

# Crime and Disorder Committee

Tuesday, 15 September 2015

- Attendees:** Councillor Marcus Harrington (Deputy Chairman), Councillor Professor Peter Higgins (Member), Councillor Chris Pearson (Member), Councillor Annesley Hardy (Member), Councillor Julie Young (Member)
- Substitutes:** Councillor Julia Havis (for Councillor Nick Cope), Councillor Pauline Hazell (for Councillor Beverly Davies), Councillor Dennis Willetts (for Councillor Patricia Moore)

## 7 Deputy Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Hardy be elected Deputy Chairman for the meeting.

## 8 Have Your Say!

Andy Hamilton attended the meeting and addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1). He explained that he had been attending the club called Mingles in London Road, Colchester regularly on Friday and Saturday evenings in order to make a silent protest about the club. He considered it had breached planning requirements but he had received no response to his emails to the Council in relation to the club's operation. He alleged that he had been assaulted, threatened and harangued by the club owner. He was concerned that the Council seemed to be denying responsibility for what he considered to be an unlicensed sexual entertainment venue and, as such, he deemed the Council was supporting the sex trade.

## 9 Minutes

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meetings held on 16 September 2014 and 27 May 2015 be confirmed as correct records.

## 10 Safer Colchester Partnership

**Councillor Havis (in respect of her Board membership of Colchester Borough Homes) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure 7(5).**

**Councillor Pearson (in respect of his employment with the National Probation Service) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the**

**provisions of Meetings General Procedure 7(5).**

**Councillor J. Young (in respect of her spouse's Chairmanship of Colne Housing Association and her spouse's position as Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure 7(5).**

The following members of the Safer Colchester Partnership (SCP) attended the meeting and jointly presented an overview of the Partnership's work in 2014-15 as well as responding to members questions:

- Pam Donnelly, Chairman of the Safer Colchester Partnership
- Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Licensing and Culture
- Sue Nice, Community Safety Manager, Colchester Borough Homes
- Henry Griffiths – Offender Management, The Essex Rehabilitation Co Ltd (Essex CRC)
- Sam Hepplewhite – Interim Accountable Officer, North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group
  - Sharn Taylor, Acting Chief Inspector, Essex Police
  - Melanie Rundle, Community Initiatives Manager

Pam acknowledged the invaluable support provided by Karen Loweman, Henry Griffiths, Jo Hall and Richard Philibrown who had each agreed to lead on the four key priority areas identified by the Partnership whilst Councillor T. Young provided an overview of the Partnership's particular achievements during the year.

The Committee members had also been provided with a snapshot of Colchester's Purple Flag accreditation, an objective assessment aimed to provide recognition to town centres which were managing the night-time experience and to help overcome negative public perceptions and Sally Harrington, Professional Services Manager, attended the meeting to respond to questions specifically relating to Purple Flag.

**It was explained that the SCP had been set up to deliver the statutory duty for local agencies to work together to tackle crime and included a variety of partners:**

- Colchester Borough Council
- Essex Police, Essex Fire
- Essex Probation
- Colchester Community Voluntary Services
- Colchester Garrison
- Essex County Council
- Colchester Borough Homes
- North East Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

The Partnership had a statutory duty to carry out an annual assessment of crime, involving an analysis of data on the frequency, location and types of crime in order to identify patterns and trends. The assessment had been used to develop a shared

action plan which prioritised the key local issues and outlined actions to address them. The partnership then monitored this action plan throughout the year, reviewing and refocusing activity as necessary to effectively tackle the issues.

The Partnership's action plan for 2014-15 had focussed on four key priorities:

- Protecting vulnerable people
- Reducing reoffending
- Addressing alcohol misuse
- Reducing crime and the fear of crime

An end of year report and an action plan for 2015 -16 were detailed and included the following highlights:

Protecting Vulnerable People:

- New tools and powers to protect vulnerable people
- Community Trigger
- Quarterly multi agency meetings
- Raising awareness through events
- Domestic Abuse
- Sanctuary Scheme
- Healthy Relationships - roll out to secondary schools
- Keep Safe
- "Older Peoples" Crucial Crew

Reducing reoffending:

- Integrated Offender Management (IOM) continued development - 75.29% reduction in offending whilst offenders are 'active'
- Cost saving of nearly £180,000 when comparing the cost of offences pre and post IOM intervention
- 58.82% reduction in proven offending, in offenders successfully de-selected from IOM compared to pre-IOM offending
- Develop IOM links with other partners and agencies - Beacon House, Oxford Road, Open Road and Westminster Drugs Project
- Funding for two Firebreak courses to target offenders who need additional support and direction.
- Permanent Link Worker from Police and Crime Commissioner to support development of the project.

Addressing alcohol and drug misuse:

- High intensity users into Accident and Emergency including long term conditions (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)
- Intelligent use of data to identify outcomes across agencies
- Service gap analysis compared to need
- Mental Health – street triage, Accident and Emergency crisis support, System Resilience Group

- Fire Break scheme for alcohol and drug misuse
- Polycarbonate Drinking Vessels
- SOS Bus
- Licensing Enforcement Group - data sharing
- Proactive partnership work to tackle street drinking

Reducing crime and the fear of crime:

- Crucial Crew
- Section 222 development
- Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO)
- Mental Health Triage
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Stop Search
- Knife Amnesty
- Partner focus and Shared Strategies

In discussion, Members of the Committee commented, in particular, in relation to:

- The Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) record in relation to attendance at public meetings;
- Details of the delivery of actions in the presentations was welcomed but details of the SCP's strategy and targets for dealing with crime for the future needed to be provided to enable the Committee to adequately scrutinise the work of the SCP;
- The need for the Neighbourhood Watch Scheme to be revisited with a view to providing assistance in combatting dwelling burglaries;
- The evidence to support the view that drug mis-use problems often began with as a result of exclusions from school;
- Concern about the increased levels of burglaries in the town especially in the period when additional police officers were patrolling the streets as a consequence of two violent murders;
- The reasons why offenders on release from prison were not being housed close to their family members and the detrimental effect this would have in terms of poor support networks;
- The implications of forthcoming public health sector cuts and its effect on alcohol / drug mis-use and crime;
- The definition used in the report and presentation in relation to 'vulnerable people';
- More detail needed about the work with school age children regarding domestic abuse;
- Details of the numbers of police officers currently employed in Colchester;
- Whether it was possible to supply Councillors with dwelling burglary statistics on a ward by ward basis;
- The problem associated with people urinating in town centre doorways and the growing incidence of rough sleepers together with dogs in town centre walkways;
- The reference in the Purple Flag Snapshot survey to only 40% of people not recommending the town to others;
- The recent debate in parliament in relation to the National Rural Crime Survey which identified the average cost of crime to an individual in rural areas was significantly greater than in urban areas, that fear of crime in rural areas totally 39% whilst police performance was measured at 39%. Whether the perception

that rural crime was not treated as seriously as crime in urban areas was true in Colchester.

Pam Donnelly, Councillor Tim Young and the other members of the partnership provided the following responses to issues raised:

- Sharn Taylor explained there had been a 56% increase in burglary figures over the previous year but that there had been some very recent successes in response to this which she anticipated would have a very positive effect. She also referred to the significant work done in relation to drug related activity;
- Councillor Tim Young explained that the appropriate route to call to account the work of the PCC was the PCC Panel, on which he was the representative for Colchester and questions could be directed by means of the PCC website;
- Pam Donnelly explained recent discussions with the University of Essex which would assist with the evaluation of the effectiveness of the Partnership's work and the work of the Responsible Authorities Group in determining the most effective use of funding to help develop a longer term strategy which was hoped would be presented to the Committee next year;
- Sharn Taylor explained the reduction in hours of the Essex Watch Co-ordinator that had been part of Essex Police cost saving exercises and the forthcoming review of priorities which would be part of future budgeting measures. She went on to detail the work undertaken in schools by Police Youth Officers in order to identify those students who needed extra support;
- Sue Nice referred to funding provided to Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) for work with Year 8 and 9 pupils at Colchester Academy involving talks by former offenders and drug users. The initiative had proved to be effective and further funding was being used to focus on Year 10 and 11 pupils;
- Henry Griffiths confirmed his awareness of the resettlement issues which were largely due to the reduced cost of housing in Tendring compared to Colchester. He acknowledged that it was important for people to live close to their families if they could provide positive support and he confirmed that work was continuing with the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO);
- Sam Hepplewhite briefly explained the reorganisation of health service commissioning and acknowledged that Councillors' alcohol / drug related concerns were shared within the Health Service;
- Pam confirmed that a specific definition for 'vulnerable people' had not been used but that the action plan provided an indication of the type of people and groups considered to fall within this term and she explained the review being undertaken in relation to the work of the Crucial Crew and the need to maintain its relevance;
- Sharn provided details of the number of police officers within Colchester's establishment which were supplemented by additional officers directly employed by other budget holders. She went on to mention the further significant cuts which would be necessary for Essex Police to meet the £60million savings that needed to be identified by 2020 and she acknowledged that local policing would look very different in five years' time compared to the present day, particularly given the predicted increase in housing in the area and the movement of people into the area from elsewhere;
- Councillor Young agreed that increases in crime statistics was a direct result of decreases in funding. Neighbourhood Policing would continue to be affected, the

number of police stations was likely to be reduced to one per district and he considered the total number of police officers would shortly fall below 3,000;

- Sharn confirmed that dwelling burglary statistics would be sent to Mel Rundle for circulation to Councillors;
- Sharn explained that people found urinating could be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice and went on to refer to the campaign 'Your Kindness Kills' which had been initiated to draw attention to the fact that 80% of rough sleepers were not actually homeless and that donations of money to individuals would be better directed towards support agencies who could target assistance to those most in need;
- Sue Nice confirmed that action was due to be taken in relation to a rough sleeper in possession of a number of dogs;
- Councillor Young's view was that even though the numbers of people recommending the town was not increasing, the numbers of people visiting was going up;
- Sally Harrington explained that the Purple Flag survey had been completed by a predominantly younger group of people and it was likely that their view of the town was skewed by reason of their familiarity with attractions in and around London;
- Sally also explained the work done by Council officers to support the new Pub watch initiative. This had shown that the local pub owners and managers were very willing to work together to improve the town centre night time economy but were reliant on the involvement of the Council to make sure meetings were arranged adequately. She was hopeful that future work would bring more restaurant owners to join the group to give a wider and balanced view;
- In terms of rural crime Sharn confirmed that police forces were compelled to prioritise resources according to demand and to direct resources where there were higher concentrations of crime. She also mentioned the presence of a County-wide rural policing team which was based in Chelmsford.

*RESOLVED* that the representatives from the Safer Colchester Partnership be thanked for attending the meeting and responding to members questions and the contents of the report detailing the work of the Partnership be noted.