

**MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 3 OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE**

held on Thursday 4 January 2007 in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans at 7.00pm.

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Present:

Councillors Lusby (Chairman), Green (Vice-Chairman), Eileen Harris, Rowlands, Stroud and Willcocks.

Apology for Absence:

Mr C Lomax, Environment and Health Promotions Manager.

In Attendance:

Councillor Swendell.

Officers in Attendance:

Mrs C Roach, Community Support Manager;  
Ms N Brar, Community Safety Officer;  
Mr P Storey, Corporate Administrator.

Also in Attendance:

Community Inspector M Hanson, Hertfordshire Constabulary.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of Meeting No.2 of the Sub-Committee held on 5 October 2006 were taken as read and confirmed.

Further to Minute 3(i), there had been no further correspondence relating to the iQuanta crime figures following the reply from the Home Office, received following the last meeting of the Sub-Committee and circulated with the minutes of the meeting, stating that the figures could be considered in public, subject to data for the "most similar" peer group not being identified by name. The Community Support Manager considered that the information was meaningless if it could not be compared and, therefore, the iQuanta figures remained in Part II of the agenda.

Further to Minute 3 (ii), a meeting had not been held with the Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) since that referred to in the minute. Members were concerned that the record of the meeting was incomplete and the officers would be contacting the CPS again. Members were concerned that the role of local authorities had changed markedly in recent years and that this change needed to be acknowledged by the CPS.

## 2. **IMPLICATIONS OF THE HEALTH ACT 2006 – SMOKEFREE ENGLAND**

In the absence of the Environment and Health Promotions Manager through illness, the presentation on Smokefree England was deferred to a future meeting.

## 3. **QUARTERLY CDRP CRIME FIGURES**

The December 2006 crime figures had only just been received and updated the November figures contained in the agenda. It was agreed that the December figures be sent to Members with the minutes of the meeting.

The figures showed a reduction of 13% in all notifiable crime in the District over the period 1 April - 31 December 2006 against the same period in the previous year. The detection rate had also improved by 11% over the same period, to give an overall detection rate of 29%. The figures for each Policing area were:

- St Albans - notifiable crime reduced by 12%; detections increased by 16%;
- Harpenden – notifiable crime reduced by 7%; detections increased by 2%;
- London Colney - notifiable crime reduced by 20%; detections increased by 3%;

The November 2006 figures were 5% ahead of target for the reduction of crime in the District with 190 fewer crimes than last year. The December figures also showed a 5% reduction, with 249 crimes fewer than in December 2006.

There had been some increases in low level crime and in personal robbery, which was of most concern. Trends were encouraging, however, and there was little evidence of migration of anti-social behaviour between wards, with the exception of an influx to the Abbey Orchard over the summer which had now ceased. Good partnership work between the Police and other agencies had reduced many of the crime types in the District and it was hoped that private sector contributions to CCTV and the start up of the Business Crime Partnership would make a difference in 2007. Many diversionary activities were also being undertaken to seek to prevent anti-social behaviour. Changes in the licensing laws during 2006 had not resulted in increased problems, with several Members stating that increased noise rather than other types of anti-social behaviour had been the main problem. The Police were intending to tackle certain aspects of anti-social behaviour and were investigating Best Practice in a number of areas.

Members thanked the Police and the Community Safety and Support Team for their work in the District

## 4. **POLICE REPORT**

Inspector Hanson reported that the Community Police team was at full strength, as were the PCSOs across the District although one PCSO post was about to fall vacant in St Albans.

## 5. **POLICING PLAN PRIORITIES FOR 2007/08**

The Sub-Committee's views were sought by the Police Authority on the draft Policing priorities for 2007/08. Comments were requested by 22 January 2007 from stakeholders and partners and would be considered by the Police Authority on 23

February. It was noted that there were a number of gaps in the draft for reduction figures to be inserted after consultation.

Members made the following comments on the draft:

- The wording of the draft was confusing and unclear in many cases;
- There was no prioritisation in the draft or indication of how objectives would be achieved;
- Target times for Police responses were not required as Police officers assessed situations and responded appropriately;
- It would be helpful if the draft indicated how the Police deployed their resources;
- There should be a firm, clear policy regarding drugs.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Community Support Manager be asked to draft a response to the Police Authority, taking into account the comments above and any further comments from Members, and that the response be agreed with the Chairman.

## **6. DRAFT COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

The Sub-Committee received the draft new Community Strategy for St Albans District 2007-2020, which was also being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to stakeholders for comments. It was therefore suggested that the Sub-Committee's comments be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee for information. It was noted that only the section of the draft relating to community safety fell within the Sub-Committee's remit.

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was currently developing a new Community Strategy, as the present one would end in April 2007. Consultations and evidence gathering had taken place to produce the draft, on which comments were being sought. It was intended that the new strategy would be short, sharp, clear, easy to use and produce tangible outcomes for the District.

Members made the following comments on the draft:

- Some Council strategies tended to be over complicated and too elaborate;
- There was too much information in the document and it might be better to produce several documents rather than one;
- The draft needed to be studied critically to ensure that it was viable;
- The Young People's Provision Working Party could be useful in meeting some of the gaps identified in the draft relating to young people.

Members also made some suggestions regarding minor rewording of the draft in a small number of cases.

### **RESOLVED**

That the above comments be passed to the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee for information when considering the draft new Community Strategy.

7. **WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE TO 20 DECEMBER 2006**

The Community Support Manager reported on progress on items in her work programme. She stated that some of the items were on-going projects and could be moved into an "on-going" work list, e.g. the "In Safe Hands" newsletter which was being produced quarterly in the Review. She also drew attention to the action to mainstream community safety throughout the District Council, as required by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This action was now back on target following the filling of a staff vacancy.

Members considered that the work programme was very large and needed to be prioritised to reflect the major issues to be progressed.

8. **PROGRESS REPORT ON COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTIVITIES TO 20 DECEMBER 2006**

The Community Support Manager presented her progress report, much of which had been covered in the work programme update earlier in the meeting (Minute 7 above refers).

In answer to Members' questions and comments, she stated that:

- She would check whether the number of drug dealers in the District had reduced and report back to Members;
- Agencies with knowledge on drug related issues would be invited to the next meeting to give their views and to answer Members' questions;
- She did not believe there had been any progress in persuading leaseholders at the Maltings to link the CCTV there to the CCTV in the City Centre. However, many of the shops in the Maltings had joined the Business Crime Reduction Partnership.

**RESOLVED**

That agencies with knowledge on drug related issues be invited to the next meeting to give their views and to answer Members' questions;

9. **PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A CROSS-COUNCIL ENFORCEMENT SERVICE**

Cabinet on 9 May 2006 had agreed in principle to the establishment of a single cross-departmental Enforcement service, based within the Environment and Health Department. A Working Party had been established to report back to Cabinet with first stage proposals, which it did on 5 December 2006. Comments were now being sought on those proposals to report to Cabinet in February or March 2007, when more detailed operational matters would be considered.

The Sub-Committee was informed of progress to date. The report was also being presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for comments. It was therefore suggested that the Sub-Committee's comments be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee for information.

Elements of enforcement models from other local authorities were being investigated to see whether it was possible to adopt something similar in St Albans.

Members made the following comments on the proposal:

- That Enforcement covered a wide area of legal issues, as well as the Council's corporate objectives;
- Complainants should be kept informed of any action being taken in respect of their complaints and be "kept in the loop";
- It needed to be possible for enforcement to be taken outside normal office hours;
- The proposal was vague in terms of concrete actions which could be taken in respect of enforcement;
- That any discretion given regarding enforcement could be abused;
- That large enforcement issues should be tackled rather than issuing individuals with fixed penalty notices.

### **RESOLVED**

That the above comments be passed to the Overview and Scrutiny (Community Services) Committee for information when considering the draft new Community Strategy

#### 10. **AUDIT COMMISSION REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP WORKING IN THE DISTRICT**

The Community Support Manager stated that the Audit Commission's report had been expected in December 2006 but had not been received. She had received a brief email from the Audit Commission stating that the Community Safety Partnership had been rated the best partnership within the Council. She hoped to be able to present a more detailed report to the next meeting.

#### 11. **SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2006/07**

Members added the following items to the work programme for the next meeting:, as set out at Appendix 1:

- Smokefree England presentation;
- Audit Commission review of partnership working;
- Drug related issues.

A report from the British Transport police regarding anti-social behaviour on stations and the railway was requested during 2007/08.

It was agreed that a review of the Sub-Committee's work to date be undertaken at the next meeting.

#### 12. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

### **RESOLVED**

That under Section 100(4A) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of confidential information given to the Council by a Government Department on terms which forbid its public disclosure.

#### 13. **IQUANTA CRIME FIGURES**

Members noted the figures contained in the report.

The meeting ended at 9.18pm.

**(SIGNED)**

**CHAIRMAN**

**COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB- COMMITTEE**  
**WORK PROGRAMME 2006/07**

<b>Meeting dates</b>			
<b>4<sup>th</sup> July 2006</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> October 2006</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> January 2007</b>	<b>14<sup>th</sup> March 2007</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Crime Figures for the District</li> <li>• Police Report</li> <li>• Community Safety Work Programme and Performance Targets</li> <li>• Progress Report on Community Safety Activities</li> <li>• The Government’s “Respect” Agenda</li> <li>• Response from the Crown Prosecution Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Crime Figures for the District</li> <li>• Police Report</li> <li>• Community Safety Work Programme and Performance Targets</li> <li>• Progress Report on Community Safety Activities</li> <li>• Review of the Crime and Disorder Act</li> <li>• Street Nameplates</li> <li>• Review of Locality Policing Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Crime Figures for the District</li> <li>• Police Report</li> <li>• Policing Priorities Plan</li> <li>• Draft Community Strategy</li> <li>• Work Programme Update</li> <li>• Progress Report on Community Safety Activities</li> <li>• Proposal to Establish a Cross-Council Enforcement Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly Crime Figures for the District</li> <li>• Police Report</li> <li>• Implications of the Health Act 2006 - Smokefree England</li> <li>• Community Safety Work Programme and Performance Targets</li> <li>• Progress report on Community Safety Activities</li> <li>• Outcome of the Audit Commission Review of Partnership Working in the District</li> <li>• Drug Related Issues</li> <li>• Review of the Sub-Committee’s Work to Date</li> </ul>