

BOROUGH SERVICES POLICY AND REVIEW PANEL

Meeting held on Monday, 14th November, 2016 at the Council Offices,
Farnborough at 7.00 p.m.

Voting Members

Cr. A.R. Newell (Chairman)
Cr. M.S. Choudhary (Vice-Chairman)

Cr. T.D. Bridgeman
Cr. R. Cooper
Cr. Liz Corps

Cr. Marina Munro

Cr. M.J. Roberts
Cr. M. Staplehurst
Cr. B.A. Thomas

15. **MINUTES –**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th September, 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

16. **SAFER NORTH HAMPSHIRE PARTNERSHIP – UPDATE –**

The Panel was advised that, at the last mid-cycle meeting, it was agreed that appropriate items were required for discussion with the Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner at the meeting of the Panel on 6th February 2017. The presentations given at the meeting would help inform a list of relevant issues that could be raised with Mr. Michael Lane prior to the February meeting.

The Head of Community and Environmental Services, Mr. Peter Amies, gave an overview of working arrangements and activities of the partnership. Mr. Amies advised of a number of developments within the partnership since the last update, these included: joint overview and scrutiny, community safety awards, a Peer Court and community meetings. It was advised that the Peer Court was a panel of 13-24 year olds who considered the offences of young people around theft, damage or public disorder crimes. To date, 21 cases had been heard by the Peer Court and only two of those individuals had reoffended.

The Partnership was undertaking the strategic assessment for 2015-16 to help identify emerging community safety trends, and enable the Community Safety Partnership to organise activities and allocate resources based on need. Assessments ran from April – March the following year and the Panel reviewed the data for 2015/16 compared to that for 2014/15. It was noted that the way in which data was entered and recorded had changed which did not allow easy comparison year on year.

The Panel highlighted some areas of concern, including possession of weapons and burglary in dwellings and shop lifting. Mr. Amies agreed to provide more detailed information on these issues.

A discussion took place on the rise in hate crimes, it was noted that more minorities were reporting such hate crimes but no significant increase had been identified since the 2016 EU Referendum. It was also noted that work was ongoing with schools, colleges and staff to help identify the signs of radicalisation. It was also noted that Members should contact the Housing or Community Safety teams should they have any concerns over radicalisation in their wards.

The Panel **NOTED** the update and requested that the **ACTIONS** raised be followed up at the next mid-cycle meeting.

Action to be taken	By Whom	When
Further information be sought on the 21 cases trialled by the Peer Court, details were to include the nature of the crime and the outcome of the trial.	Mr. Peter Amies, Head of Community and Environmental Services	December 2016
More detailed information be provided on key areas of crime within the Borough, specifically possession of weapons, burglary in dwellings, shoplifting and links to Indices of Multiple Deprivation.	Mr. Peter Amies, Head of Community and Environmental Services	December, 2016

17. ROUGH SLEEPING AND STREET DRINKING –

Mr. Ian Harrison, Corporate Director, gave a presentation to the Panel on rough sleeping and street drinking in the Borough and particularly the recent issues in Aldershot town centre.

It was noted that, historically, street drinking had caused small scale impacts throughout the Borough but mainly in the parks in Aldershot. However, in 2015, large numbers of rough sleepers and street drinkers had begun to gather in the High Street Car Park, Aldershot. The group, of 10 - 30 individuals, were very visible and high levels of concern and complaints had been received from residents, businesses and shoppers. The Council had organised a Hub Event in September 2015 in partnership with local organisations to help address the issues. Six rough sleepers engaged in the Hub Event were housed in temporary accommodation; unfortunately, all but one broke the terms of their tenancy and had returned to sleeping rough.

Subsequently, in October 2015, the Council had taken specific action to take back possession of the High Street Car Park. Injunctions had been obtained against seven individuals who had consistently been causing anti-social behaviour (ASB). All seven had been issued with terms of undertaking as part of their injunctions. By March 2016, rough sleeping and street drinking had become more visible in the town centre, particularly in Union Street. The Council had created a small team, led by Mr. Harrison, to co-ordinate an approach to address the issues. A number of initiatives had been put in place, from boarding up empty shop units to shop owners/managers recording incidents of ASB. Community Patrol Officers (CPOs) had assisted by patrolling the town centre and clearing rubbish, as required. Two additional mobile CCTV cameras were also utilised as a prevention measure. The measures taken to clear up Union Street had proved effective, although some individuals had been displaced to other areas of the town and the Council had continued to work with property owners, agencies and out-reach workers to further address the issues.

It was noted that, in August 2016, two of the individuals had been brought back before the courts for persistent breaches and had received custodial sentences of three months and one month. The individual who had received the three month custodial sentence was currently engaged and living in a new secured tenancy. However, the individual who had been sentenced to one month in prison was currently back on the street.

In June 2016, the Cabinet had agreed to convert the former Army Barrack and Air Training Cadets hut at Ordnance Road, Aldershot into a “wet hostel” for homeless people. The hostel would be run by specialists from the Society of St. James (SSJ) and would consist of nine bed spaces and provide support for long term resolution of drug, alcohol and mental health problems for an initial three year period. It was hoped that the facility would open in December 2016. The Council was also working with the Vine Centre to provide severe weather accommodation between November 2016 and March 2017 for individuals sleeping out over the winter months.

Mr. Harrison advised that street drinking and rough sleeping continued to be a significant issue locally and on a national scale. The Council’s response locally had combined a supportive approach and a resolve to take firm action as required. Working in a co-ordinated and cohesive fashion with partners was critical to a long-term solution.

The Panel discussed the issues raised and supported the provision of the “wet hostel” as a positive step towards addressing long term issues. It was felt that rough sleeping and street drinking had become a way of life for some involved and a number of individuals were evidently not homeless. Support given to the individuals from the general public was helping to enable some to remain on the street; this was being addressed in public literature. It was discussed that reports of individuals receiving large sums per day begging on the streets had been helping to sustain this lifestyle.

In response to a query, it was advised that the main cost to the Council had been the physical costs, such as the installation of security gates on Union Street and the £20,000 contribution towards the construction of the “wet hostel”. The Council had prioritised the problem as a result of the large number of complaints received relating to the issue, and it was noted that the cost of officer time was relatively low and that no new officers had been appointed to tackle the issue.

The Panel were advised of a couple of incidents in Farnborough, in particular a male and female sleeping rough in Queen Elizabeth Park. The male was reported as being an ex-service man suffering from the misuse of drugs and alcohol. This had raised questions about the available support and a request was made for more information on the current working arrangements and activities at Mike Jackson House.

The Panel **NOTED** the update.

Action to be Taken	By Whom	When
More information be provided on the working arrangements and activities of Mike Jackson House, Aldershot.	Mr. Ian Harrison, Corporate Director	December 2016

18. **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRL CRIMES AND DOMESTIC ABUSE UPDATE -**

The Panel welcomed Ms. Karen Evans, Chairman of the North East Hampshire Domestic Violence Forum, who had been invited to the meeting to update the Panel on domestic violence in the Borough, in particular the cross government strategy, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

Ms. Evans reported on the VAWG cross government strategy which had the intent that, “no woman should live in fear of violence, and every girl should grow up knowing she is safe, so that she can have the best start in life.” To date, progress had been made at national level to take measures to tackle stalking; forced marriage; revenge pornography and controlling and coercive behaviour. A new law had also been introduced called “Clare’s Law”, which allowed women to check if their partner had a violent past. New protection orders were also in place for domestic and sexual violence cases and cases involving female genital mutilation (FGM), these allowed authorities to take protective action before harm occurred. It was noted that locally the support given, in such cases, was to both female and male victims.

The national VAWG Strategy 2016-2020 had four key priorities, these were:

- Prevention – by working within the education system and through the media
- Provision of Services - access at any time for anyone
- Partnership working – sharing information with other related agencies
- Pursuing perpetrators – through the use of technology, e.g. body cameras and GPS technology, and by increasing the capabilities of the police and prosecutors to help identify online crimes.

The Panel reviewed some statistics issued by the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). It was reported that the Police had recorded 1,800 – 2,000 cases of domestic abuse in 2014/15 in Rushmoor and conviction rates in Hampshire had increased from 70.5% in 2014/15 to 77.2% in 2015/16. Sexual abuse statistics were also reviewed for the six-month period between 1st April – 30th September 2016. 51 offences had been reported in Rushmoor, which represented an increase of 27.5% on the previous year. Under 18 offences accounted for 15% of all sexual offences reported, and 85% of the victims were female. The peak age range was between 14-17 years.

It was reported that, often, the domestic abuse incidents and crimes that were reported were repeats and increasingly involved parents/grandparents being abused by their over 16 child/grandchild.

Ms. Evans advised of the tiered response to reported domestic abuse. Police and associated agencies carried out risk assessments to identify those at a high risk of serious harm or murder. Victims were then categorised into high, medium or standard risk and referred to the appropriate support services. High risk cases were referred to the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). Hart and Rushmoor held monthly joint MARAC meetings, which had discussed 221 cases at risk of murder between July 2015 and June 2016. This equated to 30 cases per 10,000 population. The cases involved 311 children, 14.5% of BME cases and 9.5% male victim cases. Victims with long-term disabilities also featured, and measures were being taken to better work in such cases, especially deaf victims where specialist equipment had been used. It was also noted that a Nepali speaking domestic abuse worker was in place, managed by CAB Rushmoor and the DA forum, to help bridge the language and cultural barriers when working with Nepali victims.

It was advised that Rushmoor had a refuge facility within its boundaries which provided emergency safe accommodation for victims, as well as options for “move on” support for victims through the Hampshire Make Safe Scheme (HMSS). The HMSS included the Sanctuary Scheme, which assisted with safety plans within the home; the intention was to make it as difficult as possible for the perpetrator to access the victim’s property. Measures could

include a safe room where the door opened outwards making it harder to force open, window and door alarms and door chains.

The Panel was informed that a number of local measures were in place including healthy relationship sessions in schools and colleges, armed forces domestic abuse work and awareness raising presentations and publicity. A RADAR (Domestic Violence Intervention) programme had also been established recently aimed at young perpetrators aged between 16-23 years and was being run by the Hampton Trust in conjunction with Step by Step. There were currently two groups in Aldershot involving 7-9 males and three females.

The Panel discussed the presentation and reflected on the issues in the Borough and the need for the same level of support as the larger areas, like Southampton to be in place. The Panel also recognised the strong partnership working to make a difference to the reporting levels of domestic abuse.

The Panel **NOTED** and **ENDORSED** the update.

19. **PEST CONTROL –**

The Panel **NOTED** the outline paper, which gave a current overview of the pest control service.

20. **WORK PROGRAMME –**

The Panel noted the current work programme.

The meeting closed at 9.32 p.m.

CR. A.R. NEWELL
CHAIRMAN