

Minutes of the meeting of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 10 January 2006.

Present:

Councillor	John Haynes (Chair)
"	John Wells (Vice Chair)
"	John Appleton
"	David Booth
"	Michael Doody
"	Bryan Levy
"	Barry Longden
"	Mike Perry
"	Anita Macaulay
"	Dave Shilton
"	Heather Timms

Also Present: Richard Hobbs, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety.
Mark Lynn, Crown Prosecution Service.

Officers:

William Brown, Strategic Director of Community Protection.
Victoria Cooke, Group Assistant, Performance and Development Directorate
Louise Denton, Group Assistant, Performance and Development Directorate
Jean Hardwick, Principal Committee Administrator, Performance and Development Directorate
Andrew Lawrence, Head of Community Support, Community Protection Directorate
Adrian Levett, Head of Trading Standards, Adult, Health and Community Services
Paul Littler, Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator, Community Protection Directorate
ACC Andy Parker, Police Authority
Jane Pollard, Assistant County Solicitor, Performance and Development Directorate
Julie Sullivan, Community Safety Manager, Community Protection Directorate
Gereint Stoneman, Corporate Review Team, Performance and Development Directorate

1. General

The Chair welcomed Mark Lynn, Chief Crown Prosecutor, who was attending the meeting as an observer.

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bernard Kirton.

(2) Members' Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Any discussions relating to Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships

All members declared personal interests as district and borough councillors.

(3) (a) Minutes of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 15 December 2005.

Resolved –

That the minutes of the Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting held on 15 December 2005 be approved and signed by the Chair.

(b) Matters Arising

None

2. Public Question Time

None.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy

Andrew Lawrence introduced the speakers for this item, ACC Andy Parker and Paul Littler, the County Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator. Mike Maguire, Positive About Young People, had also been scheduled to address the Committee but was unable to be present because of illness but would be present at the follow-up event on 8 February 2006.

Andrew Lawrence, referring to the Executive Summary of the Countywide Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy, explained that there were many approaches to tackling anti-social behaviour and the key to successful action was striking the right balance between prevention, support and enforcement. He highlighted that -

- Since the establishment of the Youth Offending Team in January 2004 offences committed by young people had fallen;
- The number of incidents of violent crime and criminal damage had increased but some of this increase could be attributed to better recording of incidents;

Andrew Lawrence suggested that, whilst total crime had fallen and youth crime had fallen even more dramatically, the question of why many communities did not feel safer could be an issue that Members addressed at the meeting on 8 February 2006. At this meeting Members could help identify what more could be done, and fill the gaps in the service, with regard to prevention, support and enforcement.

Members then commented as follows that –

- Their perception was that in some areas youth offending was not reducing and more serious crime was increasing;
- The Magistrates did not impose strong enough sentences and the CPS did not back up prosecutions. Stronger sentencing might act as a deterrent to re-offending;
- There was some problems encountered when trying to report minor crime (criminal damage) and for them to be recorded by the Police as a crime;
- The introduction of beat policemen had solved problems in some areas overnight;
- There had been an increase in youth nuisance incidents despite the presence of CCTV cameras.

ACC Andy Parker then outlined to Members the process and steps relating to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) case management and outlined the six-stage approach used, prior to the issue of an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO). He then gave a brief overview of the police powers relating to Dispersal Order.

Following the presentation Members commented as follows that –

- The issue of “non-judgemental” letters in particular areas had had a good result and had produced an 80% reduction in problems as had the use of Community Wardens;
- The “non-judgemental” letters would only have a positive impact when sent to parents who cared;
- There was a need to publicise and communicate to the public the measures that could be taken to reduce anti-social behaviour;
- More power should be given to community support officers and to publicise what was happening.
- The power enabling the Police to return young people to their homes had been taken away and, whilst dispersal orders worked, in some instances, they had displaced the problems elsewhere;
- In one area the PODS had caused problems because they encouraged the congregation of large numbers of young people;
- ASBCs did not work and ASBO should be issued sooner;

Paul Littler said he believed that the ODPM was looking at returning power to allow the Police to physically return young people to their homes when they were causing a nuisance.

Councillor Richard Hobbs suggested that “communication” between the Police and local authorities was missing from the six-stage approach.

Paul Littler then presented the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and highlighted that –

- His Co-ordinator post was funded by a contribution from each CDRP and the two year contract would soon terminate;
- Acceptable Behaviour Clinics (ABC) clinics would soon be piloted in the Nuneaton area and would be attended by representatives from a range of agencies and the perpetrators and their parents;
- It was hoped that the clinics would reduce the number of exclusions from school;
- Early indications in the south of the county was that ABCs were very successful;
- The results of the work with Community Wardens in Rugby when evaluated would be made available to Members;

In reply to Members' questions and comments Andrew Lawrence explained that –

- The Co-ordinator post was currently funded by a £5,000 contribution from each CDRP from £25,000 grant given to each CDRP, for two years only. A budget pressures bid had been made to continue this post;
- Each CDRP had a statutory responsibility to carry out its work and was encouraged to be consistent in its Membership;
- A representative from each CDRP would be invited to attend the event on 8 February 2006
- Research into the backgrounds of people who were the subject of ASBOs revealed that they had similar problems. PAYP had much work to do to in prevention and support to help with appropriate parenting to turn round these children.

Resolved –

- (1) one abstention, that Cabinet be asked to endorse the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy and action plan on behalf of the County Council;
- (2) that Members' comments and questions be used as the basis for the key lines of enquiry for the Anti-Social Behaviour event on 8 February 2006.

4. Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items Relevant to this Committee

(a) Provisional Items for Future Meetings

Members noted the table setting out provisional items for future meetings.

CFO William Brown suggested, as a future item for consideration - "To consider the arrangements in place to ensure the safety of older people who wish to live independently within the community."

A Member proposed "Neighbourhood Policing" as a further item for discussion. ACC Andy Parker commented that there was much happening on this topic and would be happy to report to Committee in March 2006.

The Committee agreed –

- (1) that all Members of the Council be invited to attend the extra meeting to be held at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, 8 February 2006 on Anti-Social Behaviour in Warwickshire;
- (2) that the following topics be included in the Committee's future work programme –
 - "To consider the arrangements in place to ensure the safety of older people who wish to live independently in the community" (to be scheduled for consideration later on in the year);
 - Neighbourhood policing- to be schedule for the 2nd May 2006 (report from ACC Andy Parker)

(b) Forward Plan – Items Relevant to this Committee

Members noted Forward Plan items relevant to the work of this Committee as follows -

Cabinet – 12 January 2006

A Policy of Selective Mobilising to Calls Instigated by Automatic Fire Alarm (AFA) Equipment.

Legislative Fire Safety Risk Based Inspection Programme

5. Any Other Items

There were no items of urgent business.

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Chair of the Committee

The Committee rose at 4:15 p.m.