of domestic abuse were managed and risk assessed. He explained how officers wearing body cameras could assist with investigations and outlined the victimless prosecution process. With regard to repeat offences, he clarified that each incident of domestic abuse was a single crime. He explained how repeat victims were assessed and how such options as panic alarms were utilised.

In response to questions from members, Inspector Lillitou and the Community Safety Coordinator:

- Explained how crimes with an element of drug abuse, addiction and mental health were dealt with (including referrals to appropriate agencies) and how officers identified the associated signs. Anti-social behaviour could be an indicator of mental illness in the first instance – with appropriate mapping taking place.
- Clarified that he did not have figures to hand specifically in relation to domestic abuse against males – but the same procedures applied as with regard to female victims.
- Advised that cultural differences could be responsible for less reporting of cases of domestic abuse in some instances. However, the police encouraged reporting and worked with minority groups seeking to ensure this was the case. The issue also rested with other agencies and organisations and not solely with the police.
- Outlined how liaison took place with mosques and with Imams in the borough and how there was a desire to interact more with young people. The Chair emphasised the importance of the involvement of all CSP agencies in problem solving.
- Explained how the police currently worked with young people – such as with Youth Connexions, local authorities, sports agencies, youth clubs and outreach workers.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head explained how the mapping of the communities in Watford (as discussed under item 6) could assist with domestic abuse identification. Decisions could then be made as to how to engage with the more at risk communities. Councillor Bolton commented that councillors could also assist to identify domestic abuse issues.

Inspector Lillitou discussed future plans in relation to the night time economy with the focus on a multi-agency approach – including assisting people leave the town in taxis.

In response to further questions from members, Inspector Lillitou and the Community Safety Coordinator:

- Confirmed that tenancy agreements were examined by the Community Protection Group. This was the first matter for consideration in cases – such as by housing providers.
- Clarified that the Watford knife amnesty had been planned for some time; although the numbers handed in thus far were not presently available. A recent knife arch operation at West Herts College was discussed which had indicated students were not carrying elicited items. Further knife crime operations were planned in the future.
- Explained that detection rates were a more accurate way of measuring the successful outcome of reported offences as opposed to arrests against reported crimes. Members debated the use of crime statistics and how context was very important to ensure that accurate figures were presented so as not to unnecessarily increase the fear of crime.
- Clarified issues in relation to crime figures recently publicised in the media.

RESOLVED that –

the update be noted.

Chair
Community Safety Partnership Task Group

The meeting started at 6.30 p.m.
and finished at 8.45 p.m.

