

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

2 JUNE 2014 - 2.30PM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs J French(Chairman), Councillor G Swan(Vice-Chairman), Councillor D Broker, Councillor Mrs V M Bucknor, Councillor S Clark, Councillor J R Farmer, Councillor D Hodgson, Councillor R Skoulding.

APOLOGIES: Councillor D Stebbing

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Robin Sissons - Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Councillors Clark, Mrs Mayor, Mayor, Miscandlon, Murphy, Oliver, Sutton and Yeulett

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Anna Goodall, Dan Horn, Aaron Locks, Alan Pain, Jane Webb.

OSC1/14 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Sam Clark on her recent election to Fenland District Council and welcomed new Members Councillors Sam Clark, Farmer and Skoulding to the Panel.

The Chairman informed Members that Agenda Item 6 - Lease of New Road Allotments, Whittlesey would be taken before Agenda Item 5 - Fenland Community Safety Partnership Report.

The minutes of the meeting of 7 April 2014 were confirmed and signed with the following amendments noted.

- OSC35/13 Wisbech 2020 Vision Update, points 13 and 19 to read Councillor Hodgson and not Councillor Stebbing.

Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked when the update regarding Wisbech 2020 Vision would be as this had been scheduled for 2 May 2014, but due to Purdah, could not take place. Alan Pain explained that a firm date was yet to be set but this would be circulated as soon as possible.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OSC2/14 FENLAND COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Members considered the Fenland Community Safety Partnership Report presented by Councillor Oliver.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Mrs French stated that the parish breakdown of crime figures were confusing as the totals do not add up; are they wrong? Robin Sissons stated these were confusing and were broken down per 1,000 population; he could not explain them but stated a level of trust and confidence was needed. Councillor Oliver explained that these figures do not represent all crimes and therefore may differ. Councillor Mrs French stated there was a difference in figures of over 300; should these not be accurate?
2. Councillor Farmer asked if there was a reason that Police recorded Shoplifting has made a marked reduction in all areas except March where it has risen. Robin Sissons stated that the Police had worked very hard in Wisbech, with the supermarkets, as part of the area had

suffered badly from shoplifting; with the Police even taking one supermarket to a Licensing Hearing where they have eventually changed their culture and this has had a massive effect on the figures. The Police had attempted to repeat this success in March but in March there is no one particular shop that is being targeted, there are a range of shops; this is often caused by just one or two individuals. The key for the Police is how quickly they react as these individuals are hardly ever local people, they come from other cities to target the area and then leave again. Both ShopWatch and SIRCS are invaluable in trying to locate the individuals and within twelve months these figures should reduce;

3. Why are the Police recorded dwelling burglary figures down, except in Whittlesey? Robin Sissons explained that Peterborough had a big problem with dwelling burglaries of which they targeted hard and these individuals have now gone elsewhere, just over the border into Whittlesey and again it is how quick the Police can react to this;
4. Councillor Farmer asked why Police recorded Theft from a Vehicle has increased in March. Robin Sissons stated this was seasonal and frequently goes up and down;
5. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated the huge reductions in crime were very welcomed but why were Wisbech figures so much higher than March figures, what analysis were the Police taking forward? Robin Sissons explained that Wisbech was the busiest town where most of the Police resources were placed. Crime figures have been historically high but this is reducing at a good rate. There are many reasons why the figures are higher in Wisbech - social issues, migration, Operation Pheasant etc. and these all build up; the Police are aware of these and are working to reduce the figures;
6. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated she knew the reasons and that these all screamed that more resources are needed. Was there a need to persuade operational officers that greater resource is needed? Robin Sissons explained that Wisbech received supplements from various agencies (National Crime Agency, Organised Crime Group), Operational Pheasant has been resourced. He stated he was confident that there was enough resources where needed;
7. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated she was concerned about the under-reporting to the police being as high as 87% for 10-15 year olds in Fenland; what action is being taken to combat this and were the Police doing anything regarding understanding the picture of children's experiences of crime and anti-social behaviour, analysis of schools data? Robin Sissons explained that regarding the under-reporting, Terry McCormack was working hard in local schools to gain the confidence of these young people. The Police were also trying to get head teachers on board with the idea that the information will be cascaded down to classroom teachers who would then hear the children talking about living in houses of multiple occupancy etc; this would be another way for the Police to collect intelligence and crime, also talking to GPs and other agencies;
8. Councillor Mrs French stated that last month Members had asked for information regarding Operation Endeavour of which a written report was received a week ago, have officers discussed this with the Police? Robin Sissons confirmed he had spoken to officers but as the case does not go to court until October there is a need to be careful about what is discussed;
9. Councillor Farmer commented that the series of recommendations made in the report (page 21 of 152) were "opaque and unclear". Robin Sissons explained the report is compiled by a data analysis at Cambridgeshire County Council and it is then up to the Community Safety Partnership to adopt them and to discuss the necessary actions needed;
10. Councillor Broker asked for clarification of the figures relating to young people regarding the under-reporting of crime and experiencing forms of domestic violence. Robin Sissons explained the issues is regarding children not coming forward to the Police and that statistics regarding domestic violence do show that it is under-reported, so much so that the Police are pleased to see when reporting increases;
11. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if the Police still completed a 32 page risk assessment document when first called out to domestic violence incidents to which Robin Sissons stated that Police officers first on the scene, carry out a risk assessment of the situation and mark it accordingly. Those situations that are marked as basic are asked the minimum of

questions and are then closed, if it is decided that the situation is high risk then the document is completed and sent to the Central Domestic Violence Unit and if it is a medium risk then officers guide those completing the forms;

12. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how the Unit operates where there is a particularly bad incident. Robin Sissons explained that all high risk incidents are sent to the Unit where there are dedicated officers who are specialised in domestic violence. The unit takes on and manages the case, linking in with other agencies to develop a long term plan. Medium risk incidents will be taken on by the Unit if they are able to, if not they will be sent back to District to deal with;
13. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how the data is captured to enable other agencies have access to the information. Robin Sissons explained that the data is sent to MARU (Multi-Agency Referral Unit) which contains other agencies, if a high risk case is received then a conference will be called that morning where all the agencies are represented and bring in their own data;
14. Councillor Farmer stated he was surprised that "the proportion of residents who perceive anti-social behaviour to be a fairly or very big problem" was only 0.7% and should this not read 70%? Robin Sissons explained this was because the majority of people are not affected by anti-social behaviour;
15. Councillor Farmer asked if recording "anti-social behaviour within 100 metres of a recreational ground" has a potential to distort figures. Robin Sissons explained that some incidents may not start in that location but are the catalyst to it;
16. Councillor Farmer asked if the police felt they should give guidance as to what is an issue and what is not an issue. Robin Sissons explained this was basically common sense and teachers should be able to make that judgement. The schools in Fenland are very good at sorting and dealing with problems "in-house" and if there is a problem and the teachers have taken the time to call the police then there must be something of some importance;
17. Councillor Farmer stated that although it was documented that under-reporting is an issue, surely full reporting would not be good either, as some would be trivial. Robin Sissons stated that if a child reports an incident, then it is not trivial to the child;
18. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that Cabinet had agreed in January to help fund Youth Services projects but that no information regarding this had been forthcoming to which Councillor Mrs French stated that the information would be sought;
19. Councillor Farmer asked if the risk factors for becoming an offender are part of the cause of the problem or just highlighted it. Robin Sissons stated it was common sense, if a child witnesses domestic abuse then they are more likely to go towards crime and if a child is not exposed to those factors then they are less likely to turn to crime;
20. Councillor Mrs French stated that it was very disturbing to see that 8 victims were in the 0-3 age group to which Robin Sissons stated it was very disturbing and traumatic, but unfortunately does happen;
21. Councillor Farmer commented that recorded crime was divided by wards but that March town centre was split between two wards as opposed to the central ward of Medworth in Wisbech, does this not undersell the level of crime activity in March or oversell the levels in Wisbech? Robin Sissons stated that Medworth contained the main focus of Wisbech town due to the amount of pubs and visitors. He explained these figures are used as a guide and that the Community Safety Partnership were not dictated by them; there are other factors also taken into consideration, surveys, intelligence etc. Councillor Farmer stated his concern was as to whether the Police were aware of the statistics to which Robin Sissons explained the maps were populated first using dots and the wards added afterwards;
22. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked if the introduction of the Cumulative Impact Zone had made a difference on the town or had that not been sufficient time to measure any results. Robin Sissons stated this was only one of many tools that the police use and that there had not been any more licensed premises opened although there had been a couple of applications but it was too soon to measure its impact. Wisbech is still a hot spot for the Police and there are other legislations in the pipeline that will also have an impact on anti-social behaviour which result in not knowing that just one piece of work has had an impact;

23. Councillor Farmer asked if the couple of applications were going to start up in business. Robin Sissons explained that most companies visit a licensing solicitor before setting up. The Cumulative Impact Zone does not stop applications, it emphasises on them that they must not have an additional impact on anti-social behaviour; there have been two or three people approach the police station but have not applied. He emphasised that the police want to see premises in the town as this means more witnesses to any incidents that may take place, as a quiet town invites criminals;
24. Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how the Police were endeavouring to work with the Lithuanian community. Robin Sissons explained that Operation Endeavour had a massive impact as the community could see the police were rescuing people. The BBC showed footage of the police knocking down doors which was all positive action and showed that the police were supporting the community. After that operation, the Lithuanian Community do report incidents; there is a Lithuanian PCSO who has his own facebook page in Lithuanian. Fenland District Council also has bilingual employees in the one stop shops and the Rosmini Centre is available. Trust and confidence from the community has to be earned and over time the community will become integrated within society, there is no easy solution;
25. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the Rosmini Centre regularly travel to London when an Eastern European has had their passport taken away or lost, do the police engage with them. Robin Sissons explained that the Rosmini Centre will not support the individuals concerned until they have reported it to the police;
26. Councillor Mrs French asked for clarification regarding the need for A&E information to focus on areas which have seen an increase, such as March. Robin Sissons explained the police wanted A&E data to know where victims were picked up from, often those that are assaulted, have no idea where the incident took place. The A&E departments record a large amount of data from patients and if the police can pinpoint locations etc then this will help with resourcing;
27. Councillor Swan asked how the police were dealing with and interacting with the PubWatch schemes and if SIRCS was now fully implemented. Aarron Locks explained that all PubWatches are attended by both Licensing and Police and that SIRCS was now up and running with all pubs connected (193 members);
28. Councillor Swan stated that Whittlesey has a very active PubWatch Scheme but when SIRCS was implemented they were very anti as they did not want those from outside the district to feel alienated. Aarron Locks explained that a lot of work was carried out with Whittlesey and other towns to explain the processes;
29. Councillor Swan asked if there was an issue in one of the villages, could a mobile CCTV camera be moved to cover the area. Aarron Locks explained that the cameras are redeployable cameras, not mobile ones and are therefore restricted in how mobile they are. The cameras have to work within an infrastructure already in place, at present, they are all working. To put cameras into the villages would mean more money was needed. Councillor Swan asked if these resources were available. Aarron Locks explained these cameras were not mobile, just redeployable and are mainly used to focus on town centres. Councillor Swan stated the one in March has been at the same premises to which Robin Sissons stated this was moved to another location last year. Aarron Locks explained the cameras were introduced in 2009 and relocated last in 2013 and that he would rather have them active in an area of need. Councillor Swan stated that the towns already have CCTV and therefore there was a perfect opportunity to place a mobile camera where there is known activity and the police are not present. Robin Sissons explained the mobile cameras have been used to solve problems in the park; lots of work had been carried out, taking seven months to come to fruition. If there were incidents happening elsewhere then the camera would be moved but there are technical problems making them not completely moveable. Councillor Mrs French stated with the technology now available the cameras should not need to be hardwired and that March town does have problems and benefits from the cameras. She suggested that a camera should be placed at Hostmoor Avenue for those that turn right. Aarron Locks states that the current location of the cameras are still serving key areas and needs and are not sat redundant;

30. Councillor Swan asked where in the report was the evidence to show where the money had been spent on CCTV. Aaron Locks explained that the report was compiled by data analysis at Cambridgeshire County Council and was built for the partnership. Councillor Oliver explained that all the CCTV information is sent to town councils but if Members wished to see this information, then it can be made available;
31. Councillor Swan commented that the breakdown of total crime shows a general decrease and this is compared to other similar areas. Councillor Oliver explained that the chart shows Fenland District Council in tenth place on the table, whereas previously placed at fifteenth. Councillor Swan asked if this information should be better reported and used as a positive piece of news to which Councillor Oliver stated that performance highlights are regularly included;
32. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated she would like to see a proper breakdown on how agreed funding is being used for Children and Young People and what projects were being undertaken. Aaron Locks explained these projects were still in their infancy and more information will be shared once the projects are up and running;
33. Councillor Farmer stated the maps showing hotspots for all police recorded anti-social behaviour with a youth related tag in April 13 to March 14 showed a problem in Kirkgate, Walsoken, was there really a problem in this area. Robin Sissons explained that it was probably caused by drinking and noise as there was a certain area where two or three groups of children have caused issues. Aaron Locks added that was noticed in October 2013 resulting in the Community Safety Partnership and other agencies putting an action plan into place which immediately reduced the problem;
34. Councillor Mrs French stated that March Town Centre had been highlighted in the action plan yet this information is not highlighted at March Town Council meetings. Robin Sissons explained that town council meetings are more detailed and held more regular than the Community Safety Partnership whereas this is a strategic document that covers a whole year; March is not a bad place to live and has only been highlighted when the figures increased and the other towns reduced;
35. Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that the reduction was quite incredible and the Partnership was to be congratulated on the work involved in achieving this.

OSC3/14 LEASE OF NEW ROAD ALLOTMENTS, WHITTLESEY

The Chairman proposed that the Lease of new Road Allotments, Whittlesey be deferred to the July meeting. Councillor Seaton explained that further information had recently been received from Whittlesey Town Council and Officers would need time to evaluate this therefore it would seem appropriate to defer the item until July to allow time for this evaluation to take place.

It was AGREED that the Lease of New Road Allotments, Whittlesey would be deferred until the July meeting.

OSC4/14 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2014/15 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Following discussions members agreed that:

- The Fenland Tourism Board Update to be deferred from the 2 June 2014 meeting to 1 September 2014 meeting;
- The Lease of New Road Allotments, Whittlesey to be deferred to 14 July 2014.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2014/15 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, subject to the above additions.