

MINUTES OF MEETING NO. 4 OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE

held on Thursday 29 March 2007 in Committee Room 3, District Council Offices, Civic Centre, St Peter's Street, St Albans at 7.00pm.

Present:

Councillors Lusby (Chairman), Eileen Harris, Rowlands and Willcocks.

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Green and Stroud;
Community Inspector M Hanson, Hertfordshire Constabulary.

In Attendance:

Councillor Swendell;
St Stephen Parish Councillor Bill Pryce.

Officers in Attendance:

Ms N Brar, Community Safety Officer;
Mr C Lomax, Environment and Health Promotions Manager;
Mrs G Mathers, Corporate Administrator.

1. **MINUTES**

The Minutes of Meeting No.3 of the Sub-Committee held on 4 January 2007 were taken as read and confirmed.

2. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

Minute 1 – Minutes – Reference to Crime Prosecution Service

Concern had been expressed at the previous meeting that the record of the meeting with the CPS attended by the Chairman, Officers and Police was incomplete. The Chairman reported that the CPS had advised that they were unable to accept corrections received later than one week after issue of the minutes. The Council had sent the CPS information detailing what it considered had been omitted from the minutes.

Neil Kieran had attended a meeting in London on the subject of Anti Social Behaviour Orders. He had raised the issue of the CPS having stated that information relating to ASBOs could only be shared with the Police and not with Anti-social Behaviour Officers based within local authorities, although it was understood that this information had been shared with other Districts. It had been agreed that the situation with the CPS would be investigated further. The Chairman had requested that a letter be sent to the local CPS to advise them of this. No reply had been received to date.

Minute 6 – Draft Community Strategy

Narinder Brar confirmed that the comments of the Sub-Committee had been passed to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Community Services).

3. **IMPLICATIONS OF THE HEALTH ACT 2006 – SMOKEFREE ENGLAND**

Carlton Lomax gave a presentation on Smokefree England. The Health Act 2006 would come into operation on 1 July 2007 and smoking would be banned in many different types of public spaces. It was agreed that a copy of the presentation be sent to all Members via the Members Information Bulletin.

During discussion the following comments were made:

- Carlton Lomax reported that the Officers were undertaking much preparatory work with the public advising on the implications of the legislation
- Councillor Swendell remarked on the importance of enforcement of the regulations. The Chairman suggested that the Police be asked to report back on operations once the legislation had been in place for a while.
- Councillor Rowlands asked what were the main problems for Council Officers in dealing with the new legislation. Carlton advised that he and one other officer would be involved in advising people on the need for compliance with the regulations – they would need to contact for example premises such as public houses, taxi drivers, van drivers, hotels, sheltered accommodation and the Council's own premises. Ensuring that the official signage was correctly displayed would also be an important issue. With the assistance of funding supplied by the Department of Health it was intended to employ an additional officer to assist with this work, and also to provide help in other areas such as support work for employees who wished to cease smoking.
- Councillor Lusby asked whether Officers involved in out of hours working would be able to respond immediately to reports of breaches of the Act. Carlton Lomax explained that it was not the intention to give an immediate response, but that there would be discussion with businesses on the need for compliance with the regulations and on the consequences of not complying. He confirmed that there was the facility within the protocol to undertake spot checks.

Carlton Lomax was thanked for his presentation.

4. **QUARTERLY CDRP CRIME FIGURES**

The Sub-Committee considered the Crime Figures. Councillor Swendell expressed concern regarding the reduction in detection rates. There had been an increase in the 'theft from a person' category. Narinder Brar stated that the majority of these incidents involved theft by and from young people, and that an in depth analysis revealed that approximately 80% involved theft of equipment such as mobile phones, Ipods and MP3 players.

Councillor Rowlands remarked that, whilst serious crime had reduced, less serious crime had increased by 10%. At previous meetings Inspector Hanson had spoken of the value of Ward meetings with the Police. Councillor Rowlands understood this

was being reviewed and wished to know the outcome. The Chairman suggested that the Police be asked to report back on the Ward meetings, how they had been received and who was attending etc. She was of the view that, as these meetings had been requested by the Police, they should be providing administrative support for the meetings.

In noting the figures the Sub-Committee also noted the iQuanta Crime Figures published in Part II of the agenda.

5. **POLICE REPORT**

In the absence of Inspector Hanson there was no police report, however the Chairman asked the Sub-Committee whether they had any questions they would like to send to him. During the meeting the following issues were raised:

- Councillor Swendell referred to the recent announcement by the Policy Authority that the number of Community Support Police Officers was to be cut by 100. He asked what effect this would have on the Policing Plan.
- The Police should be asked to report back on how the Ward meetings were progressing (See Minute 4 above).
- The Sub-Committee requested information from Inspector Hanson as to the possible continuation of police work with young people (Minute 7 below refers).

6. **REVIEW OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE'S WORK TO DATE 2006-07**

A list of issues discussed by the Sub-Committee during 2006/07 had been circulated with the agenda. The Chairman asked that future years more detail be provided on decisions and outcomes.

7. **PROGRESS REPORT ON COMMUNITY SAFETY ACTIVITIES TO 31 MARCH 2007**

Narinder Brar presented the above report. Councillor Rowlands asked about the liaison work with the Police undertaken previously by the Youth Action worker provided by Leisure Connection. Narinder responded that this police post (previously funded by the Police) had been cut –unfortunately it was seen as a luxury which St Albans had been fortunate to enjoy for a brief period. Funds had been identified for the interim period until a long term strategy had been agreed; however this was very much a short term measure and not a replacement for the service previously provided. Savings needed to be made and the Police view was that funding for core police work was a priority. Councillor Harris understood that Inspector Mike Hanson was investigating possible ways of continuing the service. The Chair suggested that he be asked whether there was any progress.

Parish Councillor Pryce asked what area was covered by St Albans Business Against Crime (SABAC). Narinder Brar advised that it currently only related to St Albans City Centre but there were plans to extend to St Albans and London Colney. However there were resource limitations.

Councillor Willcocks asked when the CCTV camera on the Abbey would be activated. Narinder Brar advised that it was hoped that it would be running within the next two weeks.

8. **ST ALBANS DISTRICT ADULT SUBSTANCE MISUSE TREATMENT DATA**

The Sub-Committee noted a report on the above issue which had been requested at the previous meeting. Councillor Rowlands pointed out that the Minutes stated that agencies with knowledge on drug related issues would be invited to attend this meeting to give their views and answer questions. He was disappointed that no one from these agencies was in attendance. Narinder Brar advised that post of the Partnership Liaison Officer, who would have taken this item forward, was currently vacant. The Chairman suggested that the Sub-Committee repeat their request, and undertook to ensure that there was someone in attendance for the next meeting.

RESOLVED

That the Officers be requested to invite representatives from agencies with knowledge of drug related issues to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

9. **COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICE PLAN UPDATE 2006-2009**

The Sub-Committee considered the Service Plan update. Narinder Brar advised that work was continuing on mainstreaming community development within the District Council. This involved increasing awareness of how the obligations of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 impacted on the work of the Council.

10. **SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2007/08**

Members considered the proposed work programme for 2007/08. It was acknowledged that the Sub-Committee might have a different membership in the next municipal year. Items could be added to the work programme during the year.

At the previous meeting the Sub-Committee had requested a report during 2007/08 from the British Transport Police regarding anti-social behaviour on stations and the railway. Members requested that a representative from the BTP be requested to attend the meeting to present their report. This item was included in the work programme for the meeting scheduled to take place on 3 July 2007.

Councillor Rowlands asked that a review of the operation of Smokefree England be undertaken six months following implementation. It was agreed that this be added to the list of items for 24 January 2008. Councillor Rowlands also asked if the Officers could arrange for the Members to spend half a day looking at the work of the Community Safety Team.

At the conclusion of the meeting the Chairman asked what Members considered had been gained from the work of the Sub-Committee. A Member expressed the view that information on the major issues addressed by the Sub-Committee should perhaps be disseminated more widely to all members of the Council. The role of the Sub-Committee in scrutinising the work of the Police was considered important. As Community Safety was a newer function of the Council it was also considered that the Sub-Committee acted as a bridge with other Council activities, by drawing attention to profoundly important issues. It was suggested that more representatives from organisations outside the Council should be invited to attend future meetings.

The Parish Councillor attending the meeting agreed that the information was interesting but wished to know how the Council used the information. Councillor Rowlands referred to the Council's responsibilities in relation to community safety. The Chairman agreed that investigations needed to have an outcome. She explained that the minutes of the Sub-Committee's meetings were reported to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Community Services.

The meeting ended at 8.40pm.

(SIGNED)

CHAIRMAN

COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE
WORK PROGRAMME 200708

Meeting dates			
29 March 2007	3 July 2007	24 January 2008	3 April 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Crime Figures for the District • Police Report • Implications of the Health Act 2006 – Smokefree England • Progress Report on Community Safety Activities • Review of the Sub-Committee’s Work to Date • St Albans District Adult Substance Misuse Treatment Data • Community Safety Service Plan Update • Work Programme Update • Drug related issues <p>[Note: Representatives from agencies with knowledge of drug related issues to be invited to attend the meeting].</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Crime Figures for the District • Police Report • Progress Report on Community Safety Activities • Work Programme Update • Report of the British Transport Police regarding anti-social behaviour on stations and the railway <p>[Note: Representative from the BTP to be invited to attend the meeting].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome of the Audit Commission Review of Partnership Working in the District • Community Safety Service Plan Update 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Crime Figures for the District • Police Report • Progress Report on Community Safety Activities • Work Programme Update • Community Safety Service Plan Update • Review of operation of Smokefree England 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Crime Figures for the District • Police Report • Progress Report on Community Safety Activities • Work Programme Update • Community Safety Service Plan Update