

<b>STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 5</b>
<b>19 JANUARY 2011</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

## **Report of the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Community Safety**

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### **Portfolio Progress Report**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

To provide Members with a progress report from the Cabinet Member for Community Cohesion and Community Safety in relation to matters relevant to this Committee.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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**

The ambition of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to deliver a bigger and better Peterborough, taking advantage of the inherent opportunities we have and at the same time tackling the challenges we face in order to deliver a higher quality of life for all. The priorities and actions from this Portfolio directly contribute to this ambition.

#### **4. BACKGROUND**

The Strong and Supportive Scrutiny Committee have agreed to invite all relevant Cabinet Members to its meetings throughout the year to learn more about the priorities for that Portfolio, to provide input and information in support of the work of the Cabinet Member, and to ascertain what help or advice the Scrutiny Committee can provide.

This report provides Members with an update on Councillor Irene Walsh's Portfolio including information about priorities, progress made to date, and forthcoming actions.

#### **5. KEY ISSUES**

##### **5.1 Context**

The Portfolio covering Community Cohesion and Community Safety was newly created this municipal year, and draws together important aspects of Council business which are critical to the growth, regeneration and resilience of our communities. The Portfolio responsibility also covers Human Resources and Health and Safety, but these do not fall within the remit of this Scrutiny Committee.

Initial priorities for Councillor Walsh centred on (i) learning about all aspects of her new Portfolio, and (ii) working with Cabinet colleagues to prepare for and publish the budget proposals currently being consulted upon.

Running alongside this, operational reviews and restructures of many parts of Councillor Walsh's Portfolio have been taking place, and Councillor Walsh herself has been instrumental in guiding new arrangements and structures to deliver even better services. For the remainder of this year, the focus will be on ensuring new structural and organisational arrangements are fully embedded, that the whole Portfolio is working effectively with all key areas of the Council and its partners, and that services continue to improve whilst driving forward on the efficiency agenda.

The following sections review each element of Councillor Walsh's portfolio in more depth.

## **5.2 Community Safety**

The community safety service for Peterborough continues to be delivered by the multi-agency Safer Peterborough Partnership community safety team.

### **5.2.1 *The current position***

The community safety structure within Peterborough arose from joint Police/City Council work following various Home Office support visits in recent years<sup>1</sup>.

The result of that work was a joint Police/Council Community Safety Unit that provides focussed partnership activity across a number of core community safety areas of business.

Working primarily to the priorities set out in the Safer Peterborough Partnership Strategic Assessment 2009/10, the year to date has seen some significant successes in reducing reported crime and tackling anti-social behaviour. A review of the unit's structure during the latter part of 2010 has seen further evolution of the team to now include the Council's Road Safety function, and the Neighbourhood Managers are also co-located alongside community safety staff.

The result is a truly outward looking department embedded in the whole Neighbourhoods division, that is able to tackle not only 'here and now' issues that require immediate attention but is also able to identify emerging trends and prevent escalation, looking too at the causes of issues rather than simply the symptoms with long-term sustainable improvements in our neighbourhoods as a goal. The newly shaped unit will look at supporting and addressing vulnerable localities as well as focussing upon those individuals who cause our communities the most harm and protecting those vulnerable individuals within our communities. This change of emphasis syncs with Peterborough's intention through the wide-ranging Sustainable Community Strategy to have a 'preventative agenda'.

To reflect this change of emphasis the community safety team is now known as the Safer/Stronger Peterborough Team.

### **5.2.2 *Specific successes through 2010***

- **A reduction in overall crime rates of around 9% for Peterborough**
- **Reductions in priority crime**  
Supported by the joint Safer/Stronger Peterborough Team, the partnership has continued to evolve its existing Prolific and Priority Offender Scheme, linking it more closely with the Drugs Intervention Programme, Operation Alert (a Police-led targetting of those thought to be actively committing offences), and a probation-led Key's Project for offenders, aiming to bring a single integrated approach to offender management within Peterborough.

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<sup>1</sup> Home Office Police and Crime Standards Directorate and GO East Partnership Support Programme with Peterborough Community Safety Partnership (January 2008, reviewed October 2008)

Based upon an approach that encourages those at risk of offending to change their ways or face a higher risk of capture this refocus has brought significant reductions in reported priority crime:

- ***House burglary has reduced by 18.2 % leading to 275 fewer victims***
- ***Car crime has reduced by 24.8 % leading to 653 fewer victims***
- ***More people are entering drug treatment (around 800 at any one time) and that treatment is more effective***

The integrated offender management approach currently aims to manage around 120 of those causing Peterborough the most harm.

An independent review commissioned and funded under the Governments 'Vigilance' programme (addressing areas with historic high crime rates) endorsed the approach being taken by Peterborough and in particular the move towards Integrated Offender Management as a plank of long-term sustainable success.

- **Violent Crime**

Statistically violent crime shows a slight increase over the year. This is an example of why statistics always have to have context around them. This rise is in part as a direct result of police activity to try and prevent serious violence arising out of the night time economy. The police are targetting those getting drunk earlier in the evening with penalty notices for disorder in order to prevent them from becoming victims or offenders as the night wears on.

Domestic Violence continues to be a concern, amounting for between 30% - 35% of Peterborough's overall reported violent crime. Domestic Violence has always been under-reported leading to victims suffering in silence and, at times, leading to really serious injury or death. Increases in the reports of domestic violence can indicate a positive endorsement of our attempts to really deal with the problem by encouraging people to come forward; the domestic violence team have completed awareness training amongst numerous groups of professionals during the year in order to increase the understanding of the signs of what is a serious crime. This will remain a difficult statistical balance as we move forward into the next year but the really positive news is the reduction in the number of repeat cases, up to 13.5%, indicating that interventions are working.

- **Anti-social behaviour**

The Local Authority had developed a bespoke system for tackling anti-social behaviour across Peterborough with the appointment of an anti-social behaviour co-ordinator and caseworker. Working closely with the police and neighbourhood managers the team has begun to tackle some of Peterborough's long-term hot spots areas for such behaviour. Work will be developing over the next twelve months to join the Local Authority and police systems together to provide one anti-social behaviour response for Peterborough where citizens can expect a consistency of approach for such problems.

### 5.2.3 The future

Peterborough's Safer/Stronger Peterborough Team now has distinct identity. It has a clear statement of intent about what it aims to achieve:

**To lead on the creation and sustainability of Strong and Supportive Communities by making Peterborough a safer place to live, work and visit.**

We will do this by working in partnership to empower communities and to cut crime and reduce anti-social behaviour. We will consult with our communities to address issues that concern them most and keep them informed. We will deliver this through a partnership that is flexible, responsive and innovative; with a delivery style that is based upon integrity, respect and sensitivity for all.

We will aim to be:

- The best partnership team in the country
- A team that understands the needs of our citizens and uses its influence and powers working with them to deliver positive and lasting change

The key challenges for 2011 are significant though and will require a continued strong partnership to deliver even more success. Four of those challenges are set out below:

- **Maintaining a strong partnership commitment to a multi-agency way of working to deliver a safer Peterborough**

The budget reductions across all statutory agencies mean that every post and every penny is scrutinised. The strength of the partnership arrangements in Peterborough has enabled us to develop our team around targetting those who cause the most crime, protecting the vulnerable and enhancing our neighbourhoods. None of the successes to date will be sustainable unless those partnerships continue. The benefit for Peterborough will be in the long-term by reducing repeat offending and by increasing the strength of our communities. I would urge the Scrutiny Committee to recognise the benefits of sustainable partnerships.

- **Delivering a single anti-social behaviour system for Peterborough**

Whilst Peterborough benefits from a police and council focus on ASB the two are not truly joined and also miss out on other early indicators of emerging ASB. To fully understand the ASB picture for Peterborough requires a single system drawing information from all partners about how ASB is affecting them

- **Delivering a new system for tackling drug misuse within Peterborough**

The current contract for drugs services comes to a close on 31st March 2011. A process is in place to renew and modernise the service. This will effectively link the criminal justice interventions with community based interventions leading to a more effective service. In addition the Citizen Power programme includes a Recovery Capital aspect for drug users aiming to build sustainable changes in use. This service change is a significant piece of work that will require considerable time and effort by the Safer/Stronger Peterborough Team's drug specialists in order to ensure no break in service provision.

- **Delivering a new system for tackling domestic violence**

The funding position means that the existing domestic violence service is unsustainable. New ways of working and opportunities to link with the wider Cambridgeshire independent domestic violence service are being looked at in order to ensure no drop in standards of intervention in this important area.

### **5.3 Community Cohesion**

The Community Cohesion function forms part of the overall Neighbourhoods division, and is coordinated by the Cohesion Manager.

#### **5.3.1 *The current position***

Peterborough benefits from an experienced and effective Cohesion Manager, who, although employed by the Council, is currently based at the offices of the Greater Peterborough Partnership. The post, which has existed for around 4 years, has benefitted from this relative independence, especially when trying to develop relationships with different communities and community leaders.

The work carried out by the Cohesion Manager, particularly in relation to the Preventing Violent Extremism agenda, is recognized nationally as good practice, and we are keen to continue to build on this and other aspects of the Cohesion function.

To help drive this continuous improvement, the recent restructure within the Neighbourhoods division has resulted in the Cohesion Manager joining the leadership team and being managed directly by the Head of Service. This will complement the work of the other members of the leadership team, specifically in areas relating to social inclusion, safer and stronger communities, regulatory services, and housing.

The work of the Cohesion team is overseen by the Cohesion Board, chaired by the Council's Executive Director of Operations. This Board draws together a very broad range of partners with an interest in or directly supporting cohesion in Peterborough, including representatives from across the public, voluntary and community sectors.

The Board has agreed a Cohesion Plan for 2010/11, along with a set of priorities which are as follows:

- tackling socio-economic related challenges
- promoting inter-faith, inter-cultural and inter-communities
- working closely with young people to promote cross community working
- empowering communities and neighbourhoods

In addition, the Board has identified four specific areas of focus within those priorities, which are:

- Gypsy and Traveller issues
- Poverty, linked to vulnerable localities and families
- Young People, especially those not in employment, education or training
- Hate Crime

#### **5.3.2 *Specific successes through 2010***

- Planning and preparing for the demonstrations that took place in the City Centre on December 11<sup>th</sup> were a significant priority for this Portfolio. Joint Police and Council operations drew together a huge range of partners and community representatives to prepare for any potential impacts as a result of the demonstrations, and to try to mitigate those through diligent planning and risk management. As a result, this work, and the investment in time and resources over the past few years, has resulted in our communities coming together more strongly than ever giving us the best platform possible to continue to improve and enhance community cohesion

- A diverse and innovative programme of activities and projects continue to be delivered through the preventing violent extremism programme funded through Government grant specifically aimed at the PVE agenda. A new PVE Delivery Board has been established to oversee this area of work, which includes:
  - training for faith leaders
  - a leadership development programme for young people and community groups
  - a mosque governance programme
  - a mobile Imam project, providing chaplaincy and pastoral support to young people in schools and colleges
  - a programme working with Muslim Youth ambassadors, focussing on youth engagement
  - a homework club
  - a parenting programme
  - a programme of myth busting through work with the Muslim Women's Forum, Senior Citizens and the rural communities
- A new Muslim Community Reference Group has been formed, a critical milestone in our strengthening relationship with the Muslim community. The MCRG is organised and led by the community themselves, and acts as both a critical friend but also as ambassadors for all aspects of cohesion and PVE in the context of the Muslim community
- A series of in-depth thematic discussions have been held as part of the Cohesion Board agenda, focussing on ways in which issues can be supported through the Cohesion Board. To date, these discussions have covered issues associated with housing, hate crime and young people not in employment, education and training
- A Solution Clinic to focus on action needed in relation to the Paston Gypsy and Travellers Site was held in September 2010. Councillor John Fox, Councillor Sue Day and representatives from the public and community sectors attended. The Solution Clinic has led to the development of a broad but focussed action plan and the formation of a task and finish group to oversee its delivery

### **5.3.3 The future**

The focus for the remainder of this year is twofold:

- To continue to deliver against the Cohesion and PVE action plans
- To embed the work of the Cohesion Manager more squarely at the heart of the Council through an approach which seeks to mainstream their work as part of the new Neighbourhoods division structure

As part of that restructure, we are redeveloping the New Link service to focus more broadly on supporting excluded people. The New Link service will no longer operate from Lincoln Road from early 2011, and will instead relocate to Bayard Place.

## **6 IMPLICATIONS**

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 CONSULTATION**

Consultation relating to any specific action or initiative contained within this report takes place as required.

**8 EXPECTED OUTCOMES and NEXT STEPS**

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

**9 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

None

**10. APPENDICES**

None

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