

**CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE
24 AUGUST 2009**

Present :- Councillor Christopher Arnold (Chairman)
Councillors Nick Barlow, Mike Hogg,
Jackie Maclean, Gaye Pyman, Laura Sykes,
Nick Taylor, Dennis Willetts and Julie Young

Substitute Members :- Councillor Helen Chuah for Councillor Mark Cory
Councillor Dave Harris for Councillor Kim Naish

1. Crime and Disorder

RESOLVED that the committee:

- i) Noted the Home Office Guidance for the scrutiny of Crime and Disorder matters enclosed in the agenda as a background paper.
- ii) Noted the Developing Overview and Scrutiny event to be held in the Town Hall the following evening and that would include discussions on Councillor Calls for Action and issues in regards to crime, disorder and anti social behaviour.

2. Review of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Councillors Barlow, Harris, Maclean, Pyman and Taylor (in respect of being Members of their local Neighbourhood Action Panel) all declared a personal interest in the following item.

Councillor Sykes (in respect of being a member of her local Neighbourhood Action Panel and Member of the Stanway Parish Council) declared her personal interest in the following item.

Councillors Hogg and Chuah (in respect of being members of their local Neighbourhood Action Panel, and Trustees of St Anne's Community Hall Association) both declared a personal interest in the following item.

Councillor J Young (in respect of being a Member of her local Neighbourhood Action Panel, a Member of Essex County Council, and her spouse being the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, a Member of the Essex Probation Board, and a Member of the Responsible Authorities Group) declared her personal interest in the following item.

Councillor T Young (in respect of being a Member of his local Neighbourhood Action Panel, a Member of the Essex Probation Board, and a Member of the Responsible Authorities Group, and his spouse

being a Member of Essex County Council) declared his personal interest in the following item.

Chief Superintendent Tim Newcomb and Superintendent Jason Gwillim, both of Colchester and Tendring Police, Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder responsible for Community Safety and Mr. Ian Vipond, Executive Director and Chair of the CCDRP Responsible Authorities Group, all attended the meeting for this item.

2. Colchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership

Mr. Ian Vipond introduced the report on the work and progress of the Colchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Chief Superintendent (CS) Newcomb addressed the committee to explain the role of Tendring and Colchester Police in relation to the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

CS Newcomb explained how Colchester was meeting its Crime and Disorder targets including:

Criminal damage had reduced by 9% to date in 2009-10, Violent crime had reduced by 7.5% to date in 2009-10, Dwelling Burglary had reduced by 11% to date in 2009-10, with 31 fewer victims in burglary, and an excellent result of 64% detection rate.

Offset against this, it was noted that burglary in commercial premises had risen and thefts from motor vehicles had increased, though vehicle theft had reduced.

There were to date in 2009-10 fewer instances of anti social behaviour, though the reductions are marginal.

Councillor T Young addressed the committee to explain that Community Safety was one of the Council's Strategic Priorities, and spoke of some of the Community Safety successes in the last year, including:

The SOS and Community Bus, Days of Action, The Safer Colchester pilot and encouraging feedback from officers supporting the Neighbourhood Action Panel process of improving attendances and better organisation.

Councillor Young said partnership working had improved immeasurably and the Council had an excellent relationship with Essex Police.

Councillor Young told the committee that the Council had served its first 'Closure Notice (Order)' on a private landlord tenanted dwelling. Councillor Young circulated the Closure Order to the panel. Councillor Young was

confident that the order would be enforced by the Magistrate Court. Councillor Young agreed to circulate to the panel details of the background and press notice in respect of this order.

It was also confirmed that Colchester was the only authority in Essex where the Community Safety Team was based at the local police station, an initiative well thought of and appreciated inside and outside the borough.

CS Newcomb responded to Councillor Hogg in respect of the perceived rise in the average age group of drink related cases of anti social behaviour (ASB) in the St. Anne's Ward. CS Newcomb said he did not have any statistics to confirm this perception, but that further research was needed and would be fed back directly to Neighbourhood Action Panels. CS Newcomb did confirm the trend and problem of young people drinking to excess before visiting the Town Centre. A crime analysis was required to determine why youngsters do this and determine a way of preventing this from happening.

Superintendent Gwillim said alcohol with young people had been a problem for a number of years, so there could be a natural assumption that these people are getting older and getting involved in alcohol related ASB. It was a fact that the average age of people diagnosed with liver sclerosis was going down.

In response to Councillor Barlow, CS Newcomb said that whilst there had been a significant decrease in violent crime, domestic violence had increased locally and nationally. Special units at Tendring and Colchester are tasked with addressing these issues. The target percentages for reducing the perceptions of ASB are based on people who tick 'high values' in surveys, and who expect it to decrease if we are successful in reducing instances of ASB, so the aim was to reduce the perception of ASB amongst residents. DS Newcomb confirmed that more officers are present on the ground and their work is better targeted than ever before, with innovative ways of working with new technology introduced. Councillor Young explained that there are now Street Wardens covering the whole of the borough.

Both Councillor J Young and Taylor acknowledged their appreciation of the partnership and what it had achieved, with Councillor Young saying the relationship and communication between the Council and Essex Police had improved immeasurably. Councillor Young did express a request for more attention to be given to producing good news stories to local residents and for more to be done to allay fears of residents.

Councillor Arnold asked that the Council's Communications Team consider publishing an article in the Courier on good news stories, not just about reducing crime but to help towards improving the resident's perception of crime.

In discussions with the committee, DS Newcomb said residents needed to be encouraged to report all instances of crime. Whilst there may be a common perception that “if the Police cannot do anything about a crime why bother to report it”, DS Newcomb said he would be dismayed if improvements in targets was as a result of not reporting crime, saying all serious offences should be reported as this information provides an accurate data base of information that allows the police to more intelligently target patrols and resources, and any crime involving bodily contact provides forensic opportunities.

Councillor Sykes said that Stanway Parish Council did not support the West Colchester Neighbourhood Action Panel as it never received feedback or progress on issues that had been raised. Councillor T Young said he would discuss this issue with the appropriate officers.

In response to Councillor Willetts about the concerns of the large geographical area of the Constable Neighbourhood Action Panel and the long journeys needed by some residents to attend meetings, Councillor Young said he would speak to the Chair of the panel and the Head of Street Services to determine if this situation could be improved. Councillor Young did say there are fifteen panels covering the borough, the number that was felt adequate at the time of the panels review by Councillor Henshall as Portfolio Holder in 2007.

In response to Councillor Willetts, DS Newcomb said the crime detection rates are those provided under caution, during reprimands and defendants admitting extra offences in court. In respect of Credit Card Fraud (CCF), DS Newcomb said the instances of reported CCF are only a fraction of the actual number of instances. The Police will deal with CCF if reported, though he said it was difficult to get evidence from the financial institutions to help prosecutions.

Councillor Arnold thanked guests and officers for attending the meeting and contributing to what was a meaningful discussion.

RESOLVED that the committee considered and noted the current work and progress of the Colchester Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership in developing a safer Colchester.