



CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT PENALLTA HOUSE, YSTRAD MYNACH ON THURSDAY, 20TH MARCH 2014 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT:

Councillor H.W. David - Chair
Councillor Mrs J. Summers - Vice Chair

Councillors:

L. Binding, D.G. Carter, C.J. Cuss, Ms E. Forehead, J.E. Fussell, C. Hawker, Ms J.G. Jones, G. Kirby, A. Lewis, C.P. Mann, S. Morgan, D. Rees, R. Saralis.

Cabinet Member:

D.V. Poole (Community and Leisure Services).

Together with:

R. Hartshorn (Head of Public Protection), K. Peters (Community Safety Manager),
C. Forbes-Thompson (Scrutiny Research Officer), R. Barrett (Committee Services Officer)

Outside Bodies: S. Bosson (Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gwent), Superintendent M. Budden (Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J. Taylor, together with B. Bolt (Caerphilly Local Health Board), P. Jenkins (South Wales Fire and Rescue Service) and E. Richards (Wales Probation Trust).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received at the commencement or during the course of the meeting.

3. MINUTES – 12TH SEPTEMBER 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 12th September 2013 (minute nos. 1 - 9, on page nos. 1 - 4) be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

REPORTS OF OFFICERS

Consideration was given to the following reports.

4. YOUTH FORUM PRIORITY

Sophie Jones and Lewis Harding, representatives from CCBC's Youth Forum, presented an update to Members on the issues that were deemed important by the young people of Caerphilly, arising from the four main areas of Regeneration, Education for Life, Health Social Care and Wellbeing, and Living Environment.

A short film was shown to the Committee, compiled by the CCBC Junior Forum, and highlighted a number of specific issues considered important to children within the county borough. It was felt that more cycle routes needed to be introduced to make cycling safer throughout the county borough, and that spending should be prioritised for education and leisure facilities (such as skate parks, leisure centres, schools and libraries) as opposed to spending on urban renewal projects (such as statues and other public artwork). There were calls for an increase in alcohol awareness campaigns, and the Junior Forum also identified drug use and its impact on communities as an important issue.

With the aid of a slide presentation, Members were then updated on the priority issue for the CCBC Youth Forum. It was advised that four issues had been put to a public vote on the Youth Forum website, with the most popular issue thus identified as the priority issue. The list of issues for consideration included the improvement of walk and cycle ways in the county borough, the tackling of dog fouling, and the improvement of personal and social education (PSE) in secondary schools. The overall priority identified was for the area of Health, Social Care and Wellbeing, addressing the issue of 'Drugs, Alcohol and New Psychoactive Substances', which gained 48% of the vote.

Members were informed that the Youth Forum were currently producing three films, with each respective film concentrating on drugs, alcohol and new psychoactive substances, and focusing on current trends such as the Neknominate drinking game. The Youth Forum therefore requested the support and assistance of the Authority in showing these films and delivering related workshops in schools and youth projects across the county borough.

The Youth Forum representatives were applauded by the Committee for their detailed and insightful presentation, and a number of the issues raised were discussed by Members.

Members responded positively to the issues raised by the Youth Forum and a number of arrangements and offers of assistance were made in regards to promoting the priority issue across the county borough, including Members suggesting that the presentation slideshow be shown at a number of upcoming meetings. It was suggested that each of the issues identified by the Junior and Youth Forums be taken back to the relevant Scrutiny Committee for further discussion and action. Superintendent Budden offered his assistance with the workshops.

Officers confirmed that an online survey was currently being conducted in relation to the priority issue and that the results would be brought back to a future meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee. Members were also invited to the next meeting of the Youth Forum in June 2014.

In regards to the issue of spending on urban renewal projects, Members confirmed that such funding was provided via a specific pot of money for each scheme and could not be reallocated for other purposes, and advised the Youth Forum representatives that this would be a matter for the Welsh Assembly to address.

The Chair thanked Miss Jones and Mr Harding for their attendance at the meeting, and arranged for a formal written response to be provided to the Youth Forum, detailing how the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee would assist in taking forward the priority issue identified as 'Drugs, Alcohol and New Psychoactive Substances'.

5. SAFER CAERPHILLY AFTER DARK

Kath Peters, Community Safety Manager, provided Members with an update on the progress of the new Safer Caerphilly After Dark initiative.

Members were advised that the initiative was conceived as a response to tackling issues in the night-time economy in the Authority's two busiest town centres, Blackwood and Caerphilly. The scheme brings together members of Gwent Police, the Local Authority, door staff, bar persons, the Street Pastors, late night food outlets and taxi drivers and was launched on 2nd December 2013 by the Gwent Police and Crime Commissioner. The scheme specifically aims to reduce night-time economy related crime, such as violence, damage and hate crime, improve communication with night-time economy agencies and co-ordinate action, and make the two town centres a safer place to visit.

With the aid of a slide presentation, Members were shown images of the initiative launch, together with examples of Safer Caerphilly After Dark branding and promotional posters. These branded materials had been distributed to premises, street pastors and door staff in order to build recognition and awareness of the scheme, and an After Dark liveried vehicle is now in use by key Gwent Police staff at licenced premises visits.

While it was too early to judge the success of the initiative, Members were informed that there were some slight reductions in night-time economy offences over the Christmas period. The initiative will continue throughout 2014-15 and a full evaluation can be carried out after 12 months.

Superintendent Marc Budden of Gwent Police was then introduced to the Committee as the new Superintendent for the Caerphilly area, and he added his endorsement to the After Dark initiative. Along with the Community Safety Manager, he then took a number of questions from Members.

The process used to allocate police patrol teams to town centres outside of the After Dark initiative was queried, with Superintendent Budden confirming that all patrol teams in the area were prioritised and utilised accordingly. Members discussed and queried the role of community safety wardens and their impact on local communities, and the Superintendent confirmed that the joint working partnership currently in operation between wardens and police officers would continue. Members discussed the work of street pastors in the Authority and the Superintendent praised their contributions to the initiative.

Following discussion of the report, Members were pleased to learn of the progress of the Safer Caerphilly After Dark initiative to date and noted the contents of the report.

6. SAFER CAERPHILLY PERFORMANCE SCORECARD

Kath Peters, Community Safety Manager, and Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, presented the report to Members, the purpose of which was to detail the Safer Caerphilly Performance Scorecard.

Following the development of the 'Caerphilly Delivers' Single Integrated Plan, a number of priorities were identified, three of which are relevant to the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee. These strands are: 'Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and fear of becoming a victim of anti-social behaviour for residents', 'Reduce crime and the fear of crime for the residents of the county borough' and 'Reduce the harm caused to communities through substance misuse'.

The Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group has developed a Scorecard for the Safer Caerphilly outcome, which details all of the objectives under each priority that the Partnership will work towards to achieve the overall outcome.

At the last meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee, Members requested that the Scorecard be reported at each meeting as demonstrative of Partnership progress under the 'Caerphilly Delivers' Single Integrated Plan. The Scorecard has been further developed since the last meeting to align with the Ffynnon performance management system. Members were directed to Appendix 1 of the report, which outlined in detail the performance data against each of these priorities.

Of particular interest to Members was the data relating to the number of domestic abuse crimes and they queried how it was possible to assess domestic abuse levels within the Authority. It was confirmed that this was largely due to successful partnership working between agencies and increased confidence in communication between agencies. The Domestic Abuse Conference Call (DACC) process was explained as involving key partners able to influence the safety of victims

It was confirmed that the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit for Gwent Police had been disbanded and the investigative role devolved back to local investigating officers with a central Gwent Police Public Protection Unit concerned with safeguarding for victims. Members raised concerns regarding the weekend availability of the support for victims and the possibility of referrals not being actioned or shared with other agencies until the Monday morning. Members requested further information regarding this issue and details of the multi-agency processes involved in dealing with such occurrences of domestic violence.

In relation to the concerns regarding the weekend availability of anti-social behaviour diversionary services, Members also requested information regarding the commissioning of youth services, and were referred to the relevant Officers for this information.

Reference was made to the 2013 Household Survey, which was used in assessing the performance of several of the priorities, and Members commented on the performance data which detailed the public perception that the police and council are effectively dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour matters. Members queried whether this public perception varied between areas of the county borough and it was confirmed that this was a matter that could be looked into for future reference.

The Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the report.

7. REQUESTS FOR REPORTS TO BE INCLUDED ON THE NEXT AVAILABLE AGENDA

The following requests were received:-

- (i) Councillor L. Binding requested a report on domestic abuse and the multi-agency processes involved in dealing with such occurrences.
- (ii) Councillor C. Cuss requested a report on the Safer Caerphilly Community Safety Partnership and dealing with anti-social behaviour by Council tenants.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

The Committee noted the following items for information, full details of which were included within the Officers reports. There were no items brought forward for review.

- (1) Safer Caerphilly Delivery Group Minutes – 25th October 2013.

The meeting closed at 6.38 p.m.

Approved as a correct record and subject to any amendments or corrections agreed and recorded in the minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2014, they were signed by the Chair.

CHAIR