

# **CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE**

## **11 SEPTEMBER 2018**

*Present:-* Councillor Davies (Chair), Councillor Coleman, Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Councillor Scordis, Councillor Wood

*Substitutes:-* Councillor Hazell for Councillor Bentley

*Also Present:-* Councillor Lilley

### **17. Minutes**

*RESOLVED* that the minutes of the meeting held on the 12 September 2017 and 23 May 2018 were confirmed as a correct record.

### **18. Safer Colchester Partnership**

**Councillor Davies (by reason of being a Magistrate) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7 (5).**

The report invites the Crime and Disorder Committee to scrutinise the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership. The report was presented by:

- Pamela Donnelly, Chair, Safer Colchester Partnership
- Councillor Mike Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Public Safety and Licensing
- Chief Inspector Shaun Kane, Essex Police
- Melanie Rundle, Community Safety and Initiatives Manager

### **Have Your Say!**

#### **Nick Chilvers**

Nick Chilvers attended the Crime and Disorder Committee to have his say regarding his previous role as Magistrate and Court Chairman and the arrangements around sentencing guidelines.

Mr Chilvers highlighted that there was a common misunderstanding of the reasons why sentences are made and that there are strict rules around what types of sentences can be given depending on the type of offence. Mr Chilvers stated that guidelines are set nationally, and that there are a number of elements which need to be taken into consideration when sentences are delivered. In addition to this, Mr Chilvers highlighted that fines were not derisory and that a number of factors are taken into account when these are set, such as the means of the offender. Suspended sentences also have a number of conditions.

Mr Chilvers highlighted that he had provided a similar summary to around 20 community groups providing a background to why different sentences are delivered. Mr Chilvers also highlighted that the sentencing guidelines are available to members of the public to view

Councillor Davies welcomed the contribution from Mr Chilvers, highlighting an important point regarding arrangements around sentencing.

### **Louise Wishart, Dutch Quarter Neighbourhood Watch**

Louise Wishart attended the meeting to have her say on behalf of the Dutch Quarter Neighbourhood Watch and to speak out the level of anti-social behaviour which is affecting residents quality of life. Louise Wishart handed out a map of the area and informed the Committee that over the past nine months there had been drug taking at all times of the day.

Louise Wishart welcomed the news that there would be additional Police Community Support Officers, however felt that investing in CCTV for the area would provide a greater ability to monitor the area. This would provide round the clock coverage of the area and deter drug taking, compared to a limited number of PCSO routes. Louise Wishart noted that there was CCTV provision on East Stockwell street and that drug dealing has moved away from this area. Louise Wishart requested that the Council give serious consideration to installing CCTV on Williams Walk, George Street and the top of Maidenburgh Street.

### **Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Public Safety and Licensing**

Councillor Lilley informed the Committee that he had attended the Dutch Quarter Neighbourhood Watch meeting to listen to residents' concerns. Councillor Lilley stated that whilst he preferred pro-active policing compared to CCTV, in this instance due to the concerns raised he has asked Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Resources to look into funding for additional CCTV. Additional CCTV would need to include other area of the Dutch Quarter, including the alleyway near the Townhouse. Councillor Lilley also highlighted that Zone Wardens have started evening shifts in the recent weeks in the Dutch Quarter, and they have fed back to the Police about those in the area taking drugs.

### **Louise Wishart**

In response to Councillor Lilley, Louise Wishart thanked Councillor Lilley for attending the neighbourhood watch meeting. Louise Wishart acknowledged that Police Patrols are a preferable approach to resolving crime, however due to the resources required and frequent nature of the drug taking CCTV does need to be considered.

### **Chief Inspector Shaun Kane, Essex Police**

Chief Inspector Kane confirmed that the concerns raised about the Dutch Quarter are being taken seriously and that Essex Police have a bespoke operation in place there, which includes the use of overt and covert patrols as well as specialists. Shaun Kane confirmed that there is a zero tolerance approach from Essex Police on this issue and that there had been a number of seizures and possession prosecutions in that area.

## **Councillor Adam Fox**

Councillor Adam Fox attended the meeting to have his say and raised concerns about austerity and impact this has had on visible policing that many in Colchester would like to see, but also expressed thanks for the work of the Police and the Street weeks initiative. Councillor Fox welcomed the Street Weeks initiatives, which recently ran in the Old Heath and the Hythe ward, as it provided an opportunity to go out into the community with a wide range of organisations.

Councillor Fox questioned whether Street Weeks were going to continue and whether there are more opportunities to hold them in other areas such as Barn Hall.

With regard drug dealing in different neighbourhoods, Cllr Fox welcomed the support of neighbourhood watch groups who do a lot of work in providing reassurance to local residents and to help reduce the isolation for people. Councillor Fox also highlighted the need to report incidents online, which can be an easier route, so that the police can build up a picture of issues across Colchester.

## **Chief Inspector Kane, Essex Police**

Chief Inspector Kane welcomed the feedback from Cllr Fox about the Street Weeks partnership and stated that further information on Street Weeks would be provided as part of the presentation.

Chief Inspector Kane also noted that reporting crime allows for the Police to piece together the jigsaw for the bigger picture.

## **Cllr Tina Bourne**

Councillor Bourne attended the meeting to have her say and informed the Committee of a situation following a Scrutiny Panel meeting last year. Councillor Bourne informed the Committee that she had witnessed a man and a younger boy having an altercation near the Town Hall. Councillor Bourne indicated that after stepping in and taking the boy home, the boy informed Councillor Bourne that he had been in a fight at St Martins Church Yard.

Councillor Bourne explained that she then took the boy to his house and that his parents were not aware of where he had been and that they had only been in Colchester for the past three months. Councillor Bourne informed the Committee that she had reported the incident to the non-emergency number 101. Approximately 15 months later, Councillor Bourne saw the same boy involved in a drug deal with an older man in the town centre.

Councillor Bourne highlighted the story as it highlighted how easily exploitable young people are to crime and that it is up to everyone to try and do something about it.

## **Chief Inspector Kane, Essex Police**

Chief Inspector Kane commended Councillor Bourne for her actions and acknowledged the importance of education to help young people make the right decisions away from drugs and violence. Chief Inspector Kane also highlighted the importance of ensuring that communities feel safe and that people are aware of what happens when people get involved with drugs and gangs. He also stressed that the Police will always attend incidents to protect people from serious harm. Chief Inspector Kane confirmed that Essex Police are engaging with the University,

colleges and schools in Colchester to tackle the involvement with drugs and gangs. In addition, Chief Inspector Kane confirmed that for serious incidents, if 999 is called, Essex Police will always attend to protect people from serious harm.

### **Safer Colchester Partnership Presentation**

Pam Donnelly, Chair of the Safer Colchester Partnership, introduced the organisations of the Safer Colchester Partnership and thanked them and the Colchester Borough Council Community Safety Team for the work undertaken during the year. Pam Donnelly gave the Committee a brief overview of the work undertaken during the year as well as the aims for the next year. Pam Donnelly highlighted that the work of the partnership was vital, with a shared vision to drive down levels of crime and the fear of crime in Colchester. Pam Donnelly also mentioned that the partnership had strengthened with Essex County Council joining the SCP.

### **Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Public Safety and Licensing**

Councillor Lilley provided the Committee with information relating to the highlights of the Safer Colchester Partnership from 2017-18, including the Street Weeks initiatives and the Nights of Action. Councillor Lilley also highlighted the work with neighbouring authorities with regard to County Lines and need for the Police to work within Town Centre as well as the importance of mental health care. Councillor Lilley also stated that Essex Police were listening to the concerns raised as part of Have Your Say.

Councillor Lilley stated that whilst there has been a reduction in the number of Police Officers, Colchester Borough Council have provided extra funding which will lead to additional Police Community Support Officers being deployed. The additional PCSO's would be able to issue fixed penalty notices, with three based in the Town centre and one in rural areas. Councillor Lilley also highlighted the need for members of the public to report incidents to Essex Police.

### **Melanie Rundle, Community Safety and Initiatives Manager**

Melanie Rundle, Community Safety and Initiatives Manager, provided the Committee with further information about a number of events that had taken place over the past year that the Safer Colchester Partnership were involved in, alongside the outcomes. This included an Essex Police and Fire Commissioner conference with a number of different workshops. Outcomes from the workshops included a gangs and vulnerability framework, as well as rural community builders who work closely with the police to develop an at risk register for vulnerable people. A further outcome was in relation to reducing casualties on the road and the Safer Colchester Partnership will be feeding back into the new Fire and Rescue Plan. There was also a conference regarding sexual violence and child sexual abuse, which received positive feedback from those delegates in attendance with regard to providing information, raising awareness and providing tools to help victims and survivors. In addition to this, there was a drama piece called Chelsea's Choice, which toured five secondary schools in Colchester to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

### **Chief Inspector Kane, Essex Police**

Chief Inspector Kane, informed the Committee that his team had drawn up a Colchester Commitment for Officers and teams, which has a clear vision and underpins the support for officers and teams to deliver safer neighbourhoods.

Chief Inspector Kane stated that they had introduced Street Weeks, in response to listening to communities feedback about local policing. The street weeks aim to increase police visibility after the austerity measures and to maximise and make best use of services to deliver activity that was purposeful in addressing local issues for people. Chief Inspector Kane also stressed that this was a new approach, utilising different resources, with a variety of organisations and engaging with residents from different areas of the Borough over a number of dates. The Committee were informed that this is a form of proactive engagement supplementary to the work done on a daily basis. The idea is to get an understanding of communities, addressing concerns, provide support and referrals, identifying community champions and establish plans and neighbourhood watch to ensure there is a legacy after the street weeks.

So far there have been three street week events, which have been successful. On the second street week event a total of 900 residents were reached, providing engagement and an understanding of the community. To date neighbourhood watch membership has increased by 300.

A fourth street week is due at the end of October and information about this will be published in due course.

Chief Inspector Kane also confirmed that Colchester Borough Council has invested £10,000 over the next two years for the development of Street Weeks. This would contribute to the promotion and frequency of Street Weeks, with one taking place each quarter of the year.

In terms of statistics, during the 12 months up to June 2017 there had been an increase in anti-social behaviour offences of 2.5% equating to 135 more offences. In the following 12 months up to June 2018 there has been a year on year decrease of 2.7%, which equates to 53 fewer offences. This at a time when there is an increased population and increased ease of reporting.

### **Panel Discussion**

The Panel welcomed the informative presentation and information provided about street weeks.

The Panel discussed and agreed that it would be useful to hold an additional meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee towards the end of the municipal year to review the plans for the Safer Colchester Partnership for 2019-20.

A member of the Committee raised concerns about the level of drug taking in Colchester and questioned whether the Street Weeks are able to influence this. Chief Inspector Kane stated that there is now a wider network of community champions as a result of the street weeks which increases the amount of information for the Police. In addition, there has been an increase of 50% in the level of stop and search and a focus on intelligence led policing. The idea behind Street Weeks is to build confidence and the communication networks in the communities, as well as increase the numbers participating in neighbourhood watches. There is also the possibility to leave a legacy in a community care plan. The funding from the Council will allow for a digital platform so that members of the public within the community can see what is taking place. Chief Inspector Kane also highlighted that following

information received, six drug warrants and searches have been conducted in the area.

A member of the Committee stressed that residents needed to be made aware that the Streets weeks would have a digital platform so that they can keep up to date.

A member of the Committee question why the report made by Councillor Bourne was not followed up by the Police. In response Chief Inspector Kane stated that he couldn't provide a response due to not knowing the full details. With regard to those who are vulnerable, there are referral and support mechanisms in place. Those individuals identified have a safety plan and a weekly meeting takes place within the Police.

Another member of the Committee highlighted the hard work undertaken by Police Officers and their dedication to the role. They suggested that the Committee should write to the Essex Police and Fire Commissioner outlining concerns with the non-emergency number as they no longer received follow up information from the reports made. In addition, further information about PubWatch and nights of action were requested.

With regard to the Night of Action, Councillor Lilley stated that it is run by the Colchester Borough Council Licensing Team. The next night of action will start earlier so that it incorporates the end of the day, providing opportunities to speak to local businesses. The event would include input from the Army, Colchester Borough Homes as well as the local MP too and knock on doors and speak to businesses. With regard to PubWatch this has grown significantly, and there is now work being down on how to link the pubs together so that when an individual is convicted of anti-social behaviour all pubs in the scheme can be aware. Councillor Lilley encouraged other pubs in the Town to join PubWatch.

A member of the Committee highlighted that there are a high number of initiatives that involve children at schools and yet there are no secondary school representatives on the partnership. Panel members suggested that the Safer Colchester Partnership look to review its membership to include more representation from schools as well as whether there are any other organisations who should be included as well. Patrick Higgs, Director for Local Delivery for the North of Essex at Essex County Council welcomed the suggestion for including direct input from secondary school headteachers. Pam Donnelly confirmed that this issue would be included on the next Safer Colchester agenda, with information brought to the next meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee.

In response to a question about Operation Diss, Chief Inspector Kane informed the Committee that these are effectively days of action within the Town Centre in support to the Town Centre Action Plan. Two days of action have occurred so far, which had led to significant results, including four crime related arrests and 65 stop and accounts. Days of action include engaging with business and visitors, improving visibility and working with partner organisations. The intention for Operation Diss is to hold more days of action, as they are assisting in prevention of burglaries at Town Centre businesses.

A follow up question was asked with regard to the Public Space Protection Order. Mel Rundle informed the Committee that there had been a review of the PSPO, which had led to a Town Centre Action Plan being formulated. This included

increased Police Patrols and enforcement as well as the scheduling of a meeting every Monday morning with partners to discuss hotspots and criminal activity. Melanie Rundle provided the Committee with information about statistics on the Town Centre Action Plan as well as highlighting that a training session will be hosted with partners on the escalation process as well as information being provided on the powers available to magistrates.

Following a question as to whether PSPO's would be rolled out to other villages, Pam Donnelly stated that this would depend on the need and evidence to introducing a PSPO. The Borough Council's investment will lead to a Police representative in the rural community which would mean that evidence for a PSPO if required would be easier to gather.

In response to a question about St Mary's Car Park, Councillor Lilley confirmed that the Council had assisted those who were homeless and using the car park. If there are further issues Councillor Lilley stated that reports should be submitted to either the Safer Colchester Partnership or to the Zones teams. Pam Donnelly suggested that information regarding how to report crime or areas which need cleaning can be provided to Councillors.

A member of the Committee asked a question about whether the Safer Colchester Partnership were looking at preventative measures, rather than reactive, as this just tends to only temporarily solve the issues and move offenders on to other locations. Pam Donnelly confirmed that the Safer Colchester Partnership are finalising a report about why some young people get involved in Anti-Social Behaviour. The project has been funded by the Start Well project and with involvement from the University of Essex. Pam Donnelly also highlighted that there will be an Anti-Social Behaviour conference taking place on 7 November, to which Councillors will be invited.

In response to a question about whether the partnership were working with the Business Improvement District, Pam Donnelly confirmed that they were working with the BID and that some priorities had been agreed with regard to community safety. Pam Donnelly also stated that the Safer Colchester Partnership would look at the BID as part of its review of partner organisations.

With regard to the funding for PCSO's and street weeks initiatives, a member of the Committee questioned whether this was a one-off initiative. In response Councillor Lilley stated that this would be a two-year initiative which would be reviewed going forward. Pam Donnelly stated that this two-year period would be an opportunity to embed learning and best practice for the scheme. Chief Inspector Kane highlighted that the aim is to be flexible and ensure that results are measured so that there can be a clear business case before the end of the two-year period.

Following a question about drug dealing in the Town Centre, Chief Inspector Kane informed the Committee that if this issue is found quickly it can be dealt with, however if discovered on CCTV then it goes into the intelligence pool. Chief Inspector Kane highlighted that the Police prioritise the response to incidents with serious harm.

A further point was raised with regard to the Safer Colchester Partnership website and twitter pages, which had only limited updates, with five tweets since March 2017. Members of the Safer Colchester Partnership acknowledged that digital engagement

needed to improve and highlighted that the twitter feed would be used for the Street Weeks initiative.

Following a question about the observers scheme pilot within the Annual Partnership Plan, Pam Donnelly highlighted that this scheme was an idea from an Officer to use own frontline staff to act as eyes and ears for signs of modern slavery. This scheme would provide training to enable staff to spot the warning signs and share information accordingly so that appropriate action can be taken. More information on this could be brought to a future Crime and Disorder Committee, where there may be additional staff considered for the scheme.

Members of the Panel thanked the Safer Colchester Partnership for their work over the past twelve months and for attending the meeting.

*RESOLVED* that;

- a) The Committee thanked the Safer Colchester Partnership for attending the meeting.
- b) An additional meeting of the Crime and Disorder Committee take place towards the end of the current municipal year, to look at the priorities for the Safer Colchester Partnership going forward.
- c) The Safer Colchester Partnership review their membership
- d) The Crime and Disorder Committee write to the Essex Police and Fire Commissioners Officer regarding concerns about the 101 non-emergency number.