

LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

COMMUNITY SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER 2020 AT 1930 HOURS

Present : Councillors A Dodwell
R Goodchild
R Berry
T Morris (Chair)
V Harvey
J Silverstone
F Kharawala
A Gray

Also in attendance: M Saccoccio, (Town Clerk)
S Sandiford, (Deputy Town Clerk)
M Jahn, (Committee Officer)
L Farmer, (TACTIC Manager)
Chief Inspector Lee Haines, (Bedfordshire Police) (left at 21.25)
Inspector Craig Gurr, (Bedfordshire Police) (left at 21.24)
S Swain, (Lead Youth Worker, Groundwork East)
Andrew Selous, (MP South West Beds)(left 21.15)
Andy McCormick, (Pub Watch)
Cllr K Cursons (left at 21.06)
Cllr C Palmer
Cllr G Perham
Cllr S Owen

Members of the Public: 0

44/CS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

45/CS DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

(i) Members were asked to declare any interests, including the nature of those interests, which they had in any of the items under consideration at this meeting.

Councillor Dodwell declared an interest as a member of the Bedfordshire Police and Crime Panel.

Councillor K Cursons was observing only but declared herself to be a Magistrate.

(ii) No disclosable pecuniary interests were declared and no dispensations were requested.

46/CS QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

47/CS MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Sub-Committee received the draft minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 13 July 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Community Safety Sub-Committee meeting held on 13 July 2020 be approved as a correct record, to be signed at a later date when safe to do so.

48/CS LOCAL POLICING MATTERS

By invitation, Chief Inspector Lee Haines of Bedfordshire Police spoke to members to discuss local/community policing matters in Leighton-Linslade.

A question was raised regarding the proposed strategy for policing in Leighton-Linslade and the plans for development of a more appropriate base in the Town where members of the public could access police services. Chief Inspector Haines confirmed a consultation was on the agenda to discuss options for policing in Leighton-Linslade including the night-time economy policing and the uncertainty brought about by COVID-19.

Clarification was sought to the enforcement and policing of social distancing and the rule of 30 attending funerals. It was confirmed that a Working Group had now been formed to include funeral directors to enable communication between each organisation when these situations arose. Prior notice and shared information of funerals happening could assist in preventing a large gathering which once formed would be difficult to police without escalation.

Another problem highlighted was the lapse in time that sometimes occurred from requesting police to when they arrived at an incident. Taxi drivers had been subject to abuse and criminal damage to their vehicles most weekends and felt vulnerable. Police were aware of this and informed members that response policing would be looked at in the town. A suggestion was made that patrols by Street Watch Volunteers or Street Angels could assist providing a visual deterrent but concerns were raised regarding using volunteer Street Watch patrols during the night-time if they did not have back up from the Community Policing Team.

A question was asked regarding Community Hubs in Bedfordshire and how the Community Hub in Leighton-Linslade could provide public access for face to face enquiries. Chief Inspector Haines confirmed the minority of contact was face to face at any hub or station in the present climate and before COVID-19. Reporting tended to be on-line or by telephone. Engagement with police occurred more out in the community with more opportunities for meet-ups at venues within the local area. The use of volunteers to man the front desk of a community hub was suggested to free up police and enable the public access to someone to report to.

Chief Inspector Haines understood all the concerns raised and would take them back to the Force Executive. It was agreed that partnership meetings such as these were the best way to raise concerns on policing and any suggestions were welcomed. Policing had changed over the last 15 years with increased demand on police services which in some cases has had a negative impact on what could be offered

RESOLVED to note the information.

49/CS OPERATION DODFORD

The Sub-Committee had received a written report regarding crime and anti-social behaviour in advance of the meeting and a verbal summary was given regarding activity undertaken in respect of Operation Dodford and incidents of note from June – September 2020.

A question was raised regarding the accuracy of the numbers showing for crimes in Leighton Buzzard. It was confirmed these figures would be checked and accurate figures forwarded to members.

The number of anti-social behaviour crimes had increased mainly during the time schools were closed because of COVID-19. Police were concentrating on high visibility and patrols around parks and other hot spot areas. Concerns were raised in the light of the lack of organised firework displays this year and whether this might cause additional anti-social behaviour and private parties breaking current restriction regulations. It was confirmed the police went into schools to talk of the dangers of fireworks and visited shops to advise on what and to whom to sell particular products. Extra officers would also be on duty to provide additional cover on Halloween and bonfire night.

Increased bike crimes, some of which was aggravated robbery of bikes from young people, were still occurring and this affected how people viewed the town as a safe place to live or start a business. Also shoplifting was prevalent with less security guards in shops and the wearing of masks which gave the shoplifter more confidence of not being identified. It was agreed that the fear of crime created within certain parts of the community was often worse than actual figures reflected.

RESOLVED to note the report.

50/CS YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECTS

(a) The Sub-Committee received an update of work funded by the Town Council and delivered through the Teenage Advice and Information Centre (TACTIC). TACTIC was now back in operation with restrictions in place running drop-in sessions every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 3.30 – 5.30 pm. TANG sessions also resumed recently with a group of 8 people attending. Staff were also mentoring 9 young people with 1 to 1 support and attending schools to offer further support and workshops. Basketball sessions had also resumed at Pages Park with 7 people attending the weekly sessions. Fifty

hampers were being made for Older People instead of the Christmas meal this year and would be delivered to their doors nearer to Christmas.

Staff at TACTIC were supporting the Young Peoples Awards initiative to encourage and celebrate some of the good work and achievements of the young people involved. They would receive a certificate and an Amazon voucher in recognition. Staff had also attended training and professionals' meetings as and when required.

Thanks were given by the Sub-Committee for all the work carried out by TACTIC during the past months during COVID-19 and their continuing hard work with young people.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(b) A summary was also given of the Summer Youth Project which was run by Groundwork with Town Council funding. Between 13 and 16 young people attended the project each week which provided opportunities to socialise, play football, obtain bike repairs, receive mentoring, talk to police and engage with youth workers.

RESOLVED to note the information.

(c) The Sub-Committee received and considered a proposal from Groundwork for provision of one fortnightly session for young people for the next 6 or 12 months. This would be in addition to one weekly and two fortnightly sessions currently being funded by Central Bedfordshire Council and the services being delivered by TACTIC. Topics covered would include managing anxiety and stress, physical and creative activities, provision of information and guidance in areas such as CSE, domestic abuse, gangs and knife crime and provision of hot food. All outcomes would be assessed by Groundwork through evaluation forms and feedback from the young people, schools and statistics from police.

These sessions should improve mental well-being, increase confidence, engagement at school and reduce anti-social behaviour and would be delivered in a COVID19 safe environment by trained youth workers.

A proposal was put forward to the Town Council to provide funding for this project on a 6-month or 12-month basis. The Sub-Committee were in favour of the proposal, subject to budget being available, and agreed to the 6-month proposal to be reviewed on completion. The rationale for funding in this way was to reduce potential for antisocial behaviour which might arise due to other provisions not running as a result of Covid-19 during this period.

RESOLVED to approve funding of £5,878 plus VAT for a six-month period to Groundwork for the provision of 12 sessions from Community Safety earmarked reserve (9042/920), due to Covid-19 and other provisions not taking place.

51/CS CCTV & RE-DEPLOYABLE CAMERAS

The Sub-Committee received reports of recorded CCTV incidents in Leighton Buzzard during June, July, August and September 2020. These reports were publicly available and published monthly on the Central Bedfordshire Council website.

The Sub-Committee agreed that this report did not provide enough information and only showed the incidents recorded by the CCTV operators. A copy of the report had been given to Sergeant Craven to add detail of police activity against the recorded incidents.

RESOLVED to note the CCTV reports.

52/CS WATCH SCHEME UPDATES

The Sub-Committee received a verbal update from Andrew McCormick, Chairman of Pub Watch. He informed members of his concerns regarding the response time of police to any incident happening in a pub and how it would be addressed especially over the festive period.

Inspector Gurr confirmed he would invite Pub Watch to the Night-time Economy Strategy Meetings to discuss incidents and problems encountered. Also it was hoped that the hours of the Community Policing Team would be increased and extended to midnight which could assist in shorter response times. The area covered was a large geographical area and the calls had to be assessed and dealt with through threat/harm and risk categories.

RESOLVED to note the information.

53/CS EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no requirement to exclude the public.

54/CS OPERATIONAL POLICING

There were no confidential operational policing matters to be reported.

The meeting closed at 21.30 hours.

I HEREBY CONFIRM THAT THE FOREGOING IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE RECORD OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 October 2020.

Chair

11 January 2021