

CANNOCK CHASE COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 25 JULY, 2016, AT 4.00 P.M.
IN THE CIVIC CENTRE, BEECROFT ROAD, CANNOCK

PART 1

PRESENT:

Councillors

Johnson, T.B. (Chairman)

Lea, C.I. (Vice-Chairman)

Cooper, Miss J. (substitute)

Martin, Mrs. C.E.

Dean, A.

Smith, C.D.

Dudson, Miss M.J.

Snape, P.A.

Freeman, Miss M.A.

Sutherland, M.

Grice, Mrs. D.

Witton, P.T.

Also in attendance: Councillor C. Bennett (Crime & Partnerships Portfolio Leader – observer).

Chief Inspector Geoff Knight, Cannock Local Policing Team.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were submitted for Councillor Mrs. P.Z. Stretton.

Councillor Miss J. Cooper was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Stretton.

2. Declarations of Interests of Members in Contracts and Other Matters and Restrictions on Voting by Members and Party Whip Declarations

No declarations of interests or party whip declarations were received.

3. Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April, 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. End of Year Performance Report 2015-16 – Cleaner and Safer Environments Priority Delivery Plan (Community Safety Section)

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Governance (Item 4.1 – 4.10 of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the performance information relating to the Cleaner and Safer Environments PDP (Community Safety section)) as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

5. Police Performance Report

Chief Inspector Knight provided Members with an update on the latest crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) numbers since 1 April this year, which detailed that there had been an increase in reported crime across the District, although less so than for the whole of Staffordshire. Adversely, the number of reported incidents of ASB for the District had increased by a higher percentage than that recorded for the rest of the County.

A Member queried if there were specific hotspots across the area where crime and ASB were happening, or whether the issue was more widespread. Chief Inspector Knight replied that it was happening right across the District as opposed to specific areas, but different times of the year also had an impact (such as school holidays). Crime activity had been low recently, whereas ASB had been more of a problem.

Crime Performance

A Member raised concern with the increase in reported cases of violent crime ('other crime against the person'). Chief Inspector Knight replied that it was also an issue across the County, but the types of incident which could be reported under this category were quite broad, such as harassment (including online harassment) and dog biting.

A Member queried if the closure of youth clubs in the District had been a factor in the increased cases of crime and ASB. Chief Inspector Knight replied that although it was not possible to determine if this had had any impact, the police could now specifically monitor and record 'youth related' crime and ASB incidents, although this power had only been in place since 1 April this year, so no useful comparator data would be available until 12 months time.

A Member queried if the reported incidents of personal robbery were 'peer on peer'. Chief Inspector Knight replied that this did appear to be the case, and were mostly young people targeting other young people.

A Member queried how the response times were rated for attending reports of on-street violent attacks. Chief Inspector Knight replied that incident responses were twice as quick as elsewhere in Staffordshire, but response times would depend on where officers were located when an incident report was logged.

A Member raised concern regarding the increase in reported cases of sexual offences and rape. Chief Inspector Knight replied that a large percentage of the cases recorded were due to historical incidents of sexual offences and rape being reported (i.e. offences which happened at least 12 months ago).

A Member then queried if Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases were included in the sexual offences statistics, as this had been one of the main issues looked at by the Committee last year. Chief Inspector Knight replied that CSE was included in the figures and was a key issue for the Local Policing Team (LPT), which had resulted in one of the PCSOs being appointed as a school liaison officer to help tackle this particular issue.

ASB Performance

A Member asked for details on where identified hotspots of ASB were in the District and responses to such incidents were prioritised. Chief Inspector Knight replied that meetings took place at the start of every week to identify where known hotspots were and what the top 3 issues were which needed to be tackled in that particular week. Incidents were logged by the call handling team and prioritised in terms of timeliness, urgency and threat to others.

The same Member then asked for clarification on how the public were notified when the 'community trigger' protocol had been activated, and how many times had the trigger been used in the past 12 months. Chief Inspector Knight replied that the public were once the trigger had been activated, which would happen once 3 separate incidents had been reported within a 6 month period. Since October 2014, the trigger had only been activated on one occasion.

Chief Inspector Knight advised that in order to better monitoring recording and reporting of ASB incidents, the individual reporting categories were being reviewed with a view to reducing the number used in order to provide better clarity of what types of incidents were being logged. This change in reporting mechanism would however mean that no comparator data would be available until next year.

Councillor Bennett arrived at the meeting at this point of the discussion.

A Member commented that ASB concerns appeared to be linked to a lack of visible policing presence within the District's town centres. Chief Inspector Knight replied that the LPT had been restructured to ensure that there was a visible presence of PCSOs within the town centres during key times of the day, however a balance had to be in place between ensure officers were visible but also being able to effectively respond to incidents elsewhere in the District.

Councillor Witton left the meeting at this point and did not return.

A Member requested to receive the information on the role of profiles of the local PCs and PCSOs as referred to on page 15 of the minutes of the last meeting. Chief Inspector Knight replied that he would arrange for this information to be circulated to all members of the Committee.

Chief Inspector Knight also provided information to the Committee on a Countywide operation currently in place to tackle drug supply and drug dealing on a cross boundary basis, which was part of a wider regional and national action plan.

6. Community Safety Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2016-17

Consideration was given to the Report of the Head of Environmental Health (Item 5.1 – 5.5 plus attachments of the Official Minutes of the Council).

RESOLVED:

That the following items be agreed for inclusion on the Committee's work programme for 2016-17:

- (A) Police Performance Report;
- (B) Community Safety Delivery Plan Performance Report;
- (C) Anti-Social Behaviour review – new powers and tools;
- (D) Hate Crime – Communities Against Crimes of Hate (CACH);
- (E) Updates on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the Staffordshire Victim Gateway service (both items rolled over from 2015-16 work programme);
- (F) Overview of the District's Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

It was also agreed that a half-day workshop be arranged for all Councillors to attend on the 'Community Trigger', led by Chief Inspector Knight and staff from his team.

The meeting closed at 5:55pm

CHAIRMAN