

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 12 November 2013 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), N. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chairman), Edge, J. Gerrard, Gilligan, V. Hill, Hodge, M Lloyd Jones and Sinnott

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Lea and Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, L. Derbyshire, G. Jones, C. Patino, R. Rout, E Sutton-Thompson and J. Williams

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order 33, Councillor D Cargill (Portfolio Holder Community Safety), Mr J. Dwyer (PCC), Mr Williams (LGA), Mr A Waller (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services) and one member of the public

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
SAF20 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF21 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board were advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF22 SSP MINUTES	
The Board were advised that there were no minutes from the Safer Halton Partnership available since the last meeting of the Board.	
SAF23 PRESENTATION: POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER	
The Board received a verbal presentation from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mr John Dwyer. Mr Dwyer thanked the Board for inviting him to the meeting and indicated that his focus was on neighbourhoods, and that he	

attended Parish Council meetings on a regular basis throughout the county in order to meet as many people as possible and discuss issues in the various communities.

Mr Dwyer reported that he was a retired Police Officer of 30 years and his home county had been Nottinghamshire, then he had moved to the West Midlands and finally Cheshire. He explained that the Police Service had first been established in 1829 and detailed the changes up to his current post as PCC via a direct election in November 2012.

The Board was advised that since taking up the post on 22 November 2012, the PCC had become responsible for the Policing Plan and the budget. It was reported that the Policing Plan was available on line and in local libraries. A leaflet on the main aims of the Plan had also been sent to all households in the Cheshire area. In addition, it was reported that an APP was also available for mobile phones and devices. The APP contained lots of information on the Police Service, including contact numbers for local police officers.

The PCC advised that his main aim was to reduce crime throughout the Cheshire area, even though it was the lowest it had been since 1990. There was a need to divert recurring offenders, who only represented a small percentage of the community, but were having a significant impact in the communities. Anti-social behaviour was also a key priority in the Borough. Anti-social behaviour had remained stable but could be improved and the Police Constable had been requested to look at ways of dealing with this matter. Burglary in a dwelling had increased and the detection rate was as low as 7% in some areas. Police Officers were now attending every burglary, including burglary from sheds and the situation was subsequently improving. In addition, it was reported that the number of people who had been killed in road traffic accidents had also reduced.

It was reported that the categories of Heritage Crime, Business Crime and Rural Crime had been introduced and were recorded separately so that they could be targeted and dealt with more efficiently. It was also reported that there was a considerable amount of theft of garden equipment and animals.

It was highlighted that 104 Special Police Constables had been recruited since November 2012 and by March 2014, there would be a further 100 recruited which would significantly benefit communities. The Special Constables, it

was reported, did not receive a salary, but would receive training and were expected to work 17 hours a month. However, it was highlighted that the Special Constables would not replace the regular Police Officers.

The Youth Ambassador had been appointed earlier this year, Dominic Rogers, and he was key to ensuring the policing needs of youth in Cheshire were addressed. The new Policing Plan next year would also include young people.

In conclusion, it was reported that £100,000 was available via the Police and Crime Prevention Fund. The criteria for the funding was that it met targets within the Police Plan and would be subject to match funding. The funding was available to benefit local communities, and to date £60,000 had been allocated to projects.

The following comments arose from the presentation:-

- A Member of the Board reported that a resident had been unable to get in contact with the Police to report a burglary, and when she eventually reported the incident the Police response had been poor. The PCC indicated that such feedback was invaluable and he requested that details of the incident be sent directly to him so that he could deal with the matter;
- A Member of the Board raised concern in respect of the witness support scheme. He reported that witnesses had to wait in the same room as offenders and their families during the trial and as a result they were very often subjected to verbal abuse and aggression. He added that this was preventing witnesses coming forward as they felt vulnerable and unprotected. In response, the PCC acknowledged the issue and reported that Baroness Helen Newlove had discussed this issue in her book and was working closely with the Government on how victims/witnesses were supported during this time;
- The excellent work Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) undertook in the various communities was noted. However, concern was raised that recently, they had been rotated around the various wards on a regular basis. It was reported that rotating PCSO's did not allow them to gain public confidence or valuable ward

knowledge or get involved in community action. In addition, it was reported that they no longer attended residents meetings, which was a valuable way of engaging with people in their communities. It was suggested that they should revert to how they worked previously where they were allocated to specific wards and attended residents meetings. In response, it was reported that last year there had been some issues and it had resulted in the rotation. However, it was reported that PCSO's were a valuable resource and would remain at the same level this year (222 PCSO's). Discussions on this issue had also taken place and it had been acknowledged that continuity and stability was important in order for their role to be effective in the community;

- Clarity was sought on how anti-social behaviour was being addressed in the area. The PCC replied that nothing new had been developed. Anti-social behaviour was being dealt with by positive action and discussions had also taken place on how to improve these actions. Restorative justice, it was reported, had been recognised as an excellent method of addressing this issue and it was highlighted that magistrates were also involved in scrutinising the service;
- It was noted that four Local Authorities across Cheshire were in discussions to develop a Government initiative to develop an Alcohol Action Plan;
- The impact alcohol abuse had on communities, and on domestic violence and the significant funding that had been invested to address this issue was noted. It was also noted that the extended licensing hours had not been successful in reducing alcohol abuse in this country; and
- It was noted that Cheshire and Merseyside Police forces were not going to be amalgamated, but were looking at possibilities of collaboration in some areas in order to make a financial saving.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The verbal report and the comments raised be noted; and

- (2) Mr John Dwyer be thanked for his informative presentation.

(Note: Councillor Edge declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as she undertook advisory work to Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service).

SAF24 CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which presented Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service's Annual report for Halton 2012-13. The Board also received an update on the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP).

The Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service representative, Mr Alex Waller highlighted the key areas in the report, in particular that there had been a 25 % reduction in primary fires, which represented the lowest number ever recorded. Injuries had also reduced and had been categorised as slight with no serious injuries. However, there had been one fatality in 2012/13, the first since 2008-9.

It was reported that accidental dwelling fires had been included in the primary fires category and these numbers were at an all-time low and had been relatively static over the last three years in Halton. Delivery of Home Safety Assessments continued to be focused on those households most at risk and this had been backed up with publicity campaigns highlighting key safety messages, particularly around safety in the kitchen where around 50% of house fires had started.

The Board was advised that deliberate fires were more of an issue in Halton than in the other areas covered by the Cheshire Fire Authority. However, there had been a dramatic reduction of 35% over the last three years. It was likely that the wet weather had contributed to the reductions in 2012-13. However, there had been concerted efforts to tackle the problems in 'hotspot' areas in Halton, particularly focusing on small (secondary) deliberate fires associated with anti-social behaviour.

In respect of IRMP it was reported that the delivery plans were on track. The Board were reminded of the plans as follows:-

- Widnes - remove the second fire engine and provide additional cover from the new whole time

station at Penketh; and

- Runcorn - change how the second fire engine was crewed from whole time to On-call (24/7).

The plans for Runcorn, it was reported were on track to commence in April 2014. However, because the crew consisted of a number of new fire fighters, they would not be in a position to stand alone for approximately 18 – 24 months. Therefore, a small whole time crew would remain in Runcorn to keep the pump operational whilst the new fire fighters completed their training. The Board noted that all the On-call crew would live five minutes from the station.

In respect of the plans for Widnes, it was reported that numerous sites had been identified for the new station at Penketh; with one site being explored further near the Fiddlers Ferry roundabout. However there had been a slight delay due to planning permission as the site contained great crested newts which were a protected species. It was anticipated that the station would be built and operational within two years and when completed the second pump would be removed from Widnes.

The Board noted the activities and success the Council had achieved in contributing to the 35% reduction in deliberate fires in the Borough.

The Board noted the excellent firework event that had taken place in Halton. It was reported that Cheshire Fire Authority supported the event. It was also noted and agreed that it would be beneficial to hold additional events throughout the Borough, but due to budgetary cuts, this would not be an option.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) Alex Waller be thanked for his informative verbal presentation.

(Note: Councillor V Hill declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as a Member of the Area Forum).

SAF25 ALLEYGATE PROPOSAL - ELKAN ROAD, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which gave Members details of an alley-gating scheme requested by Birchfield,

Farnworth and Halton View Locality Area Forum.

The Board was advised that the Locality Area Forum for Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View had received a request for the installation of an alley-gate from a resident of Elkan Road, Widnes, in January 2013. The request had been made for a gate to be installed between numbers 31 and 33 Elkan Road to reduce the incidents of anti-social behaviour on the pathway that runs between the two properties, through to Moorfield Road.

The Board was further advised that the request had been made in light of a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour, criminal activity, and an armed robbery that had taken place at retail premises on Moorfield Road in 2012, for which the pathway was used as an escape route.

It was reported that the gate had been requested on the basis that it would hinder access to and from a grassed area adjacent to the pathway, and would therefore discourage the congregation of individuals in that area.

A request had also been made that a gate be considered between the shops on Moorfield Road, to reduce access to the pathway from its other access point. It was decided that initially this aspect of the request would not be pursued, but could be revisited should issues remain following the installation of a gate between numbers 31 and 33 Elkan Road.

It was noted that during a discussion with Ward Councillors, residents in Elkan Road had been proactive and had set up an informal 'neighbourhood watch' scheme, but were seeking preventative measures. The geography of the pathway and the desired location of the alley-gate was indicated on a map in the report.

It was reported that information provided to the Locality Area Forum by the Community Safety Team indicated that recorded criminal incidents were not notably high, there being 26 recorded incidents in the vicinity over a six month period. However, an analysis of the reported disorder within the vicinity indicated the presence of anti-social behaviour, affecting individuals and groups of people, as well as the wider community.

Furthermore, it was reported that whilst the

number of recorded incidents did not constitute persistent disorder, feedback from the resident requesting the alley-gate indicated that many instances were unreported. In addition, in discussions between the Community Safety Team and the Area Forum it was concurred that the geography of this location did lend itself to encouraging anti-social / criminal behaviour, as there was no direct view of the land adjacent to the path from the Elkan Road end of the alleyway.

The Board noted the results of the consultation that had taken place with residents in April 2013.

It was reported that an article had been published in the Weekly News on the alleygate and subsequently, there had been two further objections to the scheme in respect of the cost and the design.

After considerable discussion, the Board unanimously supported the installation of the alleygate between 31 and 33 Elkan Road. The Board also recommended that consideration be given to installing an alleygate with a spring lock and that the decision on a partial or full closure be decided by Ward Councillors.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted;
- (2) the Board support the proposal to install an alleygate between 31 and 33 Elkan Road;
- (3) it be recommended that consideration be given to installing a spring lock on the alleygate; and
- (4) Ward Councillors make the decision on whether it is a full or partial closure.

SAF26 CHILDREN IN CARE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which:-

- Highlighted the risks and concerns regarding fragmented commissioning and quality assurance of Children In Care of Local Authorities(CICOLA), a vulnerable cohort;
- Ascertained senior management and partnership

support of this priority area and addressed concerns; and

- Presented an update regarding the current numbers of CICOLA's and the possible impact on services within Halton.

The Board was advised that the Commissioning Partnership had highlighted Children in Care as a priority within the new Commissioning Framework. In addition, it was reported that there was currently a health action plan for children in care that had been completed by Bridgewater. The Local Authority had also completed an action plan.

It was reported that The Children in Care strategy was required to be refreshed to ensure local and national political changes were reflected and outcomes appropriately achieved.

Furthermore, it was reported that with Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) in place and changes within Bridgewater there was a need to review these plans and the governance arrangements and structure of the Children in Care Partnership Board to ensure commissioners and providers were held to account to deliver improvements in standards and outcomes for children in care. There was a need to integrate plans and work streams to ensure joint improvements were made.

It was also reported that Cheshire West and Chester and Halton were developing a joint Children in Care Participation Service. This service would allow the young people in care to reflect their views within the action plan. The Children in Care would be able to support the development of the strategy/action plan and the changes with the Board structure through the children in care participation service.

The Board noted the activities that had taken place with CICOLA's, the notification process and the CICOLA profile set out in paragraphs 3.5 – 6.2 of the report.

Children in Care of Other Local Authorities – Concern was raised that out of the 138 children on the CICOLA's list, 11 of them had an unknown address. In response, it was reported that the addresses of all the children had now been identified.

The Board noted the excellent work undertaken in respect of Corporate Parenting in Halton Borough Council.

The Board congratulated Officers on the excellent report and how the CICOLA issues were being addressed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made on notification and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) an update report be presented to the Board in six months.

SAF27 BUSINESS PLANNING 2014 -17

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which explained that each Directorate of the Council was required to develop a medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2014-2017 was just beginning.

The Board was further advised that at this stage Members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3-5) that they would like to see reflected within those plans. Strategic Directors would then develop draft plans which would be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the New Year.

The following priorities were identified for development or improvement in the Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year:-

- To reduce alcohol abuse and domestic violence;
- Safeguarding from last year (including residential and domiciliary care providers in Halton, the 15 minute calls etc); and
- Consumer Affairs and Protection (To include food ratings on takeaway premises, illegal tattooing and other cosmetic treatments, selling of underage alcohol and cigarettes).

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the three priorities listed above be considered for

development and improvement in the Directorate Business Plans over the next three years.

SAF28 DRAFT SAFER HALTON PARTNERSHIP DRUG STRATEGY 2014-2018

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which presented the draft Safer Halton Partnership Drug Strategy 2014-2018 and accompanying evidence document.

The Board was advised that the National Drug Strategy 2010 had changed the focus of drug service delivery from maintenance of individual's dependent misusing drugs to enabling and promoting recovery. The Substance Misuse Service was a partnership approach to improve the outcomes for individuals and families affected by drug misuse problems as well as reducing the impact of drug related crime and anti-social behaviour for the communities of Halton.

The Board was further advised that the draft Strategy, set out in Appendix A to the report was designed to be a short document that focused on the strategic objectives and priorities linking to a drugs service action plan that would become the focus of the Substance Misuse task group with quarterly themed updates to the Safer Halton Partnership Board and annual amendments and updates. It was reported that the strategy was supported by an evidence paper, set out in Appendix B to the report which outlined the context in which the strategy had been developed including national and local context and supporting data and information on the issues of drug misuse within Halton.

The Board noted that the strategy had been developed during a significant period of change and the vision, objectives and priorities for the Drug Strategy.

The Chairman highlighted the oncoming alcohol free week and the launch of Dry January that was being organised by the Director of Public Health. He encouraged Members of the Board to participate in the scheme.

The Board noted the alcohol free event that had been arranged at the Select Security Stadium for youths in the Borough via the Mayors charity. The event included 300/400 youths and local bands and Members of the Board were invited to attend.

The Board congratulated Officers on the excellent

report and work that had taken place to date.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.