

Crime and Disorder Committee

Tuesday, 20 September 2016

Attendees: Councillor Christopher Arnold, Councillor Phil Coleman, Councillor Adam Fox, Councillor Mike Hogg, Councillor Lee Scordis, Councillor Barbara Wood
Substitutes: Councillor Pauline Hazell (for Councillor Beverly Davies)
Also Present: Councillor Lilley, Councillor Scott

9. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 15 September 2015 and 25 May 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

10. Safer Colchester Partnership

Councillor Hogg (in respect of his Directorship of Colchester Borough Homes and as a Personal License Holder for the Oak Tree Centre) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

Pamela Donnelly, Executive Director, introduced the Safer Colchester Partnership Report. The report requests that the Crime and Disorder Committee scrutinise the work of the Safer Colchester Partnership.

Pamela Donnelly introduced the lead officers for the four key priorities of the Partnership.

- KP1 Protecting Vulnerable People - Karen Loweman, Director of Housing, Colchester Borough Homes
- KP2 – Reduce Reoffending – Jamie Overland, Senior Probation Officer, National Probation Service and Kirsty Gibbons, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company
- KP3 – Address Alcohol and Drug Misuse - Jo Hall, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group.
- KP4 – Reducing Crime and Fear of Crime - Elliot Judge, Chief Inspector, Essex Police.

Pamela Donnelly also introduced Melanie Rundle, Community Initiatives Manager, Sonia Carr, Community Safety Co-ordinator and Scott Kincaid, Community Safety Officer from Colchester Borough Council who put together the report and assist in the work

programme of the Partnership. Pamela Donnelly also thanked other members of the Partnership for their support during the year.

Pamela Donnelly highlighted some of the key events that had taken place over the past year including an Older People's Crucial Crew. The event provides older residents in the community with safety advice, and provides assurances that Colchester is a safe place to live. In addition, the Partnership has also been involved in the DRIVE project which seeks to prevent domestic abuse offenders from reoffending. This project has been launched in three areas across the country one of which being Colchester; feedback from the project so far will be provided in March 2017. The Partnership has also run a six-month trial into the use of polycarbonate drinkware in a number of venues in Colchester which has been successful. In addition, the Safer Colchester Partnership has also been involved in the development of the Community Safety Hub, which provides a central location for partners to come together and share information and has launched a new Safer Colchester Partnership website.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Licensing, attended the meeting and provided an update to the Panel on the Police and Crime Committee. Councillor Lilley informed the Panel that Jane Gardener had recently been appointed as Deputy Chief Commissioner for Essex. In addition, Councillor Lilley stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner Roger Hirst had published new plans and priorities for the Police. Councillor Lilley also highlighted that there was praise at the Committee meeting for the Community Safety Hub and online reporting of crime.

KP1 – Protecting Vulnerable People

Karen Loweman

Karen Loweman informed the Committee that her role on the Safer Colchester Partnership is to liaise with other housing providers and assist in protecting vulnerable people. Karen Loweman stated that Colchester Borough Homes manages the Anti-Social Behaviour Team and works with vulnerable people and agencies across Colchester.

Statistics highlight that vulnerable people are more likely to be those who commit crimes and more likely to be vulnerable to crimes. Over the past year there have been a number of projects that have aimed to raise public awareness and confidence to report crimes. The community needs to be confident in reporting crimes and confident that if they are reported they will be dealt with. The more crimes of a smaller nature that are reported the more chance there is of the larger crimes being discovered.

With regard to domestic abuse, awareness has been increased following work with the local refuge and the County Council. This helps to ensure that victims can be protected either in a place of safety for them or in their own home. The Safer Colchester Partnership have also developed a range of sources from which important information can be sought, including the development of mobile applications.

A new project over the last year sought to help vulnerable people who report crimes very frequently. The aim is to provide support to them to prevent others from picking on them and provide them with a direct contact to report smaller crimes. Karen Loweman also highlighted the Keep Safe Project which currently helps adults across Colchester by ensuring that a number of venues provide a safe place for vulnerable people to make a call to their chosen contact, if they become distressed or feel unwell.

KP2 – Reduce Reoffending

Jamie Overland, Senior Probation Officer informed the Crime and Disorder Committee of the recent changes that had taken place in the Probation Service. This included information regarding the split between the National Probation Service and the Community Rehabilitation Company. The services work with different types of offenders depending on the risk of serious harm, sentence type and offence type. The National Probation Service works with those offenders who are high risk, could cause serious harm, violent or sexual offence and have a prison sentence either active or suspended for 12 months or more. The National Probation Service also works with those offenders who have a 6% or higher likelihood of reoffending with a crime of a serious nature, as deemed by a risk assessment tool.

Jamie Overland highlighted that these offenders fall within the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangement (MAPPA) which brings together all the agencies to review cases and takes place every six weeks. This includes the Police, the Prison Service, mental health agencies, social care, housing providers and non-statutory agencies as necessary. Jamie Overland stated that most sexual offenders are managed under the MAPPA case arrangement; those that are historic could be managed by the Community Rehabilitation Company.

With regard to NPS involvement in domestic violence cases, Jamie Overland stated that these tend to be limited to just the highest risk cases, either a serious violent or sexual offence.

The National Probation Service also use the Integrated Offender Management Service (IOM) which helps to review and target those offenders who have the highest risk of reoffending. However, this is only the minority of cases as the National Probation Service only deals with those cases that have the highest likelihood of a serious offence or harm.

With regards to the tools available to reduce reoffending there are a number of approved premises across the Country, including venues used in Ipswich. In addition to this there is a victims' liaison team that work with victims to keep them informed on the progress of the case and the progress of the offender in custody. When it is nearing time of release an officer will visit the victim to discuss potential licensing conditions, which may include exclusion zones.

With regard to preventing reoffending a number of accredited programmes are provided,

many of which are commissioned through the Community Rehabilitation Company. This includes programmes around drink driving and substance abuse. The National Probation Service provides a sex offenders treatment programme. In addition, there is an internet sex offender programme which looks to train those people to manage their behaviours. The National Probation Service also engages with the restorative justice hub in Essex and is currently looking at commissioning 10-20 offenders through restorative justice programme. The NPS is also linked in with the Shaw Trust, which is the mentoring and self-esteem building service that support offenders with employment and housing. More recently the NPS has been linked with social care and Police relating to gang issues in Essex. Jamie Overland highlighted the importance of offenders' relationships with probation officer and provided the Committee with an example of an offender who had, after a difficult start, completed his order with the National Probation Service.

Kirsty Gibbons, Essex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), stated that the Community Rehabilitation Company manages those low and medium risk offenders, however there is an escalation process in place if this changes so that they can be transferred to the National Probation Service and MAPPA if required. In addition, risk analyses of the offenders are done frequently to ensure that offenders are in the correct programme.

With regard to the Integrated Offender Management Service, the CRC work with the Police to identify reoffenders for crimes such as theft or burglary. Offenders in the IOM are colour categorised with red offenders actively offending and green offenders, which is the aim of the CRC, having not offended for a year.

The CRC use the carrot and stick approach, if through the IOM the offender is making progress through their programme further assistance can be provided. Kirsty Gibbons highlighted that one offender who had been responding well to the programme had been given assistance in purchasing a second hand washing machine. If, under IOM, an offender is not adhering to the probation requirements and may be offending again there are a number of measures in place to address this, an example of this the bright shadow scheme which is where a uniformed police officer will follow them throughout the day. Kirsty Gibbons provided the Committee with an example of an individual who had successfully completed their programme, and highlighted that even though the programme had finished assistance was still available to that individual. Kirsty Gibbons also highlighted the partnership work undertaken with different organisations, including Phoenix Futures, Ormiston, Nacro and Women's Projects to support service users.

KP3 – Address Alcohol & Drug Misuse

Jo Hall, North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group, highlighted that the Safer Colchester Partnership was extremely beneficial for sharing knowledge with different agencies and allowed for additional partnership working in other areas.

Jo Hall stated that there had been workshops for a number of different agencies around drugs, alcohol and improving health outcomes for all people of Colchester. Following

this it has been possible to set up a multidisciplinary group that focuses on high intensity users and regular visitors to hospitals. The intention for this group is to meet on a monthly basis.

In addition, further steps will be to form a link with the police to let them know when heavy drinkers or those who have been attacked attend emergency services. There are also plans to review the current pathway for those attending hospital to detox; this is to ensure that each user has support when they leave hospital which will help to reduce reoccurrences. There is also work underway with peer to peer reviews taking place for those GP's that are prescribing significant quantities of drugs that could have a street value if sold.

KP4 – Reducing Crime and the Fear of Crime

Elliot Judge, Chief Inspector, Essex Police stated that Colchester is one of the best performing areas in Essex. The number of burglaries, robberies and vehicle crimes have reduced, however the number of violent crimes have increased.

Elliot Judge stated that part of the reason behind the increase in violent crimes is the change to Home Office rules on counting the number of crimes, which now include abusive texts as a crime. With regard to violent crimes, this revolves around gangs, domestic abuse, child abuse, the night time economy and mental health.

In terms of crime and reducing the fear of crime there are a number of projects to assist with the challenges ahead.

Sonia Carr, Community Safety Co-ordinator, Colchester Borough Council

Sonia Carr gave a presentation about a pilot of polycarbonate drinkware in licensed premises in Colchester. The new glasses are almost unbreakable and can go through 500-600 wash cycles. The scheme was launched by the Partnership after undertaking research on how to make the night time economy safer following a glass attack on North Hill in Colchester in 2013.

As part of the pilot the Safer Colchester Partnership initially made requests to licensed premises as to whether they would be interested in joining. Whilst there was some opposition to the pilot, due to the perceived impression that those venues with issues use the polycarbonate drinkware and the different taste of drinks, the Elysium Group joined the pilot. The pilot was originally scheduled to last three months, but due to good feedback, no incidents and a saving for the group, the pilot was extended for another three months covering Christmas and New Year 2015. Following the pilot, the Elysium Group have purchased additional stock of the drinkware and are extending it to further parts of their venues. The Partnership is looking to further locations to use the polycarbonate drinkware through the licensing teams and the PubWatch association.

Elliott Judge provided the Committee with further information regarding the Community Safety Hub. Following a reduction in staffing levels of the Police it was agreed that it

would be necessary for services to be co-located. For Colchester there will be 15 different partners sitting together within the hub. Bringing the services together will allow for information to be shared and will allow better problem solving with the different organisations. It is expected that the Community Safety Hub will launch within two weeks.

Pamela Donnelly stated that the Safer Colchester Partnership had been awarded a grant from the Department of Work and Pensions to appoint a specific coordinator to help provide assistance with the growing challenge of gang related violence. Pamela Donnelly also highlighted two events for Councillors, the first on 6 December regarding work of the Police and the second a free conference on 30 November confronting hidden harm in Colchester.

Councillor Coleman questioned whether through licensing conditions it would be possible to force licensed premises to only use unbreakable drinkware. In response Sally Harrington, Planning and Licensing Services Manager, stated that it is not possible to condition premises unless they are under review. Councillor Lilley did confirm that it would be good for all premises to be using the polycarbonate glasses. In addition, questions were asked about the possible usage of plastic instead of glass bottles for drinks, whilst it was confirmed that the licensed premise in the pilot did not use bottles they have been used at a nearby festival and licensed premises could decant the contents of a glass bottle into a polycarbonate cup.

Councillor Scordis questioned whether there had been an increase in the amount of hate crime since June 2016, and whether people knew how to report such incidents. In response Elliot Judge stated that there had been increases in Colchester and similar areas in Essex since the 1st of April. With regard to the reporting of crime, Elliot Judge highlighted a survey in 2011 which revealed that Police stations may not be the best places to report crime to. However, the Colchester area does have one of the only hate incident reporting centres in Essex. Pamela Donnelly confirmed that the CBC Community Hub in Colchester Library would allow for residents to self-report crimes, which will assist in reporting.

Councillor Coleman highlighted the need for education in schools and questioned whether there would be visible policing in Colchester with reductions in resourcing. Elliot Judge stated that the reductions present a challenge, but that Colchester has the highest number of special constables as well as a dedicated team to assist with the night time economy. In addition, Colchester will have a Rural Special Constables team to provide support in the rural areas and ten special constables will work alongside the community recruitment teams and the voluntary sector to increase the number of volunteers. Elliot Judge also highlighted that the type of crime occurring was changing as most crime occurs in households not necessarily whilst the Police are on patrol. If there are areas that are suffering from anti-social behaviour issues, then the Police would be able to take a zero tolerance approach in that particular area and then work with partners to identify

the issues.

Councillor Arnold asked whether the use of Rural Special Constables was a response to an increase in crime levels. In response Elliot Judge stated that the Rural Special Constables were not a reaction to crime levels, but were something that had been used in Chelmsford and is now going to be based more locally in Colchester. Elliot Judge stated that operating in rural areas is a different type of policing, requiring a passion for local communities. In terms of reporting the crimes, reports should still go through the normal routes as the relevant teams will be dispatched if it is placed in a rural area. Elliot Judge also stated that he could provide further information about specific crime rates in rural areas after the meeting.

Councillor Scordis questioned whether it will be possible to reduce the fear of crime with less resources. In response Elliot Judge stated that the two are not necessarily linked and there is a significant amount of good publicity that could be used, for example Colchester has seen a 35% reduction in the number of burglaries taking place. In addition, social media has a significant impact in spreading effective messages about the work of Essex Police.

Elliot Judge also highlighted that the Police are currently rolling out smartphones which will enable Officers to note details of a crime instantly and upload it to the relevant areas. This will increase efficiency significantly as previously officers would have had to ring in the details taking resources away from answering phone calls from the public.

Councillor Hazell questioned whether those low level offenders in the probation service are provided with enough support, as if not supported correctly they could become vulnerable. Kirsty Gibbons stated that all offenders receive a plan that is responsive to that individuals' needs and provides the required support. Jamie Overland stated that with regard to the National Probation Service no offenders would slip through the gaps due to the number of agencies involved. Councillor Hazell suggested that further statistical information come to the Committee next year regarding the number of young offenders and domestic violence cases that could be measured. Elliot Judge highlighted that with regards to all crimes Colchester had seen an increase in 2.2% compared to 15% in Chelmsford and 10% in Basildon. Whilst it would be beneficial to have a baseline for comparisons, the figures would not necessarily be like for like due to the different trends and crime types that change each year.

Pamela Donnelly highlighted that the Partnership will be reporting back on a number of issues next year. The four priorities that have been identified will focus on a small number of people, but this will benefit the whole of Colchester.

Councillor Arnold questioned the different way of working with the SOS bus. In response Eliot Judge stated that the link already exists with the bus; providing information to the Police about the locations where individuals are consuming too much alcohol. This helps to provide an understanding of potential problems and levels of demand. Councillor Lilley also confirmed that those individuals on the SOS bus are asked where they have

been drinking, and the information on this is passed on. Partnership work also takes place with the NHS to gather more information. Following the action against Silk Road, many of the bars now regularly communicate with the Licensing authority and Police.

Councillor Coleman questioned the role of CCTV and whether the CCTV network could be expanded. In response Pamela Donnelly stated that the CCTV service is hosted in the Town Hall and the Police are able to access this information. The current CCTV network is mainly focused on the Town Centre, but the Portfolio Holder is currently looking at ways in which it could be extended; this depends on resources and internet connection speed. Elliot Judge confirmed that placing CCTV in rural areas can use a significant amount of resources. With regard to the current CCTV network, further work may be required to improve the speed at which CCTV footage can be provided to the Police. Essex Police also use a scheme of super recognisers who are able to see a face and identify that person in public areas; there are currently 30 super recognisers in Essex.

Elliot Judge also highlighted that Colchester has a night time economy special constable team, who frequently engage with bar owners. Prior to a Friday and Saturday evening, the Police hold a street briefing at 9pm with door staff and other key partners to discuss information about the night ahead.

Committee members praised the work of the Partnership over the past year, and also raised concerns regarding the increasing level of hate crimes.

RESOLVED that;

- a. The work of the Safer Colchester Partnership be noted
- b. The Crime and Disorder Committee thank the work of all the partners within the Safer Colchester Partnership for their work during the year.