

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE SCRUTINY OF COMMUNITY SAFETY - WORK GROUPS 1 & 2 FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS

WORK GROUP 1: HOW ISSUES AT A WARD LEVEL CAN BE PROPERLY COMMUNICATED AND ADDRESSED.

Councillors Compton, Copping and Short

Creating a safer environment is our aim and public reassurance is the area that this authority leads on when addressing the six principle areas of concern expressed in the consultation on the audit of crime and disorder.

The fact that councillors represented three very different areas of the district and are long serving helped considerably in identifying problems and possible solutions.

Findings

1. We noted that there was some overlap with the working group looking at the effectiveness and operation of the Communities & Fear of Crime Group.
2. We discussed a range of issues that affect people's perception of their area and how concerned they are about being a victim of crime. These included a visible police presence, CCTV, lighting, levels of domestic burglary and anti social behaviour. We discussed the impact on fear of crime of the appearance of an area or GRIME including abandoned vehicles, fly tipping, graffiti, and broken windows.
3. We recognised that there are a number of groups already meeting where safety is the sole or one of the main topics. We discussed the different groups in the district, their membership and effectiveness. We recognised that there is no *one size fits all* but there were some common elements that we could apply.
4. We discussed who the key partners were and what they must bring to the group. Local knowledge was identified as the key factor and councillors were key partners.
5. Attendance by specific groups was inconsistent. .
6. We discussed that changes in police personnel were more frequent than with Cllrs and Officers and this can lead to break downs in communication. We recognised that all partners had to commit to a minimum standard.
7. Communication re accessibility but also sharing of information needed to be improved..

Recommendations

- 1a. Joint working principles needed to be developed and adopted at the action group or community level first. The parent group (Communities & Fear Of Crime Group) would then have a clearer idea about its core membership, reporting and support systems.
- 2a. Each action group should understand the drivers of the fear of crime and develop action plans to address these including the prompt reporting and removal of GRIME and regular joint environmental and lighting audits of the area utilising those people trained by *Living Streets* .
- 3a. Existing and any new groups would benefit from a proforma setting out the business of the group, a focus on action, roles and responsibilities.
 - b. Elected members should chair the group.
 - c. The groups should meet at least quarterly with an agreed membership based on local knowledge and experience.
 - d. Where possible the agenda should allow community safety issues as a first item to ensure efficient use of a Police Officers time.
- 4a. The key partners include:
 - Local residents
 - Neighbourhood Watch
 - Local councillors
 - Clerks to local authorities
 - Officers of local authorities
 - Police
 - Local business
 - Young person's representatives
 - Fire & Rescue Service
- 5a. This committee would make recommendations to Executive re the attendance of district councillors.
 - b. This committee would make recommendations to the Warwick District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership re the support of key partners.
- 6a. It was important that people with local knowledge helped to induct any new member to the group but particularly Police Officers so that existing support systems and networks were properly accessed.

- b. Where there is a change of police officer there should be a period of overlap with previous officer wherever possible.
- 7a The group should utilise an e-mail group to share information but particularly to keep updated re changes in contact details. Voicemail and e-mail details should be circulated.
- b. This authority should develop a community safety web site to provide core information including contact details, ward and beat maps, recorded crime figures etc.
- c. The group should receive reports on the patterns of crime and disorder and identify an action and person responsible for each issue.
- d. We should share information on the distribution and coverage provided by both Police Special Officers and the Police Community Support Officers.
- e. We should share information on the allocation of time and priorities for the Park Ranger together with contact details.
- f. We should look to extend the Neighbourhood Watch messaging system to alert residents to crime patterns.

Process and next steps –

- to consider the findings and recommendations of the work groups at the June 7th meeting of the committee.
- the committee would then be asked if it wished to go into a select committee mode and invite key partners to attend and answer questions in order to further challenge the key issues and to secure an agreed way forward.
- if this was approved then questions should be approved in advance.
- that a report with the main bullet points would then need to go to Executive in order to secure corporate ownership.
- that this committee would make recommendations to the Warwick District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership re the support of key partners.

WORK GROUP 2 : MEMBERSHIP, OPERATION AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITIES & FEAR OF CRIME GROUP

Councillors Blacklock, Gill and Hatfield

It was reiterated that this area of work has had considerable scrutiny recently but this is one of 3 important areas where we have identified improvement is needed.

The Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership has addressed the concerns expressed in the consultation on the audit of crime and disorder through 6 action groups. Each has a lead agency, Warwick District Council is the lead agency on the Communities & Fear Of Crime Group.

Findings

8. The group is currently chaired by the Warwick District Council Community Safety Officer (Peter Cutts). The group has 3 action groups in the 3 priority areas and each has a liaison officer also provided by this authority: Simon Lieberman of Regenesi in Brunswick, Town Centre Manager Paul Haynes for Leamington and Community Development Officer Linda Price in Lillington.

9. Current Communities & Fear Of Crime Group membership is:

Pete Cutts – Chair

Brunswick	– Community Beat Manager Leamington Town Cllr Karamjit Rajput Simon Lieberman.
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Leamington Town	– Town Centre Sgt Leamington Town Cllr Sarah Davies Paul Haynes
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Lillington	– Community Beat Manager Leamington Town Cllr Sarah Boad Linda Price
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Nhbhood Watch	– Barry Armitage...Coordinator
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Assoc Town & Parish Councils	– Lois Sparling
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Business Rep	– Paul Haynes has identified a representative.
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10. The group meets and reports quarterly to the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership on progress against targets in the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy.
11. There is excellent progress against the targets set for this group. A view had been expressed that it had turned into a reporting group. It has a clear focus and knows which players are needed but the role of the group needs redefining and relationship between itself and the action groups.
12. We discussed membership of action groups and the inconsistency in attendance from all but the Police. The accepted principle was that local knowledge was needed at the action group level. Key players could include:

Local Councillors – District, Town and County.
Police – Community Beat Manager, CBO & PCSO
Residents and Community representatives including Neighbourhood Watch
13. We discussed what the role and responsibilities of the group were and we listed:
 - i. Devising strategies and action plans in order to meet the targets set in the Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategy
 - ii. Reporting quarterly to the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership on progress.
 - iii Receiving bids from and making awards to the 3 action groups that address specific issues in their own action plans.
 - iv Coordinating annual bids to the Building Safer Communities Fund in order to progress key issues.
 - v Acting as a conduit to ensure that local issues can be effectively communicated to the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.
14. We thought that it would help considerably if the role and responsibilities were spelt out for each organisation and individual.

Recommendations

- We felt that in order to identify who should serve on the parent group it was necessary to agree membership of the action groups and then revisit this.
- We would meet with key partners to test our understanding further.

Councillors Blacklock,, Hatfield and District Commander Chief Inspector Chris Jackson.

Findings

15. We discussed the number of existing groups where community safety is the sole or a significant topic, these include:

Brunswick Local Action Group
Leamington Town Centre Safety Group
Lillington Community Action Forum
Whitnash Community Safety Panel
Warwick Gates
Electoral Division Panels
Hatton Park
Kenilworth Police Liaison Group
16. We also stated that other groups could be forming shortly including Packmores, West Warwick and Woodloes.
17. Chris Jackson emphasised that communication was an issue and that he had to strike a balance between national performance priorities and local citizen focus. There is a great and increasing demand to access Police officers face to face. A minimum requirement agreed through this process would help all by maximising the time of the Police officer on the beat.
18. For a number of reasons the elected member is the best and most appropriate person to lead and chair the groups. We needed a protocol for effective operation and it was suggested that the length of meetings should be fixed.
19. We thought a proforma for minutes would help keep the paperwork down and ensure the group is outcome orientated.
20. It became increasingly apparent that the good Chairing of the meeting is critical. The Chair will set the tone of the meeting and should ensure that a culture of blame does not prevail.
21. Chris Jackson thought the idea of an e-group was very helpful and e-mails should go to the assigned officer for that group and where possible others in the team policing structure. Chris thought that this would facilitate communication because having an e-group would ensure that he knew who to contact when an emergency or significant issue arose.

22. We asked Chris who he thought the key players were and after some debate together we listed:
- Elected representatives
 - Neighbourhood Watch
 - Resident associations or representatives
 - Police
 - Local authority officers
 - A young persons representative
 - Fire and rescue service
23. We thought it would be useful to offer a time limited facility for any local concerned person to comment on a specific problem or contribution to problem solving.
24. Following this process we thought that the initial meeting of any new or existing group should necessitate an introduction by the Chair to set the scene and ensure each person understood their role and responsibilities.
25. We recognised that the group needed to understand the structure for community safety to ensure it could access support.

Recommendations

- 8a. The group be chaired by a Warwick District Councillor
- b. Principal support be provided by the Community Safety Officer
- 9a. Representatives be revisited following a review of the action groups
- 10a The group should continue to meet quarterly dictated by the availability of
of the analysis of recorded crime.
- 11a. Roles and responsibilities are re-stated following agreement of the terms of reference for the Warwick District Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- 12a. See 9a
- 13a. That the purpose of the group be restated.
- 14a See 11a.

- 15a n/a
- 16a A Packmores Group be convened to address the steep rise in crime and disorder witnessed on 2003/04.
- 17a A minimum standard be agreed so that expectations can be managed.
- 18a. see 8a
- 19a A proforma to be produced
- 20a The role of the chair needs to be clearly defined.
- 21a. E-groups to be used where possible to facilitate communication
- 22a n/a
- 23a The group should be the reference point for local community safety concerns and a time limited facility should be made available for a member of the community to speak.
- 24a Induction needs to be formalised to ensure continuity.
- 25a The Communities & Fear of Crime group needs to promote its supporting role.