

Notes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee
Crime and Disorder Working Group
20th October 2014

Present: Councillors: Kate Rowbottom (Chairman), David Coldwell, Christine Costin, Duncan England, Frances Haigh, Jim Sanson

Also present: Councillors: George Cockman, Christian Mitchell

1. TO APPROVE AS CORRECT THE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7TH MAY 2014

The notes of the meeting held on 7th May 2014 were approved as a correct record.

2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN OR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There were no announcements.

4. PROTOCOL FOR THE SCRUTINY OF CRIME AND DISORDER MATTERS

The Working Group noted the protocol which outlined the key provisions of the relevant legislation, the terms of reference of the Working Group, the duty to meet at least once a year, the role of scrutinising the CSP Plan and performance reports, the ability to give notice to responsible authorities to require their representatives to attend Working Group meetings or to provide information required for scrutiny.

5. REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO THE ACTION PLANS 2013/14 FOR THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN

The Working Group reviewed the updates on the CSP Action Plans for 2013/14 which indicated progress or otherwise using red, amber and green coding.

The Working Group noted that the action plans for tackling burglary and for the reduction of the level of risk to repeat and vulnerable victims did not

continue with formal CSP action plans in 2014/15. The other action plans were continuing in 2014/15 along with an additional action plan to tackle issues in relation to drugs and alcohol.

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan (lead partners: Horsham District Council and Sussex Police)

The action plan update for 2013/14 for reducing anti-social behaviour showed some actions coded as red to indicate that they had not yet been achieved and delivered.

The Working Group continued to be concerned that ASB data, collected by Sussex Police and previously analysed by the WSCC Insights team, was no longer available because of an internal restructure at WSCC. The Insights team would process special requests for data analysis; the ASB team had not requested that in 2013/14. This action, for the collection and analysis of relevant information, was included again in the ASB action plan for 2014/15.

The Working Group, at its meeting on 7th May 2014, had been informed by the Community Safety Manager of this reduction in the level of analytical support that the County Council had once provided and how the Insights Team no longer provided in-depth analysis but would, if requested, provide broad statistics on specified topics. Members suggested that a representative from the County Council be invited to attend the next Working Group meeting to discuss this issue.

Another action coded as red related to the training on ASB for CSP frontline staff, focussing on signs, symptoms, how to report ASB and the available support services. This action was included again in the ASB action plan for 2014/15. Members agreed to request that the Community Safety Manager be invited to attend the next Working Group meeting to discuss this issue.

A further action was coded red in relation to ensuring frontline CSP staff members were trained in the use of the new tools and powers to tackle ASB, and to brief partner agencies on those changes and the way in which ASB was being tackled in Horsham District. The action plan update stated that this task had not been delivered because the new tools were unadopted given that the statutory process was ongoing. The Working Group had been informed at its last meeting that the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2104 had come into effect on 13th May 2014. Members agreed to request that the Community Safety Manager be asked to confirm whether this training would be provided.

The Working Group noted that ASB crime was currently the largest category of recorded crime in Horsham District. The Chairman referred to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance Report for April 2014 which detailed performance in tackling crime in 2013/14; ASB incidents for all of Sussex had shown a reduction of 7.8% in 2013/14. Members noted, however, that ASB recorded crime in Horsham District, had shown significant increases in recent months.

Reducing Burglary Action Plan (lead partner: Sussex Police)

The Working Group noted that the total number of burglaries recorded in Horsham District had decreased from 621 incidents in 2012/13 to 571 incidents in 2013/14.

The action plan focussed on reducing the number of domestic burglaries. There had been 261 dwelling burglaries in 2013/14, an increase of five offences when compared with 2012/13.

The Chairman referred to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance Report (April 2014) which mentioned crime figures for Sussex in 2013/14; there had been 600 fewer homes burgled in Sussex compared to the previous year; of that number, West Sussex had recorded 200 fewer.

None of the actions for 2013/14 were coded as red.

Community engagement and reassurance (lead partners: Horsham District Council and Sussex Police)

The action plan update showed that the promotion of reassurance in the growing night time economy of Horsham town centre by adopting the Purple Flag Award Scheme had not been delivered in 2013/14. This action was included again in the ASB action plan for 2014/15. It was noted that Horsham Unlimited had included a Purple Flag application as part of its plans to form a Business Improvement District.

Another action was also coded as red: the action to hold at least one 'face the people' session in the District in 2013.

This action plan sought to promote the work of the CSP within Horsham District and to engage with communities. It included a task to review the CSP website to ensure it was up-to-date and reflected the CSP priorities for the year. The Working Party was informed that the Horsham District

CSP website listed out of date information, campaigns and news items, had not yet posted the CSP Plan for 2014/15, that a number of links to enable the public to report information and alleged crimes did not work, and that the contact email address for the Community Safety team was incorrect. Members felt that this action should be coded red rather than amber and recommended that the CSP be asked to consider closing down its website until the required amendments were achieved.

Reducing the level of risk to repeat and vulnerable victims (lead partner: West Sussex County Council)

The action plan update stated that there were low levels of reporting of disability victimisation and hate incidents. That seemed to be at odds with the information in the Police and Crime Commissioner's Performance Report (April 2014) which mentioned crime trends in Sussex for 2013/14; there had been an increase of 33.2% in the reporting of alleged hate crimes; a large increase of 53.8% (170 offences) had been reported in West Sussex.

The Working Group commented on a number of actions which were coded as red; they had not been undertaken because of a lack of resources. The actions related to the support of vulnerable groups and tackling age-related hate crime.

The Working Group expressed its concern that this action plan no longer featured as a formal CSP action plan for 2014/15. Members suggested that West Sussex County Council be asked about any work it was undertaking to tackle repeat and vulnerable victimisation. Members also suggested that the Police and Crime Commissioner could be asked to comment on this.

Safer Roads (lead partner: West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service)

A progress report had not been provided in the action plan template and the Working Group could not see the progress of actions undertaken in 2013/14 and whether they should be coded red, amber or green.

The Working Group noted the series of activities undertaken by CSP partners in 2013/14 to promote road safety, such as New Driver and New Rider Awareness programmes, National Bike Week, and summer and Christmas drink drive campaigns.

The CSP had, in 2013, reacted to a spate of road casualties and deaths in Horsham District by increasing its community engagement with District

Youth, providing Safe Drive sessions and by starting additional work with Billingshurst Parish Council because that area had been directly impacted by a number of road traffic casualties.

Members noted that nine people had been killed and 84 seriously injured in road traffic collisions (KSI) in Horsham District in 2013/14. The figures for West Sussex showed an increase in KSI from 420 in 2012 to 438 in 2013. In particular there had been increases in KSIs for pedestrians and cyclists in West Sussex.

The Working Group agreed to invite the lead officer from West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to attend its next meeting to discuss this action plan.

Reducing violence against the person including domestic abuse (lead partner: Sussex Police)

The action plan update stated that there had been 261 violence against the person offences recorded for 2013/14 which represented a 9.3% increase when compared to 2012/13.

ABH offences (assaults where injury was caused) totalled 311 which was an increase of 11.1% or 33 offences when compared to 2012/13.

Domestic abuse incidents had increased by 12.9% (70 incidents) as at 5th February 2014. That increase had continued with domestic abuse crime increasing by 61 offences as at 15th September 2014.

The increase in recorded violent crime had continued for 2014/15 to date, with significant increases from June to August 2014 inclusive. Members wished to know the reason for these increases given that many of the action points for 2013/14 were coded green as having been achieved.

The Working Group agreed to request Chief Inspector Hodges to provide detailed crime data for Horsham District and explanations of any significant trends.

Other matters arising from the CSP Action Plans

Members briefly discussed the work of Police Support Community Officers (PCSOs) and queried whether PCSO workloads may be increasing but without any additional powers, and how the reorganisation of PCSO areas had affected their role and efficiency.

Members suggested that warnings could be issued to the public about specific current crimes and scams, perhaps with a feature appearing in the Horsham District News magazine.

The Working Group agreed to request the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to recommend that the Council invite the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner to attend a meeting with Councillors to answer questions about policing, PCSOs, the increase in recorded hate crime, the need to reduce the level of risk to repeat and vulnerable victims, and any other relevant issues.

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee suggested that the Community Safety Manager could be invited to attend that Committee to discuss the CSP's engagement with the scrutiny process.

Members had not yet received the final action plan for 2014/15 which was being developed to tackle issues around drugs and alcohol.

Members requested that all action plan updates include a headline summary at the start and also explain the reasons for any significant increases and/or decreases in crime.

The Chairman agreed that she would, at the CSP Board meeting on 29th October 2014, request the CSP Plan for 2014/15, the action plan for tackling issues around drugs and alcohol, and highlight the out of date information posted on the CSP website. That Board meeting would discuss the half yearly position of the action plans for 2014/15.

6. CRIME STATISTICS FOR HORSHAM DISTRICT

The Working Group noted the monthly crime statistics for Horsham District for each category of crime since 2011, along with the associated pie chart and graphs for each classification of crime from August 2013 to August 2014.

The data had informed their discussions of the performance in relation to each of the available CSP action plans for 2013/14.

7. FUTURE MEETING DATE

The Working Group agreed to meet in December 2014 and to invite the following CSP partners to attend to discuss performance in delivering their CSP action plans for 2013/14 and any other relevant issues:

Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour – the Community Safety Manager;

Community engagement and reassurance – the Community Safety Officer;

Reducing the level of risk to repeat and vulnerable victims – a representative from West Sussex County Council to explain how this work would be progressed in light of it not being a CSP action plan for 2014/15;

Safer Roads – the Deputy District Commander (Central Group), West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service;

Violence against the person – Chief Inspector Hodges or a representative from Sussex Police; and

Data analysis – a representative from West Sussex County Council to explain the reasons why detailed data analysis was no longer provided.

The Working Group, at its December meeting, would also discuss the CSP Plan for 2014/15 and the half year performance statistics.

The meeting finished at 4.55 p.m. having commenced at 3.30 p.m.

CHAIRMAN