

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM

4.00pm 25 FEBRUARY 2013

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor; Morgan (Opposition Spokesperson), Bowden, Mac Cafferty, Meadows, Shanks, Simson, Marsh, Cox, Cobb and Hawtree

In Attendance: Councillor Gilbey and Pissaridou

Sussex Police: Ch/Spt Graham Bartlett, Spt Whitton

Statutory Services: John Loveridge (East Sussex Fire & Rescue) and Gary Ambidge (East Sussex Fire & Rescue)

Communities of Interest: Clare Tikly, Colin Tribe, Dave Murtagh, Paul reading, John McPhillips, Derek Peacock, Francis Tonks, Dr Sobhi Yagoub, Emma Lacey (Safety Net), Larissa Steer (Safety Net), Paul Price, Simon Burgess

Officers: Linda Beanlands (Commissioner, Community Safety), Simon Court (Senior Solicitor), Nahida Shaikh (Community Safety Manager - Cohesion), Matt Easteal (Senior Sustainable Communities Officer), Simon Bannister (Environmental Improvement Officer), James Rowland (Violence Against Women & Girls, Commissioner), Ross Keatley (Democratic Services and Nathan Birch (Democratic Services)

PART ONE

35. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

- 35.1 Councillor Meadows proposed Councillor Morgan and this was seconded by Councillor Marsh. Councillor Bowden proposed Councillor Mac Cafferty and this was seconded by Councillor Shanks. A recorded vote was then taken and Councillors: Simson, Cox, Cobb, Mac Cafferty, Shanks, Bowden and Hawtree voted that Councillor Mac Cafferty be appointed as Chair, and Councillors: Meadows, Marsh and Morgan voted that Councillor Morgan be appointed Chair for the meeting.

RESOLVED – That Councillor Mac Cafferty be appointed Chair for the meeting.

36. PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**36a Declaration of Substitutes**

36.1 Cllr Marsh was present in substitution for Cllr Carden; Cllr Cox was present in substitution for Cllr Barnett; Cllr Cobb was present in substitution for Cllr Pidgeon and Cllr Hawtree was present in substitution for Cllr J Kitcat.

36b Declarations of Interest

36.2 There were none.

36c Exclusion of the Press and Public

36.3 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).

RESOLVED - That the press and public are not excluded from the meeting.

37. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

37.1 It was noted that Mr Peacock's name had been omitted from the minutes.

37.2 **RESOLVED** – That, with the above addition, the minutes of the Community Safety Forum meeting held on 10 December 2013 be agreed and signed as a correct record.

38. CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

38.1 The Chair welcomed Chief Spt. Graham Bartlett to his final Community Safety Forum meeting and thanked him for all his work. The Chair also welcomed Spt. Steve Whitton to his new role, covering as District Commander.

38.2 The Chair advised that the presenters had requested to move item 43C, Improving the Physical Environment, to the beginning of the particular section of the agenda and he agreed to this.

39. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

39.1 There were none.

40. MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

40.1 There was none.

41. COMMUNITY SAFETY ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

41.1 There were none.

42. NATIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVES WHICH IMPACT LOCALLY: STANDING ITEM

42.1 There were none.

43. LOCAL ISSUES: STANDING ITEM**43C IMPROVING THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

43.1 A presentation was made by Matt Easteal (Sustainable Communities Officer) and Simon Bannister (Environment Improvement Officer) around work done to improve the physical environment in Turner Park and potential implications across the city. The work done had been more widely recognised and they had recently been invited to speak at a conference in Sweden.

43.2 The theory of the crime triangle – Victim-Offender-Place – was brought to the forums attention and the way place is an important factor and the City Councils role as a place manager in guiding and controlling potential offenders.

43.3 The forum received a video presentation outlining the changes made to the physical environment of Turner Park. It was explained how many park areas are seen as an asset to a community, but Turner Park was not. The park had been designated as a “tolerated graffiti area” but this had left the park under used, unwelcoming and led to further graffiti in other areas outside the park. Almost every surface in the park had some form of graffiti or tagging.

43.4 The decision had been taken to bring Turner Park back into use by the wider community. The area was cleared of graffiti and the park was no longer a designated area for this activity. A friends of the park group was also set up to encourage community participation. The Turner Tower was cleaned and restored as a focal point, art work was placed in the park and a ball court was established. The involvement of local people, including The Friends and the Local Area Team, was vital in achieving the changes. This work was all done despite an unsuccessful Lottery Fund bid. There was now real local ownership of the park and new items within the park such as artworks are being respected in a way they were not before.

43.5 The presentation went on to look at the wider physical environment across the City. The Environment Improvement team had carried out a survey looking at various areas of the City, scoring each area on the items street scene, vehicles, people and buildings. On this scoring system London Road, Lewes Road, St Nicholas and Haddington had received the highest negative scores.

43.6 Various work had been done in some of areas surveyed. This included; a gating order for Brunswick Row; improvements to alleys and encouragement to increase their use; old telephone boxes removed; cable tie safari; the set up of the London Road LAT. In

general a holistic approach had been taken, involving multi agencies and the wider community.

- 43.7 Cllr Morgan noted that the first gating orders had been used successfully in the Whitehawk area and welcomed the initiative to remove telephone boxes, something he would contact the Environment Improvement team about directly. In response to a question about the budget allocated for improvements Cllr Morgan was advised that as a non direct service team there is no specific fund, but the team provide advise and support to other departments to improve the physical environment as part of their own programmes.
- 43.8 Cllr Marsh asked what further information was available and how this was disseminated. The officers advised that further information is available on the Safe in the City web pages and the LAT's were being supported to promote the work via Wordpress sites that are being set up with support from the team.
- 43.9 Cllr Bowden welcomed the report and highlighted Turner Park as great achievement with little direct investment in cash terms, but a lot of community help and support. He further suggested that the Community Payback scheme was an excellent resource in helping achieve future projects, but also giving ownership of projects to those participating in the Payback.
- 43.10 Mr Peacock asked about the area opposite Dukes Mound, specifically the run down nature of the area and the potential for it being regarded as unsafe. In response he was advised that the area was the subject of regular cleaning operations by City Clean and volunteers from the Terence Higgins Trust (THT). The Police also added that their work was aimed at community safety and they too worked closely with the THT in this respect.
- 43.11 Cllr Bowden raised a further point around street lighting being a vital part of maintaining an area as safe. Cllr Pissaridou advised the officers about a path in her ward, between Ingram Crescent East and Bolsover Road, which was currently not lit. She was concerned that this would quickly become an unusable space at night if this was not resolved. In response the Chair agreed that this would be looked at as quickly as possible.

43A CRIME TRENDS AND PERFORMANCE FIGURES

- 43.12 The Commissioner for Community Safety presented the report describing recent activities and progress relating to priority areas in the Brighton & Hove Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy 2011-14; statistical updates relating the first five months of 2012/13 – April to December 2012 were also highlighted. Graphs showing monthly crime data from April 2008 to January 2013 were provided which set recent data in the context of both longer term trends and seasonal crime cycles. A slight upward trend in total crimes recorded was noted, but that this was again slowing.
- 43.13 C/Spt. Bartlett responded on behalf of the Police, stating that the increase in recorded crimes has been driven by increased theft, mainly from the person. Theft of mobile phones in the nigh time economy was a cause for concern, but this was now on a downward trend after recent operations. The last year had seen a significant number of

burglaries, some 300+ at approximately 40 per week, but again this was now on a downward trend with just 13 reported last week.

- 43.14 A member of the Domestic Violence (DV) Team commented that the Police were concerned with the 34% of DV cases that did not end with a successful conviction. There was currently a three month plan to review these cases in conjunction with the Crown Prosecution Service and look at ways of reducing the number of retractions in DV cases. Factors under review included the levels remand in DV cases and earlier contact from DV advisors.
- 43.15 Cllr Bowden believed that the levels of LGBT related DV victims was significantly underreported and wondered if this was due to lack of support structure. In light of the recent murder in Hove, Cllr Bowden also again raised the issue of attacks on the homeless being recorded as hate crimes and asked if there may be better ways of recording such incidents. C/Spt. Bartlett commented that the Police Street Community Team were passionate about increasing the levels of reporting from the homeless. Whether or not these incidents were labelled as a hate crime did not diminish the level of seriousness which this dedicated team pursued each case. A major aim was to improve confidence within the homeless community to defend themselves from attack and report any crimes as they occurred. The Commissioner for Community Safety advised that the Council had several DV advisors in post, including a trained LGBT specialist and there was also a specific working group on this issue.
- 43.17 From the floor it was suggested that in DV cases the sentencing was not always appropriate and proposed that the forum could invite a judiciary speaker to help inform the matter. The Chair **agreed** that this was a good idea and that a suitable speaker be invited to the next meeting. The Police added that they also had an advisor at court to help promote more standard and appropriate sentencing.
- 43.18 Cllr Hawtree enquired if the high level of bicycle thefts in Brighton and Hove was driven by organised gangs or one off crimes. He also asked what items were being targeted in burglaries and if there was a seasonal pattern to the drug related deaths in the city. In response Spt. Whitton stated that the bicycle thefts were a mixture of individual and gang organised thefts. Burglaries were mainly of the high value, easily portable items such as laptops. With regard to the drug related deaths, unfortunately the Police do not have any specific figures.
- 43.19 Cllr Simson enquired if the Commissioner on Violence against Women & Girls would move the fight against DV forward. Cllr Simson also enquired if there had been an increase in drink spiking incidents in relation to sexual offences. In response the Commissioner for Community Safety believed that the a wide ranging approach, covering a variety of issue in this area including working with perpetrators would have a positive effect. C/Spt. Bartlett commented that the Police did not have any specific evidence of an increase in spiking of drinks, but it remained a factor in some cases.
- 43.20 Cllr Shanks highlighted the issue of children being caught up DV incidents and asked if the policy was joined up with support ion Children's Services. The Commissioner for Community Safety responded that she also sat on the Children's Safeguarding Board. The place of any child(ren) in all DV cases remained equally important in all agencies and partners. Gail Gray added that there is a RISE worker seconded to the Children's

Team and that from April 2013 the definition of DV will relate to 16 years of age and older.

- 43.21 Mr Peacock asked about any seasonal patterns to reported crimes and if the Police had specific seasonal operations. C/Spt. Bartlett responded that Operation Columbus was targeting race hate crimes and that there were ongoing LGBT crime operations. In the main there are few standing operations, but operations are run as required. He explained that to help guide the operational decision making the Police had other data around what they described as bands of tolerance. This meant that if the levels of specific crime moved above certain levels within a local area, neighbourhood or divisionally then additional operations may be required. C/Spt. Bartlett believed the forum may be interested in seeing this information, but would leave that for his successor.
- 43.22 Dr Yagoub enquired about sentencing with regard to hate crimes and if a future report to the forum would be possible. He also asked how the Police had reduced the burglaries so dramatically. The Commissioner for Community Safety **agreed** to look at such a report for a future meeting. C/Spt. Bartlett responded that the reduction in burglaries had been achieved with increased arrest levels. He also advised that within Brighton & Hove the Police have not seen an increase in gold thefts from the Asian community as has been seen in Crawley.
- 43.23 Cllr Hawtree asked if the Police monitored classified ads and online sales for stolen property. C/Spt. Bartlett stated that all outlets are monitored, but that in the main thieves looked to convert their stolen goods to cash as quickly as possible. A major area of work was monitoring future trends, identifying the future must have items as this would allow the Police to profile type and location of future offenders.
- 43.24 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

43B SERVICE OFFER: ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND HATE CRIME

Managing Public Demonstrations

- 43.25 Spt. Whitton made a verbal presentation on the March for England demonstration/counter demonstration to be held on 21 April 2013. This would be a significant challenge for the city and the Police, but every effort was being made to minimise any issues, including the risk to life. There was a potential for disorder, but it was important from the Police's point of view to work with the whole community. Planning was still ongoing, but the main aim was to mitigate the potential for disorder.
- 43.26 Cllr Bowden raised the issue of demonstrators arriving by train and drinking in licensed premises around the station. He also highlighted the use of outside officers who did not know the city, being unable to direct the public away from the main areas of demonstration and the subsequent being caught up in the previously used kettling tactic. Spt. Whitton hoped there would be no surprises on the day, but the Police would still consider containment in the interest of public safety. Out of area officers would still be

used, but it was hoped there would be better communication to avoid such incidents as described. As always the Police would work closely with the licensees around the issue of drinking on the day.

- 43.27 Mr Tonks, representing the Older People's Council, suggested that the march caused major disruption in the City, stopping people from going about their day to day business, affecting trade and even bringing fear to some people. He believed that on these grounds alone the march should be banned. In response Spt. Whitton explained that only the Home Secretary can ban demonstration, when requested by the Local Authority and on the advice of the Police. The ban would normally only be requested if there were a serious threat to public order. The problem with banning a legal demonstration is that an illegal one may still take place, but without the planning or resources in place to deal with any issues.
- 43.28 Dr Yagoub, of the Racial Harassment Forum, questioned if a demonstration which included calls to remove British Citizens from the United Kingdom could be seen as an incitement and therefore illegal. He added that the seriousness of the emotional impact on local residents should not be underestimated. Spt. Whitton stated that the March for England was publicised as celebration of St Georges Day specifically. The Chair suggested that the Racial Harassment Forum and the Police should meet in the run up to the demonstration to discuss any concerns.
- 43.29 Mr Peacock pointed out that Brighton and Hove had the highest bill for Policing demonstrations outside of London. He suggested that there should be additional funds made available from the Police and Crime Commissioner for these costs. The Chair **agreed** to contact the PCC and make such a request.
- 43.30 Cllr Morgan believed that one person's right to demonstrate reduced the others rights to go about their normal life. Cllr Cox believed that the Brighton and Hove should no longer be seen as a city of protest. In the face of rising costs, loss of business and the mass disruption the price of all demonstrations was too high. Cllr Cox also questioned what powers there were to levy a cost against those demonstrating. Cllr Bowden raised the issue of the PCC freezing their budget and the additional costs incurred. Cllr Hawtree wondered at the level of local people taking part in the march. In response to these points Spt. Whitton commented that the level of local participation was significant He added that unlike sports clubs, who had a specific legal duty to pay for their policing, there was no obligation to pay on the organisers of a march or demonstration.

43D SAFETY NET: PRIORITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- 43.31 Larissa Steer and Emma Lacey, of the child safety charity Safety Net, made their presentation to the forum. The presentation included slides on;
- What is Safety Net
 - Listening to children & young people
 - Consulting children
 - What children say
 - Making a difference
 - The next step

- 43.32 Ms Steer and Ms Lacey explained that Safety Net offered family support; a home safety scheme; child protection training; Safety Squads - allowing young people to have a meaningful say around their safety concerns; various workshops, including art, filmmaking and cooking to help encourage participation.
- 43.33 Cllr Hawtree welcomed the use of cooking as a way of encouraging community cohesion. Cllr Marsh welcomed the cookery workshops in both Bevendean and Whitehawk as examples of a positive difference being made. Ms Lacey explained that while not a specific safety issue, cooking workshops allowed children and families to work together in a fun way that also had educational benefits.
- 43.34 Cllr Shanks thanked safety Net for all their work. She believed it was important to hear the young person's voice to help move issues forward. MS Lacey explained that their contact with young people helped educate and hopefully alleviate any future hate crimes.
- 43.35 The Chair **agreed** that a member of the Youth Council be invited to future forum meetings. Cllr Gilbey asked if Safety Net could speak to the Portslade Youth Forum and this was agreed.

43C DRUG COMMISSION CONSULTATION

- 43.36 The Community Safety Commissioner circulated the interim report of the Independent Drugs Commission for Brighton and Hove. There would be period of consultation than the Commission would meet on 6 March 2013 to issue its final report. This would then be passed to the safe in the City Partnership Board. She asked if forum members could please complete a consultation form, either on line or the form supplied with the report. She also advised that once the final report has been published it would also be seen by the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the various commissioning groups to help inform policy in a practical way.
- 43.37 Cllr Simson noted that the Local Area Teams had also taken the drugs issue onboard and would welcome the report.

- 43.38 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

43F PARTY HOUSES

- 43.39 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the report be noted.

44. SUSSEX POLICE & CRIME PANEL: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 NOVEMBER 2012

- 44.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

45. EAST SUSSEX FIRE AUTHORITY: MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2012

- 45.1 **RESOLVED** – That the contents of the minutes be noted.

46. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

46.1 **RESOLVED** to note the dates of future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 6.28pm

Signed

Chairman

Dated this

day of

