

## COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP TASK GROUP

27 July 2017

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)  
Councillors S Cavinder, K Crout, J Dhindsa (for minute numbers 4 and 5), M Mills, G Saffery and M Turmaine (for minute numbers 4 and 5)

Officers: Head of Community and Environmental Services  
Community Safety Co-ordinator  
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (AG)

### 1 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Councillors Bolton and Smith; who were substituted by Councillors Crout and Turmaine respectively.

### 2 **Disclosure of interests**

There were no disclosures on interest.

### 3 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 March 2017 were submitted and signed.

### 4 **The Community Safety Partnerships response to mental health and drug misuse**

The Community Safety Coordinator delivered the presentation to the task group.

He explained how mental health was a prevalent driver for the commission of anti-social behaviour and that it was a complicated issue to resolve. He outlined the community safety partnership's structures for dealing with mental health issues and how Watford was regarded as having best practice in this respect. He discussed how the work of the Community Protection Group (CPG) lessened any adverse impact mental health had on communities and the value of having a

representative from the Community Mental Health Team as a member of the group. He also discussed the benefits of the Watford Community Housing Trust forming part of the CPG.

The Community Safety Coordinator explained the mechanism for forwarding cases from the CPG to the Joint Agencies Group (JAG) for further action and discussed how age had an impact on different types of mental illness. He concluded that the increase in instances of mental health issues in Watford was likely to be the result of such matters as the increased population in the area.

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

- Explained the option of sectioning individuals with more serious problems and discussed issues around people continuing with treatment when not compulsory patients.
- Outlined how performance had been measured historically and how a Hertfordshire County Council document now compared year on year data.

The Community Safety Coordinator then presented on the community safety partnership's response to drug misuse. He explained how Watford's drug profile had evolved and how this had changed the behaviours of the individuals using substances. In particular, he discussed the use of cannabis by younger people and the relationship to the commission of anti-social behaviour – such as the erratic riding of mopeds. He outlined how the partnership tackled this issue through the instigation of Operation Capitan in the more prevalent localities.

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

- Clarified that whilst the police did visit schools to provide crime prevention talks to students - they did not have dedicated resources to do so.
- Explained the motivations of offending by children under the age of 13.

The Community Safety Coordinator continued by explaining how street drinkers in the area, in some instances, had a preponderance to misuse certain types of drugs. He discussed how the partnership made use of Acceptable Behaviour Agreements in the first instance to moderate their behaviour and how Vagrancy Act powers could then be used to take individuals before the courts. Ultimately, Criminal Behaviour Orders could be applied to prevent the individuals from entering Watford. The Community Safety Coordinator concluded by outlining how drug misuse varied between differing age groups in the population.

Members discussed whether unsupervised play areas may have an impact on drug misuse and also the apparent increased use of substances in prisons. In response to questions from members, the officers:

- Explained how drug dealers were targeted.
- Outlined how recent issues at the town centre flyover had been resolved and how the individuals concerned had been supported.
- Clarified that drug addiction was not regarded as a mental health issue by definition.

RESOLVED that –

- the presentation be noted.

## 5 **Progress with the Protecting our Communities and Managing Crime action plan**

The Community Safety Coordinator delivered the presentation to the task group. He outlined how the annual strategic assessment had been used to identify risks and the resultant partnership priorities. He discussed the relationship between the various crime types being tackled and how efforts were being made to profile child safeguarding issues.

He explained the linkage between domestic abuse and the consumption of alcohol with regard to the night time economy. He informed the task group that allegations of hate crime were investigated as such when a victim felt they had been the subject of the offence – whether or not there was any direct evidence. This to provide additional support.

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

- Clarified that instances of hate crime, with regard to religious buildings, tended to be random and explained the role of the ‘Prevent’ agenda in these circumstances. He undertook to discuss a matter with regard to the Sikh community with Councillor Dhindsa outside of the meeting.
- Advised that the increase in hate crime was due to people being more confident to report such matters. Many instances related to street drinker issues and were not targeted campaigns.

The Community Safety Coordinator introduced a slide that depicted how instances of anti-social behaviour were logged. He went on to explain the various mechanisms the partnership adopted to address the range of behaviours reported; such as the use of Public Spaces Protection Orders and Dispersal Orders.

In response to further questions from members, the officers:

- Explained how conditions could be required of licensed premises to prevent the sale of drinks with high levels of alcohol.
- Discussed the impact of crime in other areas of Hertfordshire.
- Undertook to circulate the dates of CPG meetings to members to give them the opportunity to attend.

RESOLVED that –

- the presentation be noted.
- the action requested be undertaken.

## 6 **Work programme**

The Chair introduced the draft work programme for the current municipal year to the task group. She explained that an additional meeting was proposed so as to give service providers, those receiving services and victims the opportunity to express their views to the group. Members debated the work programme and it was agreed. The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer undertook to circulate the meeting dates of the task group to members.

The Chair concluded that she considered Watford to be a safe place - with members commenting that the fear of crime was often greater than the actual levels of offending.

RESOLVED that –

- that the work programme was approved.
- that the action requested be undertaken.

Chair

The Meeting started at 6.30 p.m.  
and finished at 7.35 p.m.