

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 6
11 SEPTEMBER 2013	Public Report

Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Public Health.

Contact Officers – Gary Goose and Jawaid Khan
Contact Details – 683780 and 863833

PORTFOLIO HOLDER REPORT

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Members with a progress report from the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Public Health in relation to matters relevant to this committee.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Members are asked to scrutinise the progress made on the Cabinet Member's Portfolio by providing challenge where necessary and to suggest ideas and initiatives to support improvements in performance.

3. LINKS TO THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy aims to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough, through improving the quality of life for all. The portfolio held by the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Public Health covers those aspects that fall within the Strong and Supportive Communities priority of the Strategy.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 There are two key responsibilities held by the portfolio holder that are directly relevant to this committee – community safety and community cohesion. Since May 2013 the Cabinet Member benefits from a Cabinet Advisor covering Community Safety and Cohesion.

4.2 Community Safety

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires that a Community Safety Partnership is formed, bringing together agencies who are responsible for crime and disorder in the local area. It is acknowledged that far more can be achieved to make Peterborough a safer place if agencies work together rather than in isolation. The Crime and Disorder Act specifies that responsible authorities are Peterborough City Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, NHS Peterborough, Cambridgeshire Fire Authority, and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Probation Trust. These responsible authorities also invite other agencies who are able to contribute to the work to *co-operate* and Cross Keys Homes (representing Registered Social Landlords in the city) is one of these organisations. Other agencies, particularly from the voluntary and community sector are also *invited to participate* in the work of the Partnership. At present these organisations are Peterborough and Fenland MIND, Peterborough Racial Equality Council, HMP Peterborough and the Social Impact Bond. Other voluntary groups are represented on other partnership groups.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places on designated authorities a legal responsibility to consider the community safety implications of their actions.

4.3 Cohesion

Community cohesion is a term that is easily misunderstood. Many confuse community cohesion as another word for diversity or equality. Whilst cohesion does encompass these principles, it is a much broader term that describes how the impact of a range of social issues can affect both individuals and the wider community. Cohesive communities are ones that have a shared sense of togetherness and enjoy positive relationships between people from different backgrounds. Put simply, it is about people getting on well together irrespective of differences in age, gender, background, culture or belief.

- 4.4 Peterborough is a growing and largely tolerant and peaceful city, which enjoys positive community relationships. The overall population of the city reported by the Census 2011 was 183,631, an increase of 27,570 people compared to 2001. This is an increase of 17% compared to 7% nationally. Despite the notable population increase, the city does not face community tensions as experienced in some other parts of the country. However, tensions can rise quickly in any community and if left unchecked, can result in crime, or as we saw in the national disorders in 2011, large scale public disorder.

Whilst many potential cases of community tensions are centred within the city, there is nevertheless potential for broader cohesion issues to be faced within rural communities. These might include social isolation, intergenerational issues, integrating new and existing communities or a lack of connectivity between villages and the city.

- 4.5 Through the Greater Peterborough Partnership, a Community Cohesion Board (made up from representatives from the public sector, business sector and voluntary, community and faith organisations) works to manage and reduce community tensions. The Board is supported by a Police-led Tension Monitoring Group, which closely monitors issues that may affect community relations.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 Community Safety

- 5.1.1 In furtherance of her responsibilities the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion, Safety and Public Health is a member of the following Crime and Disorder bodies:

- A full voting member of the Safer Peterborough Partnership Board
- Vice-Chair of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Community Safety Strategic Board
- Vice-Chair of the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (this role is already formally taken over the Cabinet Advisor covering Community Safety and Cohesion).

On routine basis, the Cabinet Advisor represents the Cabinet Member at these bodies whilst the Cabinet Member is kept informed and attends as and when necessary.

The Cabinet Member holds monthly progress meetings with the Safer Peterborough Partnership Strategy Member and Safer Peterborough Manager (Cutting Crime).

Work to reduce crime and disorder within Peterborough is coordinated through the Safer Peterborough Partnership.

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, revised by the Police and Justice Act 2006, requires that the Community Safety Partnership publishes an annual Partnership Plan.

The priorities within the Partnership Plan are agreed following a Strategic Assessment which

considers the performance in the previous twelve months and takes into account the concerns of the public.

In Peterborough, The Safer Peterborough Partnership operates to an overarching three year plan (2011-14). The City is now in the third year of that plan.

The Partnership agreed one single target for the three year plan – to reduce victim based crime by 10% by end of March 2014.

The priorities in the plan reflect the partnerships desire to support our statutory partner agencies in delivering their core functions with the partnership taking a lead role in co-ordinating and delivering schemes that address root causes of crime and disorder within our City.

The priorities set out in the Plan attached are:

- Reducing Crime
- Tackling anti-social behaviour and hate crime
- Building stronger and more supportive communities

5.2 Cohesion

One of the most significant priorities is to develop rapport with community groups from different backgrounds and build networks for communities to discuss issues and promote closer understanding of each other. Examples include the Holocaust Memorial Day held in January and Inter-faith week held in November every year. Other examples include festivities, celebrations and other remembrance events held at different times of the year. Apart from events based activities, other actions to promote better understanding through improved English language skills among new arrival community groups are also delivered in partnership with Further Education Colleges and schools in the city. Police and the Civil Society Sector work in close partnership to monitor hate crime including both reported and otherwise to ensure quick and effective action is taken to ensure any breach of law is not tolerated.

5.2.1 The impacts of welfare reform need to be closely managed to ensure that support for the most vulnerable in the community is available.

The potential for any negative impacts relating to a national or international event cannot be underestimated and the situation is closely monitored through the Cohesion Board and the Tension Monitoring Group.

The Strategy adopted by the Cohesion Board to address these key issues include the following key themes:

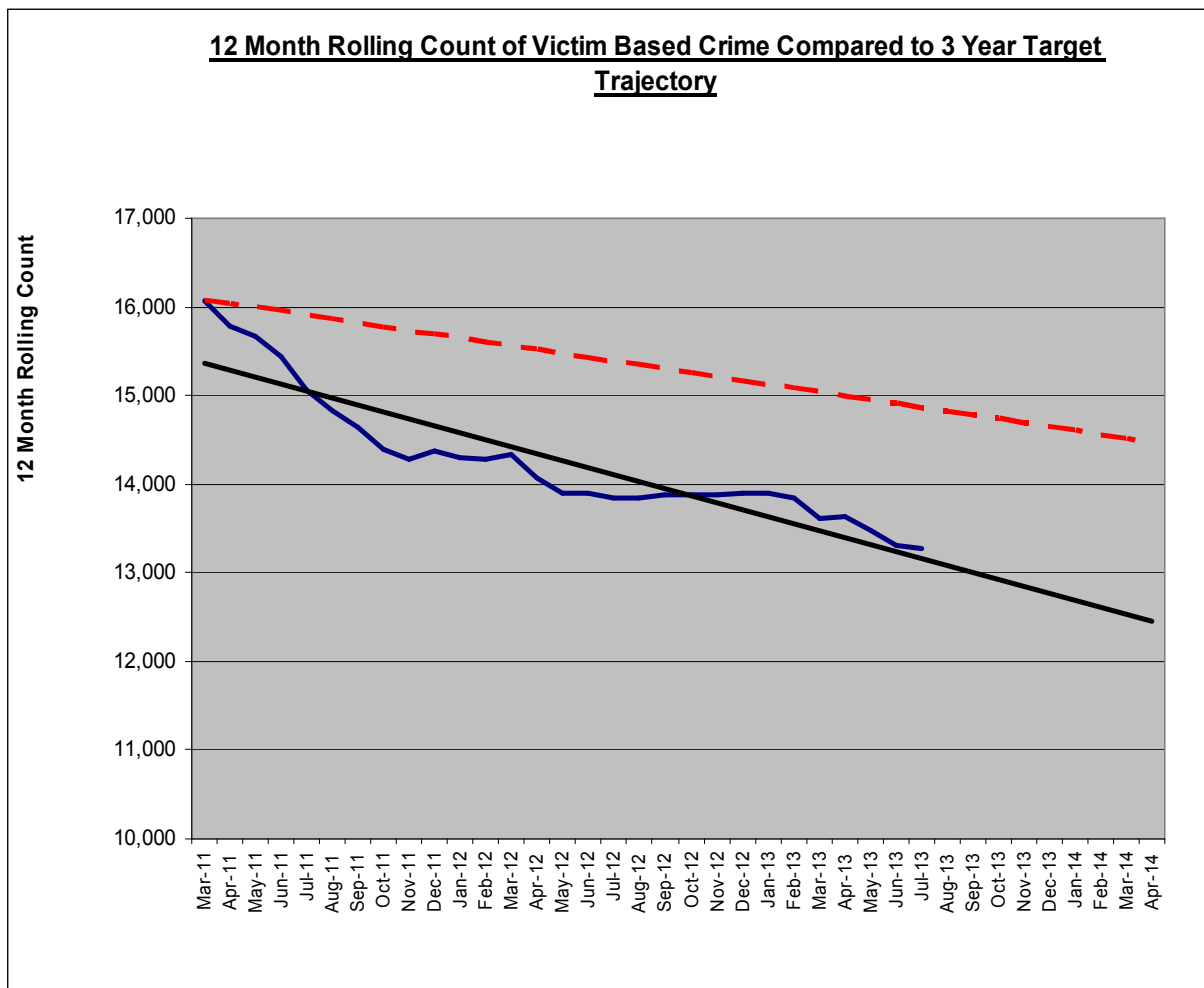
- Understanding community issues and developing critical links;
- Monitoring and earlier diffusion of any developing community tensions;
- Promoting community reassurance through local networks and efforts to strengthen localism agenda; and
- Identifying or facilitating projects which bring together different segment of community groups to promote well being of the city, e.g. food bank, charity events, city centre public events etc

5.3 Community Safety - Achievements during the previous year

5.3.1 In its broadest terms efforts to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Peterborough have been of significant success during the course of this three year plan.

- Crime has reduced
- Reports of anti-social behaviour have reduced

The table below shows the downward trend of crime in our City and the number of fewer victims compared to our baseline year of 2010.



This equates to 2796 fewer actual victims of crime based upon on a rolling twelve month count.

5.3.2 The partnership chose to approach reducing crime in the following way:

- Embedding the ‘broken window theory’ as a bedrock of our approach to reducing crime, tackling ASB and building stronger, supportive and more cohesive communities. This approach prevents escalation into more serious issues that can destroy communities, increase crime and the fear of crime and reduce cohesion.
- Taking an approach to tackle the underlying causes of offending and crime but being equally clear that those who continue to offend or bring risk of harm to the City will be targeted with the full weight of the criminal justice system.

The most up to date data for June 2013 indicates how we are monitoring progress against these areas.

Microbeat summary – June data only.

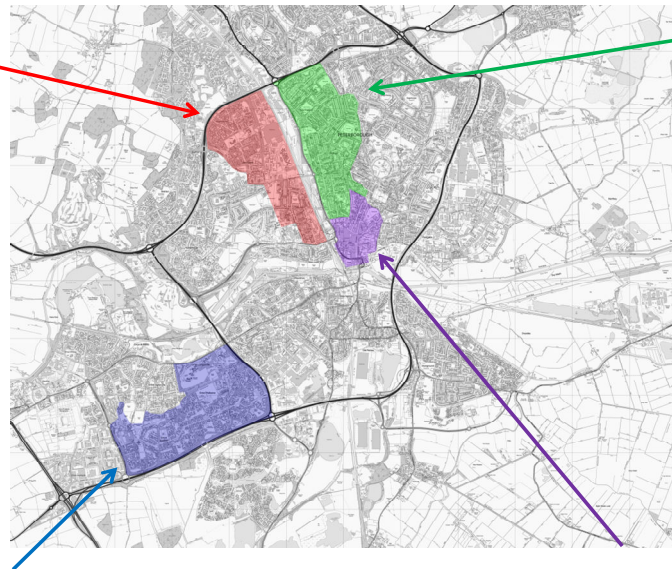


WWRAP

ASB has seen a general increase of 4.7% with 31 more recorded incidents.

Quality of Life incidents have noticed a reduction of 3.5% (n=55), though there has been an increase in rubbish accumulations of almost 20% (n=22), though a decline in flytipping clearances of 4.4% (n=52)

Victim Based Crime noticed a reduction from the baseline of 5% which amounts to 42 less victims.



Op CanDo

ASB has seen a general reduction of 1.7% with 20 less recorded incidents.

Quality of Life incidents have noticed an increase of nearly 9% (n=160), this is largely made up by an increase in flytipping clearance of 22.4% (n=223).

Victim Based Crime noticed a reduction from the baseline of 7% which amounts to 96 less victims.

HALO

ASB has seen a general reduction of 2% with 15 less recorded incidents.

Quality of Life incidents have noticed an increase of 3% (n=29), though there has been an increase in rubbish accumulations of 15.4% (n=8), as well as an increase in flytipping clearances of 4% (n=28)

Victim Based Crime noticed a reduction from the baseline of 8.6% which amounts to 74 less victims.

City centre

There have been general reductions across the majority of City Centre domains for June with the exception of ASB, up 4% (n=30)

Victim Based Crime noticed a general reduction from the baseline of 2.8% which amounts to 63 less victims.

Shoplifting showed only a 0.3% increase (n=2) and Theft from vehicle saw an increase of 8.7% (n=9).

Whilst the figures for reductions in crime and disorder are pleasing the Cabinet Member ensures that effort continues.

In particular the partnership is aware that the way people feel about safety does not match the reality in our City. In order to improve perceptions the Cabinet Member is involved in work to reshape communications on behalf of the partnership.

5.4 Cohesion - Achievements during the previous year

5.4.1 One of the key challenges in maintaining cohesive communities is the difficulty to measure it. It is noticeable when cohesion fails and may result in community based tensions or even public disorder. Hence public perception is one of the only indicators available to assess success. Statistics from the last Place Survey show that 57.3% of people believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

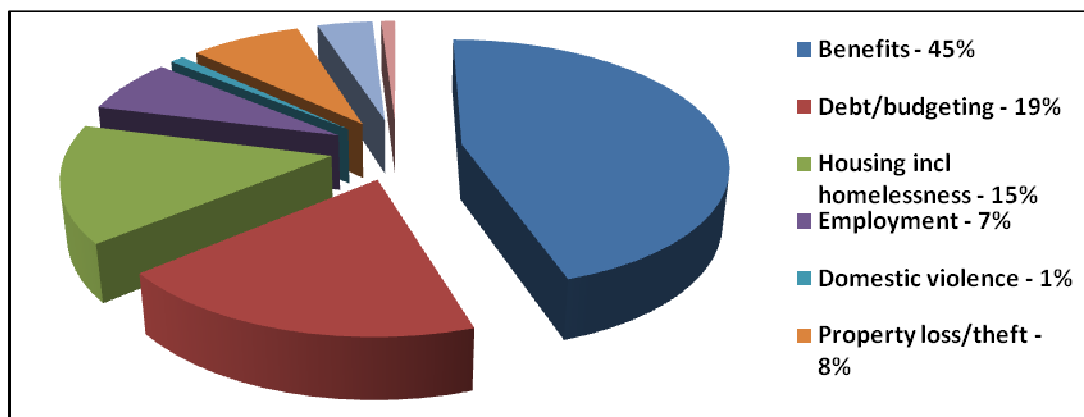
5.4.2 One of the key areas of work over the past year has been the implementation of the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme to help manage the emergency needs of the most vulnerable in the community. The committee received a report in June 2013, detailing the launch

of the Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme (PCAS) which was established to replace the former Social Fund Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants.

The scheme has been implemented successfully and has supported over 900 people since April to help manage their finances and deal with emergency situations.

5.4.3. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is the lead agency and they work in partnership with a number of specialist partners such as DIAL Peterborough, MIND, Age UK and the Rainbow Savers Credit Union.

Data from CAB shows that the majority of clients accessing the service are White British (58%), followed by White Other (17%) and then Asian (9%). Clients are from the PE1 postcode in the main. Clients can present with a number of issues as set out below:



Whilst client's issues can be varied, they typically fall into one of the following categories:

- Rent not fully covered by Housing Benefit
- Liability to pay a proportion of Council Tax
- Other bills to meet: gas, electricity, water, mobile phone contracts
- Long term benefit dependency, finances stretched, some arrears & multiple debt likely
- Relationship breakdown
- Leaving care, prison or homelessness shelter
- Disaster such as arson attack

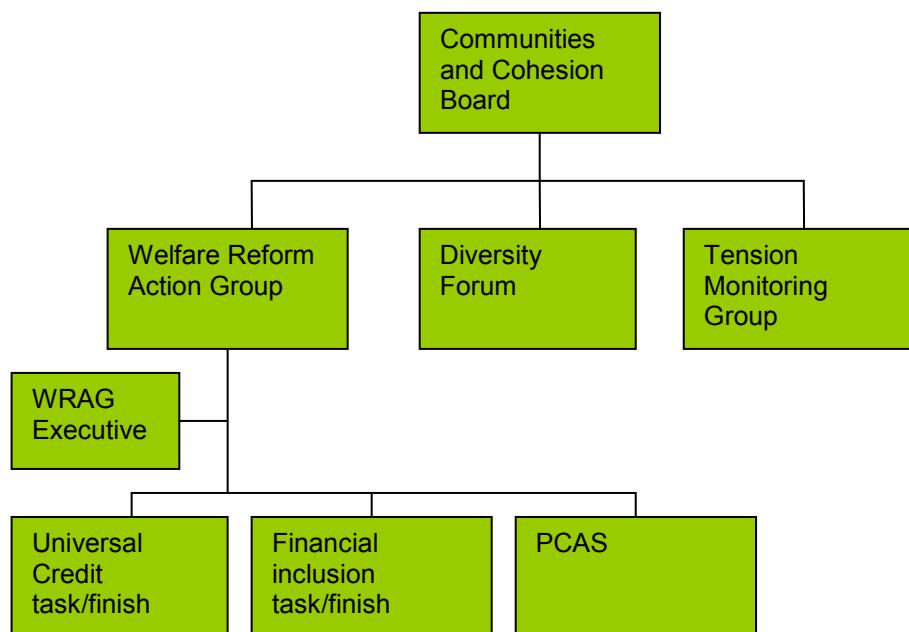
5.4.4 PCAS supports the client to address these and other issues through better budget management, ensuring that the client receives all the benefits to which they are entitled and providing advice on how to reduce monthly bills for example through being more energy efficient. In the most severe cases, a client can be referred to one of the partner organisations to receive emergency food, furniture or white goods.

5.4.5 PCAS has also been successful at improving partnership working between the statutory and voluntary sector organisations and has broken down barriers between organisations, which previously worked in silos, and failed to exchange data and intelligence. The PCAS partnership now provides innovative ways of working and a solution based approach to challenges.

5.4.6 PCAS forms just one part of the wider changes that the Welfare Reform Act will bring. Given the scale of the changes expected and the challenges they will bring, statutory and voluntary partners will need to work even closer together. However, it is vital that we have the right partnership structure in place that allows for this close collaboration to take place and for issues to be escalated where required.

5.4.7 There are a number of partnership meetings and forums currently taking place dealing with the welfare/financial inclusion agenda. Many of these operate in isolation, address similar issues and feature the same representatives from the council and partners. A review conducted with the Community Cohesion Board has sought to rationalise these groups into a more streamlined

structure to avoid duplication and increase the effectiveness of partners in addressing the issues that Welfare Reform will bring. The following diagram sets out the new structure:



As part of these changes, the Community Cohesion Board has agreed to broaden its remit and title; it will now be known as the Communities and Cohesion Board. The Board will have three key objectives:

1. Understand and respond to high levels of community tension
2. Understand longstanding issues within neighbourhoods which are impacting upon community cohesion, and identify actions to address
3. Understand the impact of welfare reform and the steps being taken to reduce poverty

This new structure will allow the council and its partners to focus on the key issues and challenges and will improve the sharing of information and intelligence.

5.5 Community Safety - Priorities for the coming year

5.5.1 During 2013/14 the partnership are working on a number of themes to further prevent and reduce crime and disorder.

The Cabinet member plays a direct role in a number of these themes and supports each and every one.

A summary of these themes is attached as appendix A of this report.

5.5.2 This committee can support the Cabinet Member by continued support for the direction of travel by the City in combating Crime and Disorder; in particular by promoting the progress made towards making our City safer in the course of members daily business.

5.6 Cohesion – Priorities for the coming year

5.6.1 During 2013/14 the Cohesion Board is aiming to consolidate the enhanced governance structure overseeing the wider communities and cohesion agenda in the city.

- 5.6.2 Tackling poverty is fundamental to the wellbeing of our residents, the strength of our communities, the investment made in our city and the success of our business sector. It is a theme which is closely linking cohesion and tackling inequalities in the society. This area is a key element of the priority ahead which is being worked in close partnership with the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee.
- 5.6.3 Travellers related issues including Travellers site management, prevention and where necessary effective response to unauthorised encampment and deliberation on future of Emergency Stopping Places are also among key priorities for the year ahead.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is anticipated that the Scrutiny Committee will comment on and make recommendations relating to the updates provided in this report in order that delivery potential is maximised for the benefit of our communities.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Comments and recommendations made by Scrutiny Committee members will be considered as part of the ongoing development and delivery of specific business areas.

8. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 8.1 None

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 Appendix A : Community Safety Themes
- 9.2 Appendix B : Community Cohesion Strategy