

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON
12 SEPTEMBER 2012**

Present: Councillors Peach (Chairman), Kreling, Nawaz, Johnson, Shabbir and Harrington

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|--------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Also Present: | Ansar Ali | Police Authority Representative |
| | Callum Hurley | Youth Council Representative |
| | Alex Hall | Youth Council Representative |
| Officers in Attendance: | Gary Goose | Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager |
| | DCI Melanie Dales | Cambridgeshire Constabulary |
| | Peter Gell | Regulatory Services Strategic Manager |
| | Donna Hall | Business Regulation Manager |
| | Peter Stonely | Principal Trading Standards Officer |
| | Samantha Olive | Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer |
| | David Marshall | Senior Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer, South |
| | Dania Castagliuolo | Governance Officer |
| | Paul Phillipson | Executive Director of Operations |

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Day, Forbes and JR Fox. Councillor Harrington attended as substitute for Councillor Fox and Councillor Shabbir attended as substitute for Councillor Forbes.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

Ansar Ali declared that he was a candidate in the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner election.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2012

The minutes of the Strong and Supportive Communities Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 25 July 2012 were approved as an accurate record.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider

5. Reducing Reoffending Through Behaviour Change

The report allowed the Committee to discharge its function as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 by scrutinising the approach taken by the Community Safety Partnership to reduce reoffending in the city.

On 1 April 2012 statutory changes to Community Safety Partnerships under the Policing and Crime Act 2009 came in to effect and added the Probation Services to the list of responsible authorities and provided a new duty to formulate and implement a strategy to reduce reoffending by adult and young offenders. It also amended section 17 of the Crime and

Disorder Act to add a duty for certain defined authorities to consider reducing reoffending in the exercise of all their duties. Defined authorities were as follows:

- Peterborough Unitary Authority
- Cambridgeshire Constabulary
- Cambridgeshire Fire Authority
- NHS Peterborough
- Cambridgeshire Police Authority
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Probation Trust

The following points were highlighted:

- 2011 saw significant success in reducing the numbers of victims of crime within the city. At the end of July 2012 the rolling twelve month average showed a reduction in crime of 13.1% representing over 1300 fewer victims of crime.
- The three year Safer Peterborough Partnership Plan (2011 – 2014) was clear that the Partnership would be committed to tackling the underlying causes of crime and offending but equally clear that those who continue to break the law would be targeted with the full weight of the criminal justice system
- The Partnership would continue to support statutory agencies in delivering their own core function but would co-ordinate and lead on the work where it felt it could provide the biggest impact, that of prevention.
- The Police alone could not be responsible for reducing crime and HM Prison and probation services alone could not reduce reoffending rates. A number of issues affected offending and reoffending. Offenders typically had multiple issues within their lifestyle that were drivers for their offending. It had been found that of those adult offenders in prison:
 - 33% had at some point been in care
 - 90% had at some point been excluded from school
 - 54% had an education level of an eleven year old
 - 50% were long-term unemployed
 - 40% had a hard drug issue of more than £100 per day
 - 70% had a closest friendship group with multi-convictions
 - 10% had a diagnosed mental illness
- Some of the issues would be long standing and required investment of time and resource to change behaviour arising from them. Changing such behaviour was not only a socially responsible course of action, it was also cost effective.
- A preventative approach would reduce this burden not only on the police, the fire service, the health service, the probation service and other criminal justice agencies but also upon all of our citizens who pay more for insurance, more for products and more in tax as a result of crime.
- True and Sustainable change comes from within and as such the partnership would continue to support the work of the Council in integrating its approach to neighbourhood management with the community safety agenda by the development of Community Action Plans for each of the seven neighbourhood areas of the city.
- The integration of public health within the local authority would also add an extra important dimension in helping to tackle the long term effects of crime, as well as playing its part in preventing the opportunity for offending behaviour to deteriorate, in particular this would include developing further links with mental health and learning disability professionals in order that the most vulnerable victims and offenders gained the support they needed.

The Committee were asked to scrutinise and endorse the approach taken by the Community Safety Partnership to reduce the number of victims of crime by reducing reoffending levels through behaviour change, suggesting improvements and alternative approaches were appropriate.

Comments and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried how many reoffenders suffered from mental conditions. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that national figures suggested that only 10 percent of reoffenders had diagnosed mental health conditions although this did not explain the full picture as daily dealings with antisocial behaviour and all crime types proved that reoffenders all had some form of challenging behaviour. Work was being carried out at present to deal with mental ill health amongst reoffenders. He suggested that it was probable that at least a third of reoffenders had some level of mental health issues.*
- Members queried how nuisance crimes were being dealt with as these types of crime could also be extremely costly to the government and the general public. *The Detective Chief Inspector advised the committee that nuisance crimes were a priority in Peterborough and the figures for these crimes were lower than last year although there had been an increase in criminal damage over the past four to six weeks this had been easy to resource with local Police Officers. It was difficult to specify a trend with nuisance crimes which made it difficult to catch the individuals who committed the crimes. The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed the committee that they were developing an approach to antisocial behaviour with dedicated antisocial behaviour officers who were now working at Bayard Place. They were keen to not have the broken window theory in any areas of Peterborough where that crime could make an area deteriorate almost over night. The Police wanted to know about these nuisance crimes as soon as they happened, that way they could be prevented. He wanted to encourage all Councillors to get the message out in their wards that incidents needed to be reported and photos could be taken of any damage.*
- Members asked if there were any measures in place to report achievements made by the Council or its partners regarding reducing crime levels within the city. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed members that eighteen months ago through the three year statutory plan, the target was to reduce crime by ten percent in three years and this was now being over achieved. Measures were reviewed regularly using a strict monitoring regime.*
- Members commented that they found it ironic that they would still issue alcohol licenses to businesses in areas known for antisocial behaviour and queried why no action was being taken on this matter as there didn't seem to be any regard for section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised the committee that they were aware of these issues but there were other laws in place regarding licensing premises that had to be considered.*
- Members also expressed their concern and annoyance that the Police had often highlighted that alcohol and licensed premises had been problems in certain areas but had not submitted any objections during licensing hearings. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that every case had to be treated on its own merits. The CanDo operation looked at premises and levels of crime and antisocial behaviour of which alcohol played a part. Each application would be consciously looked at and the reasons of the introduction of CanDo regarding alcohol.*
- Members asked if there were any other ways they could help with this project other than just reporting incidents. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager advised members that the biggest support from the committee would be to endorse the work that they were doing as the easy option would be to put offenders in prison. They were doing it the right way by spending money on prevention and they had*

managed to bring crime levels down by intervention, so endorsement would be the most valuable thing.

- Members queried whether the police had an early intervention system through schools to stop youths entering in to the criminal system. *The Safer and Stronger Peterborough Strategic Manager informed members that two years ago prevention of youths entering in to the criminal system was failing as reprimands and final warnings were not working. They had now moved to a number of ways of addressing young offenders and it was now a more common sense approach by looking at what caused certain behaviours and what the right intervention was for that behaviour. This had helped discover that for some offenders it was just a temporary blip and they were willing to change their behaviour. The Detective Chief Inspector advised the committee that there were Safer Schools Officers in place working with young people and also a family support project in place.*

RECOMMENDATION

- The Committee recommends that Cambridgeshire Constabulary take a proactive stance to make representations against new alcohol licensing applications where there are reasonable grounds relating to alcohol issues in the area.

6. Protecting The Public Through Regulatory Services

The Business Regulation Manager introduced the report to the Committee highlighting the important work carried out by Trading Standards and the Food Safety and Health and Safety Teams and outlining the proposed approach in supporting business to achieve compliance.

The Committee were asked to consider and review the achievements and future plans of the regulatory teams in fulfilling Peterborough City Council's statutory duties in public protection and public health legislation and to endorse the direction of travel outlined within the report.

The Principal Trading Standards Officer delivered a PowerPoint presentation to the group highlighting the work that the Trading Standards Team had completed in Peterborough so far this year:

- 395 items of fake clothing were seized at a festival
- Goods were seized from a factory and a home where merchandise with fake logos were being printed and sold, this business was making a turnover of £200,000
- Operators of fake Hajj Pilgrims tours were being investigated, Peterborough had recently been involved in an operation in Birmingham where local people had been caught out
- The team had worked with a farmer in Peterborough to improve standards as there had been welfare issues with his cattle
- The Trading Standards Team were working to get counterfeit tobacco off the market.

The Primary Authority Partnerships who were working with Peterborough Trading Standards to audit and agree action plans were as follows:

- AB AGRI
- British Sugar
- Indisit/Hotpoint
- Potter and Moore
- Thomas Cook
- Kiddicare
- Jam on the Hill

The current delivery of the service was enforcement driven primarily through prosecution and inspections and business support primarily through Primary Authority.

Trading Standards would use an intelligence-led approach to:

- Protect Peterborough consumers and legitimate businesses from unfair trading and the supply of unsafe goods
- Promote and support the activities of legitimate businesses in Peterborough
- Educate Peterborough consumers to make informed buying decisions

Enforcement would be to:

- Take appropriate action to disrupt the activities of rogue traders
- Combat doorstep crime
- Targeted regulatory campaigns
- Inspect high risk premises

Businesses would be supported by:

- Primary Authority
- Introducing a new scheme – Buy with confidence where businesses would be issued with a badge which would be a sign of trust for the general public to recognise that it was safe to buy from that particular trader.
- Links with business organisations
- Advice to local businesses – training would be offered to businesses to help them avoid making illegal sales

Consumers would be informed by:

- Media statements
- Targeted education to help combat doorstep crime
- Promotion of Buy with Confidence

Benefits would include:

- Best use of resources
- Interventions would be appropriate and based upon knowledge
- Reflect the national agenda of balanced regulation

Trading Standards asked members to consider the change of direction for trading standards and endorse their move towards a more targeted and preventative approach.

The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer delivered a presentation to the committee informing the committee that the primary objective was to protect public health. The most serious issues the team had dealt with was E.coli and legionella and the following information was reported to the committee:

LEGIONELLA

- Legionella was a lung infection caused by aerosols from contaminated water
- There had been a number of recent outbreaks in the UK
- Staffordshire had eighteen cases and one death which was linked to a hot tub
- Edinburgh had over one hundred cases and three deaths where no source was identified

- In recent years there had been only a small number of sporadic Legionella cases in the East of England
- Cases were fully investigated by tracing the patients movements fourteen days prior to the illness and any potential known sources were mapped against
- Peterborough was continuing to carry out checks on all cooling Towers to look at management systems and visits were being made to all known sources of spa pools. Officers were now on the lookout for any sources of aerosols during routine work.

E.Coli 0157

- E.Coli 0157 lived in the gut of animals and was highly infectious
- Only a few organisms could cause serious illness
- It could be fatal and leave people with kidney or brain damage
- Children and elderly people were most vulnerable
- There was a Scottish outbreak of E.Coli 0157 in 1996 which caused 18 deaths. In total there were 496 cases. The source was cooked meat from a butchers
- There was a Welsh outbreak in 2005 which caused the death of a five year old boy. In total there were 157 cases. This was caused by cooked meats in a school and meat supplied by a catering butcher
- The national picture showed that there had been two public enquiries in to E.Coli 0157
- There was new E.Coli guidance that had been released from the Food Standards Agency (FSA)
- Recent outbreaks in the UK was associated with soil on vegetables and animal petting farms
- Enforcement work actioned last year included
 - ❖ 130 legal notices served
 - ❖ 1 emergency closure
 - ❖ 1 formal seizure
 - ❖ 2 Successful prosecutions
 - ❖ 4 voluntary closures
- Enforcement work actioned this year so far:
 - ❖ 45 Notices served
 - ❖ 2 successful prosecutions
 - ❖ 1 emergency closure
 - ❖ 2 Health and Safety prohibitions

Food Safety and Health and Safety asked Members to endorse a continuing proactive approach to food safety and health and safety which took in to account local priorities.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members queried whether partner agencies were liaised with to share information. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer advised members that they always consulted with partner agencies and they did a lot of work with the Health and Safety Executive, the Fire Service, HMRC, the Police and the Money Lending Team.*
- Members queried whether new businesses had to apply for a change of use or submit a planning application. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer advised the Committee that new businesses selling food had to register as a food business twenty eight days prior to opening. There was a data base in place which stores information of all food businesses but sometimes food businesses were only discovered after a complaint had been made.*
- Members suggested that the regulatory team worked with planning to discover the food businesses that had not registered as it was quite distressing to think that these businesses could be operating and members of the public could come to serious harm. People choosing to open businesses in Peterborough who came from different

countries needed to be made well aware of the rules and regulations. Rewards should be given, such as charter marks, to promote good businesses. *The Principal Trading Standards Officer commented that it was important for Trading Standards to link with businesses and make them feel confident that they could approach Trading Standards for help and advice.*

- Members were concerned whether spa pools were being checked regularly in fitness clubs as these are widely used by the general public. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer advised members that this was not a requirement by the Health and Safety Executive although the Regulation Team would respond to keep Peterborough residents safe.*
- The Executive Director of Operations advised the committee that the changes in legislation regarding control of the spa pools was a national change. The Health and Safety Executive were driven by the government to make changes and relax the controls of goods such as spa pools.
- Members queried why some shops had been closed by the Regulatory Team then reopened within a few days selling exactly the same goods. *The Food Safety and Health and Safety Officer informed members that the law stated that in order to close a business they needed to be satisfied that there was a health risk condition. The business would be given a schedule to remove the health risk condition. A court case would take place within three days and once all of the requirements had been met the establishment could return to business.*
- Members commented that doorstep charity collecting was a big issue and queried what the rules and regulations were regarding this. *The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised members that registered charities did not need permission to collect from doorsteps although something could be done about people falsely collecting on behalf of charities by liaising with the police and advising people not to buy from doorstep sellers.*

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorsed the report

7. Responsible Dog Ownership

The report informed the Committee that the issue of dog control was a national issue at present and that a number of consultations had taken place nationally to consider amendments to the current legislation to control dogs. With this in mind and to very much complement any changes in the law, officers had been developing a programme to raise awareness with pet owners on how they could do more to ensure they and their animal behave appropriately when in public and at home.

The Committee were asked to support a programme that promoted responsible dog ownership, including hosting and/or facilitating events with partner agencies initially over a pilot twelve month period. Further that the committee supported officers to continue to work with the Police as new powers were introduced that enabled better controls of dangerous dogs in order to maximise the impacts of both organisations.

Observations and questions were raised around the following areas:

- Members expressed concern with potentially dangerous dogs being left alone in the daytime roaming around in blocks of flats.
- Members supported the Paws in the Park event that had taken place for dog owners to go along and seek advice on dog behaviour and training.
- Members were concerned that some people had certain dogs as a status symbol which were not ideal for the premises they lived and where dogs were often locked in all day barking. *The Senior Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer advised the*

committee that in cases like these the enforcement team should be contacted who would then liaise with the police to try and resolve the issue.

- Members asked if the Enforcement Team worked with social landlords to establish whether properties were sufficient for keeping dogs. *The Regulatory Services Strategic Manager advised the committee that they did not presently work with Social Landlords although this was a good point to consider.*
- A youth Council Representative queried how dog fouling was dealt with. *The Senior Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer advised the Committee that enforcement officers would issue a penalty notice to owners of dogs who were caught fouling and even if they went back to clear it up they would still receive a fine. If witnesses come forward to report incidents of dog fouling the Council could still issue a fixed penalty notice therefore the Council did promote that witnesses could come forward.*
- Members suggested that the Council could have an awards scheme for dog owners who were willing to send their dogs to obedience training which they could display in public to show that they were responsible owners.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee agreed for the Enforcement team to come back to a future meeting to give an update on the work that had been undertaken.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Committee recommends that the council be more proactive when dealing with reported cases of noise nuisance due to dogs being left alone all day.
- The Committee recommends that the Council be more proactive in following up reported cases to the police regarding dangerous dogs.

8. Forward Plan

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 there were no items for further consideration.

9. Work Programme

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2012/13 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2012/13.

10. Date of Next Meeting

20 November 2012

The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 8.00 pm

CHAIRMAN

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