

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

Thursday, 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 at 6.00 pm  
in Committee Room 3, Council House, Dudley

**PRESENT:-**

Councillor Blood (Chairman)  
Councillor Cotterill (Vice Chairman)  
Councillors Burston, Finch, Ms Foster, Harley, Male, Simms, C Wilson and Wright.

**Officers**

Head of Customer Services and Programme Leader, Chief Executive's Directorate (as Lead Officer to the Committee)  
Assistant Director of Law and Property (Legal & Democratic Services), the Emergency Planning Officer (Chief Executive Directorate), and Mr Sanders (Directorate of Law and Property).

**Also in attendance**

Chief Superintendents Dickerson and Green (West Midlands Police) (for Agenda Item No. 5 only).

Councillor Jackson (as Chairman of the Halesowen Area Committee) (for Agenda Item No. 7 only).

11                   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received on behalf of Councillors Mrs Collins and Mrs Dunn.

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12                   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

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13                   **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> June, 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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14                    SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor Simms was serving in place of Councillor Mrs Dunn for this meeting of the Committee only.

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15                    PUBLIC FORUM

No members of the public were in attendance.

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16                    NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

An oral presentation was given by Chief Superintendents Dickerson and Green of West Midlands Police on the delivery of neighbourhood policing within the Dudley area.

Chief Superintendent Green explained that neighbourhood policing was an initiative emanating from the National Community Safety Plan under which Community Crime Disorder Reduction Partnerships had been established, with a remit to prepare strategic assessments aimed at alleviating localised crime and anti-social behaviour through a Community Safety Plan.

In expanding on the manner on which neighbourhood policing was addressed, Chief Superintendent Green indicated the machinery in force whereby the police worked in partnership with community representatives and other agencies to determine priorities within neighbourhoods with a view to being responsive to community needs. There had been a shift away from traditional police beats and ward boundaries to policing by neighbourhoods and consultation with the public had been effected through face to face discussion and written surveys. Policing now sought to tailor service delivery with what residents in neighbourhoods interpreted as being relevant to the specific needs of their particular areas. Police resources were not infinite, however, and as one area improved, resources were reallocated to other neighbourhoods.

The Police were therefore working with local people to identify problems peculiar to the neighbourhoods with a view to identifying priorities. Feedback had revealed that many issues were not exclusively police related and needed a multi-agency response. Increasingly, partnership working was turning out to be an important conduit for the achievement of betterment within neighbourhoods.

Greater engagement with local communities was being activated via partnership working with local authorities and other relevant agencies through a performance management framework involving active meetings at which feedback would be monitored. Details were being publicised about how neighbourhood police officers could be contacted, together with details of public meetings to allow for direct participation by the public in their neighbourhoods.

A question and answer session followed in which the following points were raised:-

- The Superintendents confirmed Neighbourhood Watch remained an important aspect of neighbourhood policing and feedback from Neighbourhood Watches was significant in providing an influence in relation to local policing needs.
- In response to a question, Chief Superintendent Green indicated that police resourcing in neighbourhood management had remained reasonably constant, with some 70 % of staff who had started still being in place.
- In response to a question in respect of a particular neighbourhood, Chief Superintendent Green confirmed that the policing establishment over the Dudley area had remained the same, notwithstanding that there had been some turnover of staff.
- Chief Superintendent Green confirmed that the Police would continue to respond to 999 calls and to deal with emergencies, notwithstanding their role in neighbourhood policy. He clarified briefly the nature of responses to 999 calls and emergencies.
- One member gave an example of how neighbourhood policing was being operated successfully in her ward through partnership working via a report each week from her local police station with flyers regarding community involvement being disseminated through the local school. In this way, different agencies were engaging actively in crime reduction.
- The observation was made by some members that the amount of crime and anti-social behaviour tended to relate directly to the level of deprivation in the particular area.
- In response to a question, Chief Superintendent Green acknowledged that communication problems could occur where neighbourhoods were situated in two different police areas but confirmed that he and Chief Superintendent Dickerson were conscious of such areas and were committed to ensuring that arrangements were co-ordinated.
- In response to a further question, Chief Superintendent Green indicated that Police Community Together meetings were at different stages of engagement and that, while progress was being made, they would not be mandatory until 2008. Meanwhile,

engagement meetings were already being held and these catered for the particular issues raised by local communities. The police were looking at ways of improving communications with groups who were unable to attend meetings and disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Chief Superintendent Green emphasised that arrangements made to date had provided a start to neighbourhood policing, and should not be considered as at all final.

- The issue of the installation of speed cameras where they had been considered necessary by neighbourhood communities was raised and Chief Superintendent Green, confirmed that the Police would be happy to work with neighbourhood communities in places where speeding was a concern.

In concluding the presentation, Chief Superintendents Green and Dickerson circulated a pamphlet 'Neighbourhood Policing – Partnership Guide' which explained in some detail the principles and machinery of neighbourhood policing.

#### RESOLVED

That the presentation be received and that Chief Superintendents Green and Dickerson be thanked for their attendance.

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#### ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EMERGENCY PLANNING/BUSINESS CONTINUITY OFFICER FOR 2005/06

The annual report of the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Officer for 2005/06 was submitted.

The report indicated the legislative position under the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004, which provided for the operation of emergency planning with the additional requirement by Local Authorities to give advice and to promote business continuity to the private sector.

The report covered public safety aspects and gave an update on the state of preparedness within the Council to respond to major incidents, which could befall the community in Dudley either from natural, man-made disasters or from terrorism.

Responders to emergencies were specified under the legislation in two respective categories and these were indicated in the report now submitted. The report also set out the areas of responsibility for the Local Authority and the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Officer confirmed that all areas referred to had been addressed. The complete list of documents and plans relevant to the areas of responsibility were held by Emergency Planning and were named in Appendix 1 to the report.

Reference was made to the proposed establishment of the dedicated Emergency Planning Centre to be created at Himley Hall, in order to conform to Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Audit requirements, and which would allow the Council to deal with any incident affecting the Borough efficiently with least disruption to other services. Reference was also made to the work of the Emergency Planning team in partner organisation meetings.

In addition, the Chief Executive had recently taken on the role of lead Chief Executive for the West Midlands Chief Executives, which meant that he would be representing the West Midlands Local Authorities on both the Local Resilience Forum and Regional Resilience Forum. He had visited Washington DC recently to meet with various United States disaster management agencies to exchange views on resilience to various emergencies.

In response to a question, the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Officer confirmed that there were currently no large exercises for elected members but referred to a document on the role of elected members in emergencies, which he undertook to ensure that members were circulated with.

RESOLVED

That the annual report of the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Officer, as now submitted, be received.

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### FIREWORKS IN TOWN CENTRES AND PARKS

A report of the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Officer, in his capacity as Chair of the Safety Advisory Group, was submitted advising the Committee of the reasons why the Group had resolved not to support firework displays within town centres throughout the Borough.

At the invitation of the Committee, Councillor Jackson, as Chairman of the Halesowen Area Committee, conveyed the wishes of that Committee and of the Halesowen Chamber Trade that the firework display provided for at the switching on of the Christmas lights in Halesowen town centre be continued on the grounds that the firework display was an integral part of this well established event which is very much looked forward to by the public of Halesowen, and the traders alike. The Halesowen Area Committee was concerned that, should the firework display be disallowed, the switching on of the lights would not be such a successful an event as it had been.

In response, the Emergency Planning/Business Continuity Officer clarified the relevant Health and Safety Executive guidance and the implications of the guidance on insurance issues.

RESOLVED

That the recommendation in the report that the multi agency independence of the Safety Advisory Group be recognised by the Committee, and that the expertise of various bodies in dealing with public safety at events be supported by officers and members of the Council alike be accepted.

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19                    QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT

A report of the Lead Officer to the Committee, under cover of which was set out the quarterly corporate performance management report for the issues pertinent to this Committee, for the period from January to March, 2006, was submitted.

In response to a question on how Performance Indicator reference CEX DCP 006 had been arrived at, the Lead Officer to the Committee confirmed that this had been based on similar targets set by other Authorities.

RESOLVED

That the report be noted.

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20                    REPORTS BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE WORKING GROUPS

Reports of the Chairmen of the Partnership Development and Regulatory Controls Working Groups of meetings of those bodies held on 27<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> July, 2006, respectively, were submitted.

RESOLVED

That the reports be received and the recommendations contained therein approved, ie:

(a)    Partnership Development Working Group

(i)    Agenda Item No. 3 – Neighbourhood Policing

- That the Chairman of the Working Group write to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member responsible for Community Safety advising of the concerns expressed by the Working Group with regard to the issues of speed of the Council's response to questions put by members of the public at Partnerships and Communities Together (PACT) meetings.

- That the Cabinet Member responsible for Community Safety be invited to attend the meeting of the full Select Committee, on 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, when the Committee will have the opportunity of discussing Neighbourhood Policing with Chief Superintendent Green and Chief Superintendent Dickerson.

(ii) Agenda Item No. 4 – RESPECT Agenda

- That the briefing note circulated at the Working Group meeting and the information contained therein be noted, and that further updates on the progress of the RESPECT Agenda be included in the work Programme for 2006/2007.

(iii) Agenda Item No. 5 – Working Group Programme for 2006/07

The following recommendation was received on agenda item 5 – Working Group Programme for 2006/2007

- That the Work programme be amended to reflect the Working Group's comments made at this meeting and circulated to the full Committee.

(b) Regulatory Controls Working Group

(i) Agenda Item No. 3 – Working Group Programme 2006/07

- That a verbal update on the Crime and Disorder Act Review and issues with regard to Licensing Legislation, including statistics on the issue of Anti Social Behaviour Orders and Dispersal Notices, be included on the agenda of every Working Group meeting.
- That the Work Programme for 2006/2007 be revised as per the comments received and re-circulated.

(ii) Agenda Item No. 4 – Update on the progress of the Anti Social Behaviour Unit

- That the Working Group support the development of a pilot Anti Social Behaviour Unit within current resources with the caveat that additional resources needed to be considered if the multi-tenure role (as described in the briefing note submitted to the meeting) was to operate successfully.
- That, although the Working Group were in agreement with the setting up of a pilot Anti Social Behaviour Unit, they had deep concerns with regard to the financing of such a Unit.
- That, in view of the comments of the Working Group (as above) the Cabinet member for Community safety and the Leader of the Council be asked to consider what appropriate financing would be available for the future development of such a Unit if one was considered to be necessary.

The meeting ended at 7.50pm.

CHAIRMAN