

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - COMMUNITY - SPECIAL

15 February 2010

Present:

Councillor Dilys Baldwin (Chair)

Councillors Shiel, Branston, Choules, R Smith, Taghdissian and Wardle

Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator and Member Services Officer (HB)

Also present:

Superintendent John Vellacott - Devon and Cornwall Constabulary

Madeleine van Wyk - Family Intervention Project

Councillor Newton - Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Involvement

13 Declaration of Interests

No declarations of interest were made by Members.

14 Presentation on the Community Safety Partnership

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

Both Superintendent Vellacott and Michael Miller detailed the work of the Exeter Community Safety Partnership. They explained the legislative background to and the makeup of the Partnership and its work in the context of Devon and the Local Area Agreement, the community safety projects in Exeter now being funded by the Safer Devon Partnership. The Partnership had completed two, three year strategies and was now required to work to a one year rolling annual plan. There had been a shift in emphasis from combating acquisitive crime to alcohol and drug related crime and reducing reoffending.

Superintendent Vellacott stated that although crime was down 25% during the period 2005 to 2008 and down 4.1% for 2008 to 2009 and that, so far in 2010, there had been an 8% reduction, in Exeter there was a 10% shortfall in the Government target of 84% in respect of the public perception of the Police and Council in an area to deal with the anti social behaviour and crime that matter.

He referred to the work of the My Neighbourhood/PACT initiative which he felt was key to help reduce the above shortfall. Promoting the work of the Partnership would be important as would be improving communication and contact with the public. The Neighbourhood/PACT meetings were being augmented by "street meetings" where Police officers met the public on an ad hoc basis outside superstores etc. The CDRP website would be updated, flat screen TVs relaying information had been installed in Police stations and would be extended to the Civic Centre and the St Sidwell's Centre. Posters in shop windows and libraries etc. and newsletters would be provided and a new initiative of community messaging with emails sent to key players in the community would be introduced. He welcomed the involvement of the Scrutiny Committee and referred Members to the Home Office publication -

“Communicating for Confidence”. He hoped that the City Council would be represented at the forthcoming conference at St. Mellion on 26 February 2010. He responded as follows to Members’ queries:-

- Anti social behaviour affecting the elderly was treated as a priority with follow up calls by beat managers;
- The Anti Social Behaviour Action Team sought to ensure a multi agency approach to problems;
- It was accepted that some crimes were not reported but problem areas/premises could be identified through the analysis of data including A&E figures; and
- The Police did not fund CCTV in either Devon, Cornwall or Plymouth.

Superintendent Vellacott stated that local authorities had a central role in community safety and that a joined up approach with the Police was essential with both bodies aiming to win the confidence of the public that their concerns that anti social behaviour and crime issues were being addressed. To this end, Members asked that a detailed breakdown of crime statistics be provided to ensure that elected Members were confident that key areas were being addressed.

The Chair thanked the Superintendent and Michael Miller for their presentation.

RESOLVED that a further meeting be held at 5.30pm on Monday 7 June 2010 to receive a presentation on crime figures including a breakdown of the categories of crime and the definition of anti social behaviour.

15 **Presentation on the Family Intervention Project**

The Chair welcomed Madeleine van Wyk, Project Manager of the Family Intervention Project. Michael Miller detailed the background and history of the Project which had been introduced after the Respect Task Force had requested the Community Safety Partnership to participate. Devon County Council had commissioned the NCH (now Action for Children) to lead the project.

Madeline van Wyk detailed the operation of the Family Intervention Project which intervened with problem families at the point where legal action was served. After discussion at ASBAT, a key worker was allocated to a family and a family contract drawn up setting standards for acceptable behaviour. Of 45 referrals, 32 families had been accepted. Of these, 75 % had been referred by the City Council’s Housing service, 15% from the Police and alcohol agencies and the remainder from registered social landlords. Of the 32 families, one had been evicted because of a refusal to engage with FIP or any other agency. The other 31 families remained within the project. Intervention was reduced if the family was sustaining and monitored for a period. Families were referred back if they returned to crises. A detailed case study was provided.

The Family Intervention Project was Government funded project with the intention of becoming mainstreamed. Funding of £189,987, + £100,000 from Supporting People had been provided in 2007/08 and the figure for the current financial year was £134,743. It had been announced that the tapered figure of £94,320 for 2010/11 would instead remain at £134,000. Funding had not been identified to date for April 2011.

In response to a Member’s question, she advised that there was no waiting list and if a family could not be taken on within the first 24 to 48 hours they were referred to another agency. It was important for the Housing Service to have a good relationship

with Housing Associations and for a common approach. Where a family was housed by a Registered Social Landlord a representative attended the ASBAT meeting to discuss the case and reference was made to representatives of Housing Associations attending residents' meetings on the Countess Wear estate and recent My Neighbourhood/PACT meetings in Clyst Heath. Although it was understood that RSL's could not be required to attend Scrutiny Committee meetings, as there were some 20 operating in Exeter, managing some 5,000 properties, Members felt that it would be helpful to enter into a dialogue with Housing Association representatives on areas of mutual interest. This would be pursued.

The Chair thanked Madeleine van Wyk for her presentation.

The meeting commenced at 5.30 pm and closed at 7.15 pm

Chair