



**MINUTES of
Overview and Scrutiny meeting as the
CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE
9 MARCH 2011**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor R C Laurie
Vice Chairman	Councillor A J Cussen
Councillors	A R Cheshire, Miss M R Lewis, C A R MacKenzie and Mrs A N Warr
Substitute Members	Councillors R Pratt and Mrs S M Young

758. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor N R Pudney and Rev. A E J Shrimpton. In accordance with notice duly given, Councillor Mrs S M Young was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shrimpton and Councillor R Pratt for Councillor Pudney.

759. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 29 September 2010 be approved and confirmed.

760. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

761. PRESENTATION

The Committee received a verbal presentation from Chief Inspector Steve Ditchburn (CI Ditchburn), District Commander of Maldon Central Division and Chairman of the Maldon Responsible Authorities Group who was welcomed to the meeting.

CI Ditchburn circulated two documents to the Committee for their reference although these documents were not made available to the public due to confidential information contained, these being;

- Maldon District Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP) Overview; and

- Essex Police: The Reform Programme, District Councillors' Briefing March 2011.

Review of the NAP and Police Reform

CI Ditchburn provided the Committee with an update, as requested from the Committee's previous meeting. He advised NAP meetings had been taking place for four years and a review had recently been carried out by the Territorial Police Department to review the arrangements. Consultation had been held with internal forums such as Neighbourhood Watch, Crime Reduction, Essex Watch Administrators and other Policing teams, along the same lines as a review held recently by Kent Police. The review sought views on five areas, these being: location, publicity, planning, priorities and who should attend.

CI Ditchburn went on to advise he would be happy for his Officers to attend quarterly Parish Council meetings and in some cases, amalgamate the NAP meetings with these to avoid additional attendance at meetings being required. It was noted that there was variance of attendance throughout the district, some frequently had visitors in double figures and others only had one visitor or sometimes none giving a mixed success rate. Often people only attended the meetings if they had a particular problem directly affecting them. Details of issues that had been raised and dealt with or passed on to a different agency and been resolved were given in the information handed to Members.

From the responses received through this consultation and proposed changes to the future of NAPs CI Ditchburn advised the following;

- The abbreviation NC stood for Neighbourhood Constables, this being the new title for Neighbourhood Officers.
- The three priorities of NAPs had been difficult to adhere to in the past; it was now at the discretion of those in attendance to set one to three for their area which would be confirmed by the NC, and published on the website to ensure the team worked alongside the community.
- Dates of meetings would be set at least one month in advance and would be published on the website.
- A standard template for agendas and minutes would be used across all NAPs to ensure a standard was being met with. However, he acknowledged this would need to be tried and tested.
- Local elected Councillors should be encouraged to attend meetings but it was felt they should not be elected as Chairman or attempt to politicise the meetings in any way, and the media should be discouraged from attending as their presence could alter the public debate.
- The Chairman of each NAP should be nominated by the public but the Police discouraged appointment of a chairman who was either a Councillor or NC.

In the discussion that followed a number of points and questions were raised:

- Comment was made that if the Police structured the meetings by using a standard template, it would restrict the public, discouraging them to participate.

- It was felt that meetings of NAP were not needed in every ward in the district. In some cases meetings of NAP complicated what could be a simple process. CI Ditchburn commented that he was trying to limit the number of meetings his Officers attended but would be happy for them to attend quarterly Parish Council Meetings or to attend for example a Mother and Toddler group.
- A discussion on the amalgamation of NAP and Parish Council meetings was held and in some parishes was felt to be more appropriate than holding separate meetings.
- Often Councillors and the NCs would be ideal candidates to chair meetings; it was felt that if nominated by the public, they should be able to take that seat. In response to this, CI Ditchburn stated the wording from the review could be interpreted differently however he read it that Councillors should be discouraged from chairing the meetings but could become Chairman if attendance was low or they were nominated. Likewise NCs should not be taking the chairmanship as it was their role to facilitate the meeting and to carry forward the priorities set by the NAP and not for them to choose the priorities. They should participate but not lead.
- A comment was made that where there was low attendance levels at meetings, this should be seen as a positive and not a negative. These were the areas in which NAP meetings were not required.
- Concern was expressed at restricting the media from attending meetings as it could lead to distrust and send out the wrong message.
- It was questioned what the difference was between Neighbourhood Watch meetings and meetings of NAP. It was clarified Neighbourhood Watch was about crime and its levels, NAP was to set priorities for the public. Meetings of Neighbourhood Watch had a higher attendance rate.

CI Ditchburn thanked Members for their comments and advised he could only feedback on the outcomes of the review. He agreed to feed back the Committee's views and see what could be done about the frequency of meetings, and the possibility of using the Parish Council meetings.

Councillor Mrs A N Warr proposed a letter be sent on behalf of the Committee to Essex Police voicing the Committee's views and concerns requesting that they review their consultation policy and consider amalgamating meetings of NAP with the Parish Council and Neighbourhood Watch. This was duly seconded by Councillor A R Cheshire and agreed.

RESOLVED that a letter be sent to Essex Police voicing the views and concerns of the Committee, as mentioned above.

The Reform Programme

CI Ditchburn guided Members to the document circulated earlier in the meeting and advised it would be distributed to all Councillors in Essex by Essex Police during March 2011.

In response to a question, he advised budget confirmation for the Police Community Support Officers, often referred to as PCSOs was still awaited so he could not

comment on their future. Match funding had been withdrawn by Essex County Council for 2011 / 12. He stated the future of the policing model for the district was still to be confirmed.

The Chairman gave thanks on behalf of the Committee to Chief Inspector Ditchburn for his informative presentation.

762. MALDON COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE ON PROGRESS

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Leisure and Liveability informing Members on the position concerning the financial spending plans of the Maldon Community Safety Partnership for the financial year 2011 / 12 and gave an update on the agreed priorities and progress with the Strategic Assessment.

A copy of the Community Safety Partnership financial statement was attached to the report for information. It was noted to have been approved by the Responsible Authorities Group at its meeting of 17 February 2011. Also circulated to the Committee during the meeting, was a copy of the Basic Command Unit Fund spend to date along with a copy of the expenditure proposals for the remainder of Balance. The Interim Community Safety Partnership Manager circulated two additional documents of the Maldon District Community Safety Partnership. Only the first document was made available to the public only;

- Sample of projects / events and evaluation for Overview and Scrutiny Committee 9 March 2011.
- Progress report on Basic Command Unit Funding to the Steering Group on 17 February 2011.

The Officer advised that the joint peer review with Safer Chelmsford Partnership looked at the recommendations of the priorities in the existing Strategic Assessment and recommended a reduction in the number of sub-groups, which had subsequently been undertaken, because of the uncertainty of resources. Where the decision had been made to cease the sub-groups, any actions arising would be reflected in the delivery plan of the 2011 / 12 Strategic Assessment to consider whether or not to carry the actions forward. Four priorities had now been agreed by the partners for inclusion in the 2011 / 12 strategic assessment and delivery plans these being;

- Maintain / reduce existing low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drug misuse
- Maintain / reduce the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Reduce road traffic collisions

The Interim Community Safety Partnership Manager provided the Committee with an update to a number of projects shown at Appendix 1 to the report including Horsebreak, Enhanced Pass Plus, Heybridge Youth Project, Essex Fire and Essex Police.

The Head of Leisure and Liveability confirmed the process for funding through Essex County Council had differed this financial year in that a bidding system for 50% of

the funding available had been introduced. Because the outcome of Maldon Council's bidding of that process was unknown, posts dependent on that funding had been given notice that their contracts would expire as of 31 March 2011. Since then a shared service level agreement had been negotiated with the Safer Chelmsford Partnership for provision of a part time Manager and the balance had been given to the Community Safety Partnership as funding towards frontline posts.

Congratulations were given to the Officers for managing to save these posts that would otherwise have been lost. In response to questions regarding the funding, the Officer advised that although it looked as though there was a large amount of money not spent for 2010 / 11 that was not the case. Money had been allocated to individual projects however invoices were still awaited before the money could be actually spent.

The Interim Community Safety Partnership Manager took the opportunity to advise Members of a recent seminar she had attended entitled 'Police and Crime Commissioners'. She had made available handouts of this presentation for Members to take copies should it be of interest.

There being no other items of business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

R C LAURIE
CHAIRMAN

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