

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

14 March 2017

Community Safety Review – Final report from the Task & Finish Group (TFG)

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendations

That the committee:

- 1) Notes that the TFG considered that the required level of scrutiny of the Community Safety Partnership had been achieved.
- 2) Notes that members will receive brief case studies highlighting key areas of the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) achievement in the District via the Members' Bulletin.
- 3) Notes that members should be encouraged to promote community safety and crime prevention messages within their wards.

3. Background

- 3.1 Chichester District Council has a statutory responsibility to participate in the CSP for the area under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Overview and Scrutiny committees of local authorities have a responsibility to scrutinise the activity of CSPs on an annual basis.
- 3.2 The TFG comprised of Mr M Cullen (Chairman), Mr H Potter and Mr J Brown and met twice in February 2017.
- 3.3 At the first meeting Mrs P Bushby and Mr S Hansford, from the Council's Communities Team, explained the structures of the CSP, the CSP business plan and progress made against those targets and explained the funding, setting out the budget and current spend. At the second meeting the following witnesses gave evidence:
 - Mrs Eileen Lintill, Cabinet Member for Community Services, Chairman of the Chichester CSP and the Council's representative on the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), described the role of that panel in holding the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to account
 - Ms Emily King, Principal Manager Community Safety and Wellbeing, WSCC described WSCC role and that of the County Agreement
 - Justin Burtenshaw, Chief Inspector of Sussex Police and District Commander for Arun and Chichester, described the structures and challenges of Policing the combined area

4. Evidence

- 4.1 In reviewing the latest performance, Mrs Bushby and Mr Hansford highlighted key statistics which showed that in March 2015 there were less than 5,000 reported crimes in the district following year on year reductions over the last 10 years. However during the summer of 2016 there were increases in vehicle crime and burglaries which in December 2016 had led to an 11% increase in all reported crime compared to December 2015. A number of contributing factors were discussed such as changes in recording methods for assaults, the reporting of historic sexual offences, the encouragement and increasing confidence to report issues such as domestic violence and types of hate crime which meant that across the county there had been increases in overall crime.
- 4.2 Chichester was also perceived to be an area of 'rich pickings' and attracted offenders from across the borders. Mrs Bushby explained that the CSP set strategic priorities in its plans and the Joint Action Group (JAG) was the operational delivery group which shared intelligence and responded to trends. She gave examples of joint activity with the police and other agencies to reduce bicycle theft, theft from vehicles in beauty spot car parks, and burglaries of sheds and out buildings for garden equipment – some could be predicted from historic seasonal trends and some responded to current offending.
- 4.3 Mrs Bushby explained that the CSP received funds from the PCC which had significantly reduced over time and currently stood at c£42,000. A significant proportion of that money funded an Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator, located at the police station and a critical point of contact for information.
- 4.4 Mrs Bushby explained that under the JAG there were several sub-groups which focused on particular types of offending. One such group was the Road Safety Action Group, combined with the Arun District, which had run events targeted at giving older people refresher driving lessons as there had been a number of accidents involving older drivers in the district.
- 4.5 Mrs Bushby also described the work of the Child Exploitation and Human Trafficking Group, identifying this as a relatively new area of work the full scale of which was as yet unknown. A lot of work was being done to raise awareness among young people, such as cyber safety in schools, and by engaging with the service industries to build confidence to report potentially suspicious activity.
- 4.6 The CSP business plan and budget were then explained, highlighting the priorities, the progress and success of the activities to deliver them. The budget was explained, pointing out that over the last few years a cautious approach to spending had been taken to protect against further reductions in funding.
- 4.7 Members were satisfied with the explanations in response to their questions and generally satisfied with the priorities and performance of CSP.
- 4.8 At the group's next meeting Cllr Lintill set out the role of the PCC to maintain an efficient and effective police force and to hold the Chief Constable to account; the role of the PCP which in turn held the PCC to account for her decisions primarily in respect of setting the Police and Crime Plan and the policing precept. She gave examples of how members of the PCP had challenged elements of the plan

and rigorously reviewed the justification for an increase in new precept. Cllr Lintill closed by announcing that she had just received a letter from the PCC setting out the CSP's allocation of funding for 2017-18 of £42,000, so no reduction.

4.9 The group then heard from Ms King who explained the role of the WSCC in producing a strategic agreement between the key county agencies which interpret the priorities of the PCC and set priorities which CSPs would take into account when formulating their own plans. The plan was approved by the Safer West Sussex Partnership Executive group after consultation with the CSP Chairs group and the Community Safety managers group. The current agreement runs to 2020 and is refreshed annually. It has seven strategic areas of business :

- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Economic crime
- Prevent
- Serious organised crime
- Rape and serious sexual assault
- Preventing offending
- Reducing repeat demand

4.10 Following a review it had been decided that economic crime, rape and serious sexual assault would be removed next year as they were key issues for the police and difficult for partners to influence. They would be replaced with modern slavery and cybercrime as there was more scope for joint agency activity. Discussions explored the prevalence of CSE and modern slavery and preventative activity undertaken. Finally Ms King stated she could reassure Members that in her experience Chichester was the most effective CSP.

4.11 The group then heard from Chief Inspector Burtenshaw. He outlined the restructures that had taken place in Sussex Police following a reduction in funding, which had resulted in a joint Chichester and Arun command. This meant more shared resources could be brought to bear on identified problems. He stressed the importance of partnership working to the police in trying to resolve issues, particularly those which were not really policing matters. He stated that the increase in crime locally had been experienced across the county and that responses are now prioritised on threat, harm and risk and used intelligence to focus on particular offenders illustrating a number of successes.

4.12 He was questioned about the change in the alignment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO) to parishes. He explained that the way PCSOs had been employed had meant that they could not be deployed flexibly to support issues elsewhere; that some were aligned to areas where very little crime happened; and that no cover could be provided absences. The new arrangement had pooled PCSOs into a single team, increased their powers and skills through training and that they could not be directed to a place or problem in sufficient number to resolve the issue or to make a significant difference to it.

4.13 He also addressed issues about police presence in the city centre and the support for the Chichester Business Against Crime (CHIBAC) initiative stating that the CHIBAC Coordinator was hosted within the police station and that whenever possible resources were directed to patrol the city centre. However he

also stressed that some shops had to take responsibility for the way they displayed goods without regard to preventing opportunities for thefts.

5. Outcomes to be achieved

5.1 The terms of reference set the outcomes as reviewing the CSP's performance over the last year; identifying areas of concern for further in depth review and giving input into the strategic direction of the CSP over the following year.

5.2 At the end of the review the Task and Finish Group considered:

- That the required outcomes of the Community Safety review had been achieved
- That despite recent rises in crime, Chichester district still had one of the lowest rates of crime in the county
- That effective partnership working existed in the district
- That they supported the proposed priorities
- That they felt better informed about the 'newer challenges' from child sexual exploitation and modern slavery and understood that the current activity was in order to understand the problem and respond better and this activity would not be disproportionate to other crime issues in the district
- They understood some of the principles of crime prevention; how a wide range of factors influenced crime and how the different elements of service undertaken by the district council could help and support that activity; and that Members could also support the safety and crime prevention messages.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The TFG felt able to reassure the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that, despite the rise in crime, the performance of the CSP had been good and that there was effective partnership working in this district.

6.2 The TFG recommends that it would wish members to receive brief case studies highlighting the key areas of the CSP's achievement via the Members' Bulletin.

6.3 The TFG considered that members should be encouraged to promote community safety within their wards.

7. Alternatives that have been considered.

7.1 The nature of the statutory duty to review performance does constrain the topic. The speakers invited were to evidence those specific elements, however in future opportunity could be taken to explore other areas of work in more detail and introduce other partners and witnesses to the committee.

8. Appendices

None

9. Background Papers

The Community Safety Review 2017 Task and Finish Group terms of reference are available online (Overview and Scrutiny Committee agenda of 17 January 2017)