

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY - SPECIAL

6 July 2010

Present:

Councillor Dilys Baldwin (Chair)

Councillors Shiel, Branston, Mrs Danks and Taghdissian

Superintendent John Vellacott, Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator and Member Services Officer (HB)

43 Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

44 Community Safety Partnership - Presentation on Crime Figures

The Chair welcomed Superintendent John Vellacott, Devon and Cornwall Constabulary and Michael Miller, Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator.

At the Special Meeting of this Committee on 15 February 2010, Community Safety issues had been discussed and Members had requested a further presentation on the detailed breakdown of crime statistics to ensure that elected Members were confident that the statistics were an accurate reflection of crime and that key areas were being addressed. In the absence of Superintendent John Vellacott due to illness, Michael Miller, the Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator had briefed the Committee on crime statistics at a Special Meeting on 7 June 2010.

Superintendent Vellacott spoke in detail on the same statistics covering the period 1999/2000 to 2009/10, set out in an accompanying paper. He provided a detailed analysis of each crime heading, also referring to the significant increase in crime numbers in 2002/03 as a result of changes in recording techniques, which were now very complex. Many crimes went unrecorded, such as those linked to the night time economy, but the overall statistics incorporated data from other sources such as hospital admissions. He explained the role of the HMIC annual audit and it was noted that the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary had consistently been graded in the top band in terms of compliance with Government crime recording requirements. He also stated that the Force area was statistically the fourth safest area in the country.

He responded to Members' questions under the separate crime headings and explained how the Police worked with other agencies, the Courts and other Forces in dealing with crime. He referred to the different levels of criminality and set out the measures undertaken to combat the activity of prolific offenders. In the context of CCTV funding he advised that the Constabulary, in light of increasing budgetary constraints, were unable to support these costs and stated that Superintendent Jo Tennant would attend a meeting on this issue.

He advised that improved communication, both about the work of the Police and in terms of community feedback and intelligence gathering was a key aspect in the future delivery of partnership objectives. PACT meetings were particularly valuable in this respect and Members referred to useful data copied to them by local community police officers. He stated that greater use of social media would also play an increasing role.

Members expressed their satisfaction with regard to the accuracy of the statistics.

Both Superintendent Vellacott and Michael Miller explained the structure and funding of the Partnership, stating that the latter's post was funded one third by the City Council and two thirds from the Safer Devon Partnership. Previously, the Police and County Council budgets had been committed directly to the Partnership. The Superintendent and Councillor Fullam represented the Partnership on the SDP.

The Chair stated that the Committee required a deeper understanding of the work of the Community Safety Partnership in order to take an overview of the priorities for the City being focussed on by the Partnership and to ensure that the work being done to address these priorities was being done effectively.

Scrutiny Committee - Community agreed that a further special meeting be held after the next ordinary meeting on 31 August 2010 for a presentation on the role and remit of the Community Safety Partnership to include a detailed breakdown of the Government's Hallmarks of Effective Partnership which the Partnership was working to and that the Leader of the City Council be invited to attend to explain how the priorities of the City Council were being met by the Partnership.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 6.40 pm

Chair