



Minutes of a meeting of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee held at  
the Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall  
on 23 July 2009

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Councillors M Todd (Chairman), S Day (Vice-Chairman), M Collins, M Fletcher, J R Fox and  
N Sandford

**OFFICERS PRESENT:**

Paulina Ford, Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer  
Julie Rivett, Neighbourhoods and Community Engagement Strategic Manager  
Christine Graham, Safer Peterborough Partnership Manager  
Emma Black Head of Legal Litigation  
Amy Brown, Solicitor

**ALSO PRESENT:**

DCI D Wass, Cambridgeshire Constabulary  
DCI G Goose, Cambridgeshire Constabulary

**1. Apologies for Absence**

An apology had been received from Cllr S Goldspink.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes**

**3.1 Community Development Scrutiny Panel held on 25 March 2009**

The minutes of the Community Development Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 25 March 2009  
were approved as an accurate record.

The Committee requested that a further update on the Homelessness Strategy 2008-2011  
be brought back to the committee at a future date. The Committee also requested an  
information update on the recent Peterborough Festival 2009.

**4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions**

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

**5. Change to items on the Agenda**

It was agreed that item 6 on the agenda Domestic Abuse be deferred until the next meeting  
in September as the officer due to present the report was unavailable.

## 6. Serious Acquisitive Crime

A presentation on Serious Acquisitive Crime was given to the Committee by two Detective Chief Inspectors from the Cambridgeshire Constabulary. They advised that Peterborough was currently on the national radar as having too much crime. There was a small Police Force in Peterborough which meant that there was a need to prioritise areas of work and pay particular attention to certain areas of crime. Dwelling burglaries were one of the areas being concentrated on at this time.

An overview of serious acquisitive crime was given and the following information was noted:

- Peterborough was currently performing 14th out of the 15 most similar Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
- Serious Acquisitive Crime in June 2009 was down 18.1% compared to June 2008
- Dwelling Burglary continued to be a problem with a rise of 39.6% on the previous month.
- Vehicle Crime (Theft from Motor Vehicle (TFMV)) decreased by 39.8% on the previous month.
- Within the Peterborough Unitary Authority area there had been a decrease from 436 crimes in April 2009 to 353 crimes in June 2009
- The peak had been in January 2009 with 562 crimes

Operation Alert had targeted the 60 most known prolific offenders. The aims and objectives for Operation Alert were:

- The Northern Base Command Unit (NBCU) was responding to the continued high levels of dwelling burglaries.
- Since January 2008 over 600 arrests had been made for burglary and other linked offences.
- Analytical work was being undertaken to identify who the top 60 burglars were from those arrests.
- All officers were targeting these offenders: the 5 reactive shifts each have 12 offenders to "manage"; Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) have been made aware of offenders living in their areas; with the Priority Crime Team (PCT) adding additional attention to the Top 10 offenders.
- An effective media campaign and community safety advice programme was in place.

The results so far from Operation Alert had been that:

- Burglaries to date had decreased by 25% (from 198 burglaries between 1 – 22 June 2009 to 149 burglaries between 1 – 22 July 2009).
- 26 of the Top 60 Offenders had been arrested for a variety of crimes.
- 8 of the 26 had been arrested for burglary and a further 4 arrested for linked offences.
- However a large number of those arrested had been bailed so targeted activity around them continued.
- NPTs had raised awareness of how insecure windows and doors were exploited by burglars.

Integrated Offender Management was a programme which drew all the initiatives together to identify the most known offenders. This programme was good and was working well.

Approximately a third of the people going into prison had at some point been in care. Also a percentage were pupils that had been excluded from school, a percentage had only attained level 1 educational skills, 60% were long term unemployed and 44% had a long term hard drug problem who on average spent £100 a day on drugs. There was a prolific offender programme in place which looked at what was necessary to make them change their behaviour. The programme was being expanded to the next level of offenders. The programme was about dealing with what caused them to offend for example if a child had

been brought up with no parental guidance and had also probably been abused they might choose to take drugs to make them feel better.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Why was it that prolific offenders who were caught often ended up back out on the street? The judicial system / courts had to offer the offender an option of a number of initiatives that they could take up. If they took up the offer of one of these initiatives e.g. a drug treatment programme then they would get a lesser sentence. This had been proved to reduce crime; however there were some cases that had not gone particularly well. If all the initiatives offered to offenders were shown not to have worked or the offender was not responding to them then they may ultimately go to prison. If there was a sentence of less than six months given then there were no long term initiatives put in place. The Integrated Offender Management programme targeted those people who got less than a six months sentence.
- Young people leaving school now seemed to have no purpose to their lives. Years ago young people went into apprenticeships but this now seems to be a national problem.
- It should be noted that the vast majority of children did not fall into crime. The education of children was important. Drugs education had changed through the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons and children were taught how to manage risks.
- Children grow up with different expectations than before. The move to neighbourhood management would assist with this.
- Can you give examples of where the Integrated Offender Management approach had been tried? Integrated Offender Management had been pioneered in six areas across the country. The Home Office were undertaking an evaluation of all the schemes and would report at the end of the year. They had proved to be successful and Bolton had run a very successful scheme on drug related crime.
- Was financial resourcing going to put a great strain on the police? There would come a point when funding had to be manoeuvred and there would have to be an adjustment of resources, however we were in a position to control this. A lot of work is undertaken to ensure man power distribution was allocated appropriately.
- Community policemen were constantly being diverted onto other things. Would this change if resources were moved? A commitment to neighbourhood management was definitely in place.
- How were you going to break the chain of siblings becoming criminals who were from families of prolific offenders? Work was currently being done to help these siblings.
- How was the Community Safety Partnership assisting the Police in preventing crime? We were working very closely with the Police and had a number of community safety officers. We employed a police officer as one of the community safety officers.
- How did the Community Safety Partnership assist in detecting crime? The Partnership did not actually detect crime; this was left to the police. The Partnership address other areas like providing intelligence.
- From a neighbourhood management perspective it was about helping to break the cycle of crime in neighbourhoods. For the first time it felt that we were all working together.
- It was no good doing police work if the neighbourhood was not managed well e.g. if it was dirty, had broken street lights and rubbish everywhere. This had got much better and the environment was being cleaned up in the areas where crime had been flourishing.
- Had Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) replaced PC's? PCSO's were an additional resource for us and had not replaced PC's.
- When did most burglaries occur? They mostly occurred at night time but the biggest problem was insecure homes throughout the day.
- What intelligence was used to see where and how the proceeds of crime were being used? The intelligence on handlers was growing and being used. PCSO's provide a lot of intelligence.
- A lot of burglary and robbery was targeted at high value goods such as sat nav's, mobile phones and plasma TV's. Could we get shops to use 'smart watermark' on all their

goods? During the 'weeks of action' partnership officers had offered to smart water people's property.

- We heard tonight about treating the criminal but how were we going to take a step back to look at prevention and not just the cure. How could we help you and work together? All of the prevention work was potentially catered for in the Integrated Offender Management Programme. The Council could support the programme and support initiatives like the child intervention programme during its early stages.

### **ACTION AGREED**

- (i) That any future presentation be given to the committee in advance of the meeting to ensure they have had time to consider the detail.
- (ii) That the committee be provided with further detailed statistical breakdown of facts and figures that were presented in the presentation given by the police officer on Serious Acquisitive Crime.
- (iii) That the performance of NI 16 – Serious acquisitive crime rate - is reported to the committee on a monthly basis. Information to be submitted to the Scrutiny Officer for circulation to the Committee members.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) That in six months time Police Officers report back to the committee with an update on Operation Alert to assess its effectiveness. The report should include:
  - Information on the objectives of Operation Alert, targets and performance.
  - Examples of success and if any improvements can be made.
- (ii) That in 12 months time Police Officers report back to the committee with an update on the Integrated Offender Management Programme to assess its effectiveness. The report should include:
  - Information on the objectives of the Integrated Offender Management Programme, targets and performance.
  - Examples of success and if any improvements can be made.
- (iii) That a detailed report be presented to the committee at its meeting in September on the initiatives that are being taken across the Safer Peterborough Partnership to prevent young people who are at risk of becoming young offenders.

The above recommendations are linked to NI17 – serious acquisitive crime rate, which is in the Local Area Agreement under the priority of creating strong and supportive communities.

## **7. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan and agreed that an update on the Cultural Trust be brought to the Committee at its September meeting.

## **8. Work Programme**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2009/2010 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee agreed to include the following items in the 2009/2010 work programme

That a report be brought to the Committee at its 19<sup>th</sup> November meeting on the Sustainable Communities Act. To include:

- Why Peterborough City Council have not signed up to it yet.
- What are the implications of the Act for Peterborough City Council?
- What is being done to encourage community groups to get involved?

The Committee also requested that the following Cabinet Members attend the November meeting to give an update on their portfolios.

- Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Community Development
- Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Culture
- Cabinet Member for Regional and Business Engagement

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

10 September 2009

CHAIRMAN  
7.00 - 8.55 pm