

CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY PANEL - 10 February 2015

MINUTES

Present: Councillor K Hawkins (Chairman). Councillors K Grinsell, M Hewings, K Macnaughton (sub), M Parker and M Robinson.

Apologies:

Councillor T Hodgson.

Gillian Crabbe (Community Safety Manager – Solihull MBC).

Inspector Nigel Sarling (Performance Lead - West Midlands Police).

Officers in attendance:

Lee Stevenson (Solihull MBC, Governance Directorate).

Kulwant Virdee (Solihull MBC, Governance Directorate).

External report authors/witnesses in attendance:

Inspector Stephen Malone (Partnership Lead - West Midlands Police).

Observers in Attendance:

Councillor Mrs D Holl-Allen (Cabinet Member, Community and Partnerships).

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members of the Panel.

2. **QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS**

There were no questions or deputations in accordance with Standing Orders. It was noted that due to giving apologies for the meeting, Councillor T Hodgson had made a written submission which detailed several areas for comment and questioning. This submission was overseen by his substitute, Councillor K Macnaughton during the course of the meeting.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 2014, was submitted for approval.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes be agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

REDUCING THE FEAR AND PERCEPTION OF CRIME

In attendance: Inspector Stephen Malone (Partnership Lead - West Midlands Police).

The Panel considered an overview of the Partnerships initiatives in place which worked towards reducing the fear and perception of crime within the Borough's communities.

The Panel considered examples where there had been Partnership activity in specific areas to tackle and target individual local issues in an attempt to demonstrate that the Partnership had understood and were addressing local problems.

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The Panel welcomed Inspector Stephen Malone to the meeting who outlined that despite the numbers of reported crime steadily reducing over the years, communities still told us that the fear of becoming a victim of crime was still prevalent. As well as providing information on perceptions and recorded crime, the report set out a number of case studies that demonstrated how the Partnership responded to community safety issues and to build confidence in Solihull's communities. The remaining report and supporting information was taken as read.

In summary, the Panel made the following observations as part of their deliberations:

- Current affairs and media reporting (local and national issues) were said to contribute, in part, to a heightened fear of becoming a future victim of crime, despite there being an actual reduction in recorded crime in 2014, as compared with 2013.
- In some areas, public perception was that Police patrols/Partnership activities were less visible although this was not actually the case.
- The Partnership was working towards improvements in their communications to ensure that "good news stories" were regularly and actively publicised to lift public confidence and help reduce the fear of becoming a victim of crime amongst communities. West Midlands Police now had a resident journalist, whose purpose was to help strengthen links between the media and the partner agencies.
- Social media was a very powerful and modern tool to communicate with and publicise Partnership activities. However, it was recognised that Solihull had some very high proportions of elderly residents and more traditional methods of communication to those audiences still applied with equal importance.
- "Key Individual Networks" and re-formed Independent Advisory Groups made up of community representatives were able to offer feedback to agencies and act as a community voice. The Panel noted that these initiatives performed better in some areas of the Borough than others. Such barriers to success were weaker KIN's in parts of the Borough with higher levels of reported crime. The key role of Elected Members in community communication was also acknowledged.
- Members welcomed the inclusion of inconsiderate parking and speeding traffic as a Partnership priority and were encouraged by the activities planned in 2015/16 by the Partnership to tackle these aspects of ASB.
- Funding reductions within West Midlands Police had a massive impact on service delivery over the last 4 years. This had meant that there was now more emphasis than ever on successful partnership working and community integration initiatives. Whilst there were several examples of successful initiatives, the Panel welcomed the mind-set that the Partner agencies were always looking at new opportunities.
- Surprisingly, other visible "uniformed" presences in local communities gave heightened reassurances and, in some cases, deterred criminality. Two proven examples were traffic warden patrols (CEO's) and the Fire Service making return journeys through local communities with higher levels of reported crime.
- Bail hostel's gave rise for discussion and it was considered important that potential reoffenders were made known and monitored by the correct

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agencies when their placements began in such properties. Whilst West Midlands Police set out the normal expected protocols (the PINS process), a Member gave a recent example where this process may not have happened.

- West Midlands Police emphasised the importance of data sharing between Partner agencies and gave reassurances to the Panel that Solihull LPU would work proactively to ensure that there were no barriers within their control to hinder this.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel:

- (i) Supported further work being done by the Partnership to improve communications to promote their work – particularly recognising the importance of communicating “good news” and Partnership initiatives that are benefiting local communities. It was acknowledged that Elected Members had a role to play in this too;
- (ii) Welcomed the continued use of social media etc but recognised the challenges of communicating with parts of Solihull will high proportions of elderly (and/or vulnerable) residents where more traditional methods of communication and publicity may be a more effective option;
- (iii) Supported the work being done to strengthen other relationships such as with the local media (WMP resident journalist) and the “Key Individual Networks” in parts of Solihull where this initiative needed to be strengthened;
- (iv) Highlighted the importance to local communities of initiatives to tackle inconsiderate parking and speeding and looked forward to those priorities being further taken forward by the Partnership during 2015/16; and
- (v) Acknowledge community integration initiatives (and reach-out projects) as highly valued and beneficial and the Panel welcomed their ongoing continuation.

EARLY CRIME INTERVENTIONS AND REDUCING THE RISK OF REOFFENDING

In attendance: Inspector Stephen Malone (Partnership Lead - West Midlands Police).

The Panel reviewed the current role of the Partnership in the early intervention and prevention of crime and sought evidence of “problem solving” approaches from the Partnership.

The Panel also reviewed the initiatives in place that sought to prevent vulnerable groups from going onto commit crime and ASB. The Panel considered the Partnerships strategies to prevent reoffending, particularly with young offenders and evaluated what typical percentage and what crime types within Solihull were attributable to reoffending.

The Panel welcomed Inspector Stephen Malone to the meeting who outlined that crime had a massive detrimental effect on communities and had potential to place disproportionate financial and administrative demand on local services. The Partnership aimed to work proactively to tackle reoffending and reduce the risk of reoffending whilst collaborating to reduce the fear and perception of risk

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posed by criminality reported by Solihull's communities. The remaining report and supporting information was taken as read.

In summary, the Panel made the following observations as part of their deliberations:

- There was a perceived imbalance in the contributions from health bodies. The Police had a very well established, (circa 16 year) relationship with mental health teams which proved very successful. In comparison, relationships with health bodies (such as NHS) to directly support and promote "physical health" were, by comparison, still in relative infancy. The Panel encouraged further work to strengthen that latter pathway.
- The importance of being able to offer local people, local support was recognised – particularly having sufficient local resources available to support local people with mental health issues and seen as being at risk of committing crime or reoffending.
- The SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, Assessment) process was widely supported and several examples were noted where this practice was working well. The SARA model had identified Bilking, particularly, as an area of ongoing concern.
- The importance and benefits of Business Partnerships was discussed and aspirations to develop those further were welcomed.
- Much work was ongoing to understand "people behaviours". West Midlands Police had some very effective powers to deal with criminality although responses needed to be proportionate. It was noted that the proportionality of responses by Solihull LPU came out very well to closer scrutiny.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel:

- (i) Welcomed all the reported initiatives and practices, particularly the SARA and IOM processes;
- (ii) Noting that the Partnership had a well-established relationship with mental health services to support offenders etc, the Panel urged the Partnership to further develop its relationship during 2015/16 with the services/teams that promote and support "physical health" to address the perceived imbalance in those two areas of support; and
- (iii) Raised concerns at the amount of Bilking that takes place within Solihull and the amount of Partnership/Police resources that crime type takes up. The Panel support further work being done by the Partnership/WMP to consider future options to address this. It was noted that Bilking was a national problem and that retailers had little incentive to address the problem themselves. The feasibility of reporting Bilking as a separate crime type was also requested to enable a more transparent assessment of Business Crime data to be considered.

6. SAFER SOLIHULL PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

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In attendance: Inspector Stephen Malone (Partnership Lead - West Midlands Police).

Ahead of the March 2015 meeting of the Cabinet Decision Session, Community and Partnerships, the Panel was invited to consider the latest Safer Solihull Annual Strategic Assessment & Community Safety Plan. The same had been considered by the Safer Solihull Executive Board on 29 January 2015.

The report was presented each year, together with the revised ASA, to enable a review of progress over the last twelve months to be made and to seek views on the priorities for the coming year. The report, supporting information and presentation material was taken as read.

In summary, the Panel made the following observations as part of their deliberations:

- Welcomed the methodology to the review.
- Supported the inclusion of speeding traffic and inconsiderate parking as a Top 4 priority.
- Called for the focus on domestic violence to be given a stronger emphasis in the final publication, noting and endorsing the current and ongoing work to protect the Borough's most vulnerable.
- Called for a more obvious reference to "listening to our communities" in the final publication.
- Welcomed the specific recognition to tackle several remaining key risks for ASB in Solihull, e.g. anti-social use of off-road bikes.
- Welcomed the high level of confidence that the priorities were achievable with the Partnership resources available.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Panel:

- (i) Supported the format and contents of the Annual Strategic Assessment. The Panel also welcomed the current methodology to the ASA review;
- (ii) Supported the 4 strategic priorities as outlined at point 6.1 of the report. The Panel particularly welcomed the element of Priority 3 (Supporting Stronger Communities) which would seek to tackle inconsiderate parking and speeding and looked forward to those priorities being further taken forward by the Partnership during 2015/16. However, the Panel wished to see a stronger reference to the focus on Domestic Violence as included in Priority 1 (Better Protecting People from Harm). It was requested that a different form of words could be used in that preamble to address that point. Additionally, references to the importance of "listening to our communities" should also be more apparent and promoted in the early pages of the ASA to recognise the value of this aspect of Partnership engagement;
- (iii) Subject to the above, supported the priority themes at point 7.1 to 7.5 of the report;
- (iv) Supported the areas of multi-agency partnership focus at point 7.6 of the report; and
- (v) Supported the model of delivery as outlined at point 8.1 of the report to deliver against the Partnership priorities, themes and areas of focus.

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7. SAFER SOLIHULL PERFORMANCE SCORECARD 2014/15 - SUMMARY FOR THE PERIOD QUARTER 3 - OCTOBER 2014 TO DECEMBER 2014

In attendance: Inspector Stephen Malone (Partnership Lead - West Midlands Police).

The Panel considered a report that set out a summary of the Safer Solihull Performance Scorecard for Qtr 3 (October to December 2014). The performance data, as presented, was taken as read.

In summary, the Panel made the following observations as part of their deliberations:

- Highlighted again their concerns regarding the reporting of business crime, particularly Bilking and the perceived increase in reported business crime that was attributable to that crime type. The Panel felt that this type of criminality should be reported separately to allow for the reporting of business crime to be more transparent.
- Clarified the means of reporting and recording fraud, noting that factors such as where and how the crime was committed depended on how it was then categorised e.g. business fraud = business crime category.
- Welcomed the initiatives and policing practices in place to deal with public place violence, noting a recent operational example.
- Noted the decrease in the overall satisfaction with the outcome of ASB cases and asked for further information to explain that.

RESOLVED

The Panel made the following observations to the Cabinet Member for Community and Partnerships (March 2015 Decision Session):

- (i) Indicator NI 16d Business Crime – YTD +11.1%. A further narrative should be provided to explain why this NI had been scored as RED and to demonstrate what was being done to tackle this increase. The Panel assumed the increase was attributable to Bilking but this was not immediately obvious from the report – this should be clarified in readiness for the Community & Partnerships Cabinet Decision Session. The Panel also reiterated comments towards Bilking as set out above;
- (ii) Indicator NI 16e Public Place Violence with Injury – YTD +3.8%. The Panel noted the initiatives and policing practices in place to deal with this NI and requested that a further update should be prepared in readiness for the Community & Partnerships Cabinet Decision Session, given the reported YTD increase;
- (iii) Indicator NS CS 01b Overall Satisfaction with outcome of ASB Cases. The Panel noted the RED Status and requested that further information should be sought and circulated (in readiness for the Community & Partnerships Cabinet Decision Session) to give a detailed explanation as to the reasons why the Qtr3 2014/15 trend sat at 85% in comparison with Qtr.'s 1 & 2 which sat at 100%.

8. BRIEFING ITEM - CONSULTATION: SUBSTANCE MISUSE COMMISSIONING PLAN 2015/16

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The Panel received a copy of the Consultation: Substance Misuse Commissioning Plan 2015/16 which was duly noted. Members were encouraged to respond as per the guidance given in the covering report.

RESOLVED

That the Consultation be received and the intended mechanism for the Panel Members to respond be acknowledged.

9. WORK PLAN

The Panel received and considered its Work Plan for the remainder of 2014/15. The Panel's next meeting, to be held on 24 March 2015, detailed the following items:

- Community Integration – dealing with specific crime types (Hate Crimes).
- Police 101 Non-Emergency Number and Review of Police Contact.

RESOLVED

That the Panel's Work Plan be agreed.

7.50 pm