



**MINUTES of  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting as the  
CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE  
13 MARCH 2013**

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**PRESENT**

Chairman	Councillor A J Cussen
Councillors	M F L Durham, R P Dewick, A Fluker, Mrs M Thompson and M J Wood
Substitute Councillors	Councillor Mrs P A Channer CC
In attendance	Councillors H M Bass and S J Savage

**923 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Miss M R Lewis. In accordance with notice duly given, Councillor Mrs P A Channer CC was attending as a substitute for Councillor Miss Lewis.

**924 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 October 2012 be approved and confirmed.

Councillor Mrs M Thompson joined the meeting at this point.

**925 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Mrs P A Channer declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 5 as she was the Member representative on the Police and Crime Panel and had attended the previous two Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) meetings as an observer.

Councillor M F L Durham declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 4 as the Member representative for the Community Safety Partnership.

Councillor A S Fluker declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 5 as he rented property to the Essex Police Authority.

Councillor S J Savage declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 5 as he was the substitute Member representative on the Police and Crime Panel.

## 926 ANNUAL REVIEW OF MALDON DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee received a presentation from the Community Safety Partnership Manager and the Community Safety Projects Officer on the Maldon District Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The following significant points were noted:

- Priorities for 2013 were to maintain/reduce existing low levels of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB); reduce the harm caused by alcohol and drug misuse; protect vulnerable persons including victims of crime and domestic violence and serious acquisitive crime.
- These priorities linked with the Maldon District Council (MDC) service which aims to ensure the community felt safe from crime and ASB. The CSP were attending meetings with the Ranger service in order to establish clearer and more effective links. The CSP priorities also link into the Public Health issues which are centred on alcohol and drug misuse, smoking cessation and the needs of an aging population.
- The CSP were working on a new landscape to include the Police and Public Health Reform, the changes being introduced by the new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Nick Alston and the financial pressures due to the reduction in funding and grants that are available.
- The PCC had agreed an increase in the police precept of 3.49% of which half a million pound would be invested into community safety projects. The Police and Crime Plan had been agreed after consultations and could be viewed on the PCC website. There would be two public meetings events held annually in the District where members of the public would be able to speak to the PCC and the CSP.
- The date for the first public meeting had been set for 9 May 2013; however a Member noted that this was the date for the Statutory Annual Meeting of the MDC. The CSP Manager will review the date before the meeting is finalised and advise Members.
- At the RAG meeting in January 2013 it was agreed that the surplus rolled over monies would be allocated to funding staff and projects at the CSP for the next year. It was anticipated that approximately £16,000 would be available via a funding application being made to the PCC. This would replace the Area Based Grant that was no longer available. The CSP Manager advised that it was important for funding to be available for staff employment; otherwise it would not be possible to run projects in the District.
- The CSP Projects Officer advised that community engagement had again been a key focus with Officer's attending Neighbourhood Action Panels, co-operative working with Neighbourhood and Farm Watch groups as well as working with and holding events with local groups and schools.
- The Projects Officer highlighted several of the events organised by the CSP with local groups including the continuation of Crucial Crew workshops for Year 6 students across the District, the Reality Road show aimed at Year 10 students, assemblies for Years 8 to 11 during an alcohol awareness week and specific diversionary events held over Halloween aimed at the elderly and youths and regular events held for youths.

- Examples of literature available from the CSP was highlighted
- The Projects Officer also gave Members information on the recent Hate Crime Seminar. Due to the success of the Seminar, a further training session on recognising hate crime and understanding the reporting process was to be held specifically for staff at MDC.
- Details were provided regarding the new Keep Safe project in conjunction with Maldon Pioneers whereby shops in the High Street would become designated 'Safe Havens' for vulnerable adults. This initiative would assist in meeting the CSP's priority of protecting vulnerable persons.

In response to the Members' questions regarding the timing of the PCC / CSP public meetings it was noted that such events needed to be aimed at the different elements of the community.

Councillor Mrs Channer declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was a Member of Essex County Council and the Chairman of the Maldon Youth Strategy Group and queried whether bullying remained a key concern of children in the District. The CSP Manager noted that bullying, and in particular cyber bullying remained a concern and that an Anti-Bullying Campaign Group had been set up at the Plume School, Maldon.

There was some discussion regarding the existing cultural social acceptance of drinking and the definitions and general awareness of binge drinking.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their presentation.

## **927 A REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL POLICING FOR THE MALDON DISTRICT 2012 / 13**

The Committee received a presentation from Acting Chief Inspector Cheryl Hayes, District Commander of Essex Police. The following significant points were noted:

- There had been a recent restructuring in the Essex Police resulting in movement of officers, however, where possible officers have been kept in the same area to maximise local knowledge and relationships with the community. Neighbourhood Crime Teams have been established and are available twenty four hours a day to respond to crimes reported.
- The performance update noted that the All Crime figure was on track to meet the target reduction of 1% on last year. Shoplifting and Criminal Damage crimes were down on last years' figures whilst the Domestic Burglaries were up by 25.7% on last year. Vehicle crime was up by 6.7%, the majority of which was related to the theft of catalytic convertors for scrap metal, however after the detection of one main perpetrator this trend had significantly decreased.
- The All Crime detection rate was 16.37% which was 11% down on the same period last year. It was noted that this was a local figure and not the detection rate for Essex. The All Crime solved rate was 21.05%; the solved rate figures include neighbourhood resolutions which did not involve prosecutions.

A Member noted that the crime statistics, in particular the figures relating to Criminal Damage, were possibly not true reflections of the situation in the District as it had been brought to the attention of Members that individuals did not always report acts of vandalism as there was little that could be done by the police. Acting Chief Inspector Hayes noted that it was important that all crimes were reported to the police in order that the crime figures were an accurate reflection and that this was a message that needed to be conveyed by the police to the public.

There was some discussion regarding Vehicle Crime; Acting Chief Inspector Hayes confirmed that the police were working with scrap metal yards to ensure that stolen vehicles were not sold as scrap. Following further discussion regarding the increases in Vehicle Crime and Domestic Violence it was noted that the economic climate often contributed to the type of crimes committed.

A Member queried the County wide clear up rate and in response Acting Chief Inspector Hayes advised that she would investigate and advise Members accordingly.

A Member raised the issue of response times in the Dengie Peninsular and several Members noted concerns regarding the attendance of police at incidents in the villages of the Maldon District. In response to a Member's question, Acting Chief Inspector Hayes believed that the response time to a 999 call in a rural area was approximately ten minutes but would confirm this and advise Members accordingly.

In response to Members' concern in relation to specific incidents and the public perception regarding the perceived lack of police presence in the Dengie, Acting Chief Inspector Hayes reported that cover was always available from the Responsive Police Patrol and the nearest available police officer would be dispatched in response to a call; however it was not possible for officers to carry out foot patrols and maintain a presence in the villages due to numbers, although where possible officers were kept to the same areas in order to increase community engagement and local knowledge. In response to concerns regarding the viewing of CCTV for specific incidents, Acting Chief Inspector Hayes confirmed that she would review the situations.

Councillor Mrs Channer declared a non-pecuniary interest in one of the specific incidents in the Dengie that had been highlighted previously as she was a member of the South Eastern Planning Area Committee that had determined a planning application in relation to the site

Further to concerns expressed by Members' in relation to the distances between villages in the District and the response time from the police, Acting Chief Inspector Hayes explained that all calls needed to be responded to and it was necessary for the police to 'work smart' with the available resources to ensure adequate coverage. A Member commented that it was clear from recent first-hand experience of a police patrol that the officers were able to respond quickly and cover large distances across the District effectively.

A Member expressed concern regarding the All Crime Solved rate of 21.05% as it appeared that four out of five crimes were not solved, Acting Chief Inspector Hayes commented that it depended on how crimes were recorded as it was possible for a number of crimes to be attributed to one individual in a series of related incidents, for

example a row of ten cars could be 'keyed' by one individual but reported as ten incidents which would change the relative crime figures.

The Chairman thanked the Acting Chief Inspector for her presentation.

There being no other items of business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.14pm.

A J CUSSEN  
CHAIRMAN

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