

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

Agenda Item 25

Brighton & Hove City Council

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 10 OCTOBER 2011

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Duncan (Chair); Carden, Deane, MacCafferty, Janio, Morgan, Pidgeon, Robins and Summers

Apologies were received from Councillor Barnett

Sussex Police: Chief Superintendent Bartlett and Sergeant Castleton

Communities of Interest: Reverend Stephen Terry, Portland Road and Clarendon Forum; Rachelle Howard, Portland Road and Clarendon Forum; Sylvia Howell, Bevendean LAT; Liam Mandeville B & R Nag; Ray Freeman, Bristol Estate; Ted Harman, Tenant Rep Stanmer and Coldean; Derek Peacock, Independent Adviser to Sussex Police; Chris Cooke, St James's Street LAT; John McPhillips, Turner LAT; Christine El-Shabba, Whitehawk Crime Prevention Forum Patricia Weller, Hangleton and Knoll Community Action; Bernard Copelin, Patcham LAT; Clare Tikly Goldsmid LAT; Sue Hansen, Moulsecoomb LAT; Bert Williams, Black History Group and Councillor Mo Marsh, Moulsecoomb LAT

Officers: Linda Beanlands, Commissioner for Community Safety, Simon Court Lawyer and Penny Jennings, Democratic Services Officer

PART ONE

13. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

13a Declaration of Substitutes

13.1 There were none.

13b Declarations of Interest

13.2 There were none.

13c Exclusion of the Press and Public

In accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ('the Act'), the Community Safety Forum considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press or public were present during that item, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information (as defined in section 100I of the Act).

- 13.4 **RESOLVED** - That the press and public be not excluded / excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item on the agenda.

14. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Community Safety Forum meeting held on X be agreed and signed as a correct record.

15. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

15a Argus Achievement Awards

- 15.1 The Chair stated that he wished to congratulate everyone who had picked up an "Argus Achievement Award" at the ceremony which had been held the previous week. He especially wished to record especially wished to record the awards received by Chris Cooke and Ray Freeman whose tireless work within their communities helped cumulatively to making the to city safer and contributed to it being such a great place to live. Ray Freeman, who was Chair of the Bristol Estate Community Association had been winner in the "Above and Beyond Category and Chris Cooke, Chair of the St James's Street LAT had been runner up in the same category.

15b PCSO Powers

- 15.2 The Chair stated that he was delighted to report that the previous week a meeting of the Sussex Police's Neighbourhood Policing Scrutiny Committee, of which he was Vice-Chair had ratified a proposal to extend PCSO powers in the city. Following long-running community campaigns, PCSO's would now (if the full police authority gave the scheme its backing at their next scheduled meeting on 12 October), be able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for Dog Fouling and enforce Designated Public Places Orders prohibiting the public consumption of alcohol where it was accompanied by Anti-Social behaviour.

- 15.3 A report back on progress of this scheme would be provided to the next meeting of the Forum in December.

Travellers

- 15.4 The Chair stated that in concluding his communications he wanted to take the opportunity to say a few words about gypsies and travellers. Balancing the needs of the travelling and settled communities was a key challenge facing the city and indeed

every council in the country. Although the evidence seemed to show that there had been no more gypsies and travellers visiting the city in 2011 than in previous years, the debate had begun to spiral out of control, to the point where racial harassment and violence towards travellers had become a major and some would say the biggest community safety issue facing the city.

- 15.5 Some of those present may have seen an item on the BBC the previous week but for the benefit of those who hadn't he explained that Sussex Police were currently investigating a series of racist remarks and even death threats made to members of the council's Traveller Liaison Team and some travellers themselves. The national shortage of sites could cause tensions between the settled and travelling communities, but he felt sure that everyone would agree that the debate about the council's policy towards travellers must not stray into racial abuse or harassment, but he was becoming increasingly concerned that some meetings and demonstrations in the city had fuelled exactly that sort of language and behaviour. He urged everyone there that day, especially councillor members who really should know better, to bear in mind their responsibility to respect both the law and the principles of community cohesion when debating these issues. At this point Councillor Janio said that he was extremely dissatisfied with the comments made and in consequence would be leaving the meeting.
- 15.6 The Chair continued that a good test would be to substitute the word "black" for the word "traveller" when discussing this issue, for example, a LAT meeting to discuss "The Issue of Travellers in the City" would be as offensive to many as a meeting to discuss "The Issue of Blacks in the City" and would probably be illegal too. More than a fifth of Family of Travellers clients in Brighton and Hove experienced racism; that was clearly unacceptable and everyone had a duty to help to reduce that figure.
- 15.7 In order to help, the council had launched a consultation, available via the council's website, anyone who wanted to participate in an off line way could leave their details with the Clerk to the meeting in order to ensure that they were able to engage in that process. It was important that everyone had the opportunity for their views to be included in relation to the council's proposals, from the short term toleration of some encampments to the delivery of a new permanent Traveller's site in the city, designed to help resolve a set of questions that had blighted community cohesion in the city for decades.

16. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

- 16.1 There were none.

17. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

- 17.1 Councillor MacCafferty referred to the number of police recorded LGBT hate crimes and crime related incidents. In the absence of an umbrella organisation following Spectrum's demise. He was concerned at the impact that potential on-going cuts could have and wanted to know what measures were being taken to ensure that best practice and an inter-agency collaborative approach continued. It was agreed that a

written response would be prepared and sent to Councillor MacCafferty detailing the work carried out in concert with the Council's Equalities Unit and other partners.

- 17.2 Mr Cooke and Mr Peacock stated that although at an early stage they were aware that discussions were taking place with a view to plugging into a Sussex wide umbrella group.

18. CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE FIGURES

- 18.1 The Forum considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities describing recent activities and progress relating to priority areas in the Brighton & Hove Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2011-14.
- 18.2 Sergeant Castleton referred to the shift in emphasis which had taken place nationally and at local level towards achieving successful treatment outcomes for those in treatment towards a state of recovery. The CRI Drug Intervention Team (a voluntary organisation which provided services to drug users), supported clients who were at risk of disengaging from drug rehabilitation programmes and also supporting those who had successfully completed treatment to help them sustain their recovery. Work in communities by the Community Against Drugs team was continuing in five neighbourhoods across the city and it was developing an information pack to support families.
- 18.3 It was noted that the city's alcohol misuse programme included a wide range of work related to the drinking culture, availability of alcohol, the night time economy and alcohol treatment. An on-going county wide survey had been undertaken to build up comparatives between alcohol and other issues and the results of this piece of work would be brought forward to future meetings.
- 18.4 In relation to anti-social behaviour a number of problematic street community members had been worked with by the ASB Outreach team who had worked mainly in four city centre locations. In answer to questions Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that although the overall figures for crime had reduced as it still fell below the 3% reduction target set.
- 18.5 Councillor Summers referred to the submitted table in relation criminal damage which did not appear to have peaked during the summer months as in previous years. Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that the Police were concerned that in areas where crime had shown reductions there was not an exponential reduction in Police engagement. Fear of crime was a huge issue and there was therefore a commitment to continue to engage with the public at current levels of effectiveness.
- 18.6 Mr Peacock referred to instances where violent crime occurred which did not necessarily result in injuries. Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that such crimes could still be reported but in recording them other elements could also be relevant for instance whether it was as a result of harassment, for example.
- 18.7 Councillor Robins stated that a number of the figures appeared low but it was difficult without precise comparators to know how these compared with other places. It would be useful if more detail could be given in respect of emerging trends. Councillor

MacCafferty considered that the data provided was useful but it would be useful if there could be a more detailed breakdown of hate crime for example, giving a context to figures for the city in relation to the region as a whole. Mr Cooke stated that hate crimes were a very emotive issue and although the trend was downwards it was also important that under reporting did not occur.

- 18.8 Mr Williams stated that the figures for the summer months, particularly those for violent crime must relate to incidents involving visitors both as perpetrators and victims, particularly if those incidents did not occur in residential areas.
- 18.9 **RESOLVED** - That the contents of the report be noted. The Forum also considered the potential for supporting crime reduction and community safety when their organisations developed and took forward ideas.

**19. NATIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES WHICH IMPACT LOCALLY:
STANDING ITEM**

- 19.1 The Forum considered a joint report prepared by the Strategic Director of Communities and Commissioner of Police. The Paper sought to outline some of the implications arising from the election and appointment of Policing and Crime Commissioners (PCC's), which would follow assent of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. It was anticipated that these appointments would take place in November 2012. The Forum were asked to note and consider the information contained in the report and the likely implications arising therefrom.
- 19.2 The Forum noted that currently the Police Authority had 17 Members and was made up from elected Councillors and independent people, who scrutinised and set the strategic direction of Sussex Police. The Policing and Crime Commissioner would replace the current police authority membership/members in its entirety and would hold the Chief Constable to account. There would however, also be a Police and Crime Panel (PCP) who would in turn hold the Police and Crime Commissioner to account.
- 19.3 Chief Superintendent Bartlett explained that although arrangements had yet to be finalised there would be between seventeen and twenty people on the Police and Crime Panel made up from representatives from the district, borough, unitary and county councils in Sussex together with some independent member representation.
- 19.4 The Chair, Councillor Duncan stated that he was deeply concerned by some aspects of the proposed arrangements, not least lack of representation for/by the city. It seemed unlikely that the Commissioner would come from the city. Given its diversity, the city had its own series of specific challenges and it was hard to see how these would be properly represented by one person who had no knowledge or experience of the city and who was charged with responsibilities for such a large area. On a positive note, he was pleased that cross/agency arrangements were already in place between the various agencies in the city, the council's officers charged with community safety and health responsibilities and the Police and that regular meetings were taking place. He had attended such a meeting earlier that day.

- 19.5 Councillor Morgan concurred in that view stating that in view of the other challenges financial and other wise which Policing was facing the potential implications arising from these changes were great. There were concerns that the costs of setting up and running this model could be of the order of £25m (overall) at a time when the Police were seeking to deliver and maintain services under very challenging conditions. Lobbying had already taken place to invite revision of the current proposals and that had not borne any fruit to date. There was no option to go proceed and plan on the basis of the proposals as they stood. Suggestions made to the Policing Minister to seek to ensure that a local appointment was made had been rejected.
- 19.6 The Forum concurred with the views expressed and all expressed concern regarding the impact (not currently quantifiable) which might well arise.
- 19.7 The Chair, Councillor Duncan echoed concerns expressed in relation to potential costs, a figure of £4million had been mentioned in relation to Sussex alone and it was feared that figure could be higher. It was clear Royal Assent was going to happen and it was important that the council worked very closely with the Police to ensure that existing structures were embedded, this was in hand. Chief Superintendent Bartlett agreed confirming that rigorous arrangements were in place and that discussions were on-going.
- 19.8 Forum Members commented that it did not appear that the proposals had been welcomed anywhere, not least because they seemed rigid and provided little room for manoeuvre.
- 19.9 Councillor .MacCafferty considered that it was important to engage with other countrywide organisations and to continue as appropriate and to lobby government to underline the special nature of the City.
- 19.10 The Commissioner for Community Safety stated that she would be attending a Local Government Association meeting in the near future with Sergeant Castleton and would put the Forum's views across there. A meeting was also scheduled with representatives from the Home Office and options including the possibility of making some special dispensations for the city could be discussed.
- 19.11 Councillor Randall, the Leader of the Council was present and concurred with all that had been said and Forum Members requested that he carry forward their views when this issue as discussed at Cabinet and elsewhere.
- 19.12 Chief Superintendent Bartlett stated that it was intended that the Police would continue to have the same visibility in the city and to work pro-actively with other agencies.
- 19.13 **RESOLVED** – (1) That the Community Safety Forum notes that the Environment and Community Safety Forum is to consider a report on the implications for governance and accountability of the introduction of a Police and Crime Commissioner, at its meeting scheduled to take place on 31 October. The Forum also notes that the matter will then be referred to Cabinet for a fuller discussion.

(2) The Community Safety Forum also requests that the Environment and Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet consider and take notice of the views expressed by the Forum at their meeting today.

20. LOCAL ISSUES: STANDING ITEM

(a) Intelligent Commissioning Pilot on Alcohol

- 20.1 The Commissioner for Community Safety gave a presentation detailing the initiatives which had arisen as a result of the Intelligent Commissioning pilot on alcohol which had the longer term aim of seeking to reduce alcohol related harm in the City.
- 20.2 Dr. Scanlon the Director of Public Health was present and gave a presentation detailing his perspective on this issue and alluded to the cross cutting/inter agency approach which had been and would continue to be adopted in tackling the many issues including domestic violence which arose as a result of alcohol abuse. Whilst it should not be lost sight of that alcohol was an enjoyable social activity which contributed to a vibrant local economy the effects of alcohol misuse placed a heavy burden on a range of local services. It was a national problem but there were particular issues in relation to it in the city as when misused it could give rise to physical and mental health issues, result in accidents, risk of harm to children and young people and crime and disorder. The estimated to cost to city services was £106.4 million per year.
- 20.3
- 20.4 The Commissioner for Community Safety explained that lots of creative action had been taken over the years e.g., Cumulative Impact Assessments Test and Proxy Purchasing toperations, Designated Public Places orders, Safe Space, the Brief Interventions Service, the RUOK service for young people, Police Initiatives such as Operations Marble and Park, and the Street Pastors and Taxi Marshalling schemes. Notwithstanding all of these initiatives

20.-- **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

(b) Community Resolution

20.--

20.-- **RESOLVED** - That the position be noted.

21. SUSSEX POLICE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2011

21.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

22. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2011

22.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

23. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

23.1 It was noted that future meetings of the Forum were scheduled to be held on the following dates from 4.00pm in the Council Chamber at Hove Town Hall:

- Monday 12 December 2011; and
- Monday 12 March 2012

The meeting concluded at 6.20pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of