

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY
AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

Thursday 13th September 2007 at 6.00 pm
in Committee Room 3, Council House, Dudley

PRESENT:-

Councillor A. Turner (Chairman)
Councillor Cotterill (Vice Chairman)
Councillors Ahmed, Burston, A. Finch, Ms Foster, Harley, Jones,
Nottingham, Ryder and Tyler.

OFFICERS

Assistant Director for Partnerships and Childrens' Trusts (Lead Officer to the Committee), Head of Community Safety, Head of Policy, Head of Neighbourhood Management, Senior Solicitor (Directorate of Law and Property), Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, Police Liaison Officer and Messrs. Jablonski and Furidze (Directorate of Law and Property).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Chief Superintendent Croft (OCU Commander - West Midlands Police)

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APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs Collins and Chief Superintendent Baldwin.

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SUBSTITUTE MEMBER

It was reported that Councillor Tyler had been appointed to serve as a substitute for Councillor Mrs Collins for this meeting of the Committee only.

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DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Member made a declaration of interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th June 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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PUBLIC FORUM

No matters were raised under this agenda item.

18

NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING AND POLICE AND COMMUNITY TOGETHER MEETINGS

Chief Superintendent Croft, a West Midlands Police Operational Command Unit Commander, gave a presentation backed by slides, on aspects of neighbourhood policing and Police and Community Together (PACT) meetings. He highlighted in particular, a number of successes such as reducing overall crime levels in the borough, effective community policing and that the force was well placed to achieve its targets. The Committee were also informed that the local force achieved national recognition as an exemplar police force in a number of areas such as counter terrorism.

In response to concerns raised by Members that incidences of low level crime were too high and that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) did not have the same powers as the police officers, Chief Superintendent Croft commented on the use of PCSOs and referred to evidence from a recent survey in Dudley that showed the public was happy with the performance of PCSOs, as they had contributed to a significant reduction in crime and fear of crime. PCSOs also had a good record helping to combat crime in general as well as alcohol and drugs related offences. The recent publication of a new national crime reduction strategy was likely to see an increase in the powers of PCSOs to make them more effective. Chief Superintendent Croft urged the public and Members of the Council to attend PACT meetings, so that concerns could be raised and contact him should they remain unresolved. Increased police and public engagement would translate to better deployment of available policing resources to identified neighbourhoods.

It was also noted that it was the responsibility of the Council and all its partners to tackle the low level crime referred to in accordance with Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the presentation given and as reported at the meeting, on neighbourhood policing and the police and community together meetings, be noted.

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CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP (CDRP)
REFORM

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the updated position following the review of the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998.

In presenting the report the Head of Community Safety, informed the Committee that the proposals regarding the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and community calls for action had been put on hold to allow the Government to consider the findings of the Sir Ronnie Flanagan report on policing procedures due to be published at the end of this year.

RESOLVED

1. That the information contained in the report submitted, on the updated position following the review of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, be noted,
2. That a further report, be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee following publication of further guidance from Central Government on the role of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the community calls for action.

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BOROUGH WIDE STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT FOR CRIME AND
DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIPS

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the first Dudley Borough Strategic Assessment for the Safe and Sound Dudley Community Safety Partnership.

In presenting the report the Head of Community Safety gave an overview of the purpose and outcomes of a Strategic Assessment and informed the Select Committee that Dudley had been successful in securing the Safe and Sound approach to undertake a Strategic Assessment as an example of good practice to be published in the pending National Guidance for implementing the National Standards.

It was noted that a summary of the strategic assessment would be circulated to all Members of the Committee when available.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted on the first Dudley Borough Strategic Assessment for the Safe and Sound Dudley Community Safety Partnership, be noted.

21 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT – SAFER BLOCK

A report of the Chief Executive was submitted on the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Safer Block.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the Safer Block of the Local Area Agreement, be noted.

22 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT- STRONGER BLOCK

A briefing note of the Lead Officer to the Committee based on information supplied by the lead person for the Stronger Block, the Chief Officer of Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), was submitted.

Arising from the consideration of this matter comments were made about the roles of PACT meetings and those of neighbourhood watch. It was noted that West Midlands Police would be reviewing their relationship with the latter bodies.

RESOLVED

That the briefing note submitted on the Local Area Agreement Stronger Block, be noted.

23 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

Sue McGavin, Head of Neighbourhood Management, gave a presentation backed by slides, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members, on the role and work of the Neighbourhood Management Team. In presenting the report she highlighted a number of successes including residents taking responsibility for resolving neighbourhood issues through joint working with public sector and voluntary agencies, young people involved in the leaps and bounds project and increased community partnership working to address local issues.

Arising from the presentation made, concerns were raised about the future role of the Team should the numbers of neighbourhood managers be reduced as was being proposed and the effects on the Borough. In the light of reduced funding consideration also needed to be given to this aspect.

In the light of concerns expressed it was suggested that a special meeting of the Committee be held to enable full consideration to be given to the matter so as to inform the debate when the issue was considered at a future meeting of the Cabinet.

The Head of Neighbourhood Management also undertook to circulate to Members of the Committee, a copy of the DVD to illustrate the work of the Neighbourhood Management Team with youth in Lye.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the presentation given at the meeting and as reported, on the Neighbourhood Management Team, be noted, and that a Special Meeting of this Committee be held as soon as possible, to discuss issues relating in particular to the future funding and proposed restructuring of the Neighbourhood Management Team so that views expressed might be referred to the Cabinet when they considered the matter at a future meeting.

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QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee was submitted on the performance of the Council in relation to activities within the terms of reference of the Select Committee for the fourth quarter, covering the period from January to March 2007.

RESOLVED

That the information contained in the report submitted, on the activities relating to the terms of reference of this Committee, be noted.

The meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.

CHAIRMAN