

# ***DACORUM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP***



## **MINUTES**

**7.30 pm Wednesday 22 October 2014  
Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Hemel Hempstead**

### **Present:**

Cllr Neil Harden (Chairman)	DBC
Dr Amie Birkhamshaw	PCC
C Cllr C Wyatt-Lowe	DBC
C Cllr W Wyatt-Lowe	DBC
Cllr Griffiths	DBC
C Appleby	DBC Rep
Tony Coley	Former Chair, HHCPP
Mr Frank	Member of the public
Mr Linton	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
Jo Hudson	HMP The Mount
Maria Kraithman	Mediation Herts
George Holland	Herts Police
Mike Wallis	Deputy Chair Street Pastors
Ian Markwell	Herts Fire and Rescue Service
Jack Daw	Herts Fire and Rescue Service
Nicky Bryant	ASB Team Leader - DBC
Dave Moore	DBC – Community Safety Coordinator
Trina Lawson	Minutes

### **1. Introductions and Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from: Councillor Guest and Nicola Bond (Probation Service), no other apologies were received

### **2. Minutes of previous meeting 28 April 2014 (previously circulated)**

The minutes of the meeting on 28 April 2014 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

### **3. Performance Update**

#### **• Community Safety Partnership (inc. Funding Update)**

D Moore gave a presentation to the group highlighting the following points:

- As of the 1<sup>st</sup> April, Herts Police changed the way they record crime.
- As a result, figures for the first half of the year show 'All Crime' as being up 16%.
- However we cannot compare to last years' figures as the data collection is

- different.
- It is more meaningful to look at our position in comparison to the other 9 town in the County.
- Main concern areas are 'Vehicle Crime', where we are 10<sup>th</sup> in the County and 'Criminal Damage' where we are 7<sup>th</sup>

### Questions and Answers

Catherine Appleby noted that her problem with percentages, is what percentage of what ?

D Moore confirmed that the 'All Crime' figure showing a 16% increase totalled 518 crimes

Mr Frank asked where the local crime manager was based

G Holland advised that the figures were recorded at Police HQ but were managed locally.

Mr Frank then asked if that person could not disseminate and make sense of the figures

G Holland advised that the changes had come about following an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate. He went on to explain that the changes now meant that in previous times if the Police attended a Domestic Violence assault case, in which furniture had also been broken, the assault is the only offence that would have been recorded as that was more serious than the Criminal Damage. However now, both incidents would be recorded, therefore doubling the number of offences.

Councillor Harden asked – so if there is a scenario in the street, where a fight breaks out between several people, how is that now recorded ? Did it used to be one incident but now dependant on the number of people involved ?

G Holland confirmed that was correct

Mr Frank suggested that this hasn't happened just this year

G Holland advised that it had as a result of the Home Office changes.

Mr Linton then advised that he used to go to HQ and had the same occurrence, possibly 5 / 10 years previously and felt sure that this had happened before

D Moore suggested that these changes can cause a suspicion over whether you can trust the figures. He went on to suggest that in light of this it may be useful to ask Amie Birkhamshaw of the Police & Crime Commissioners office to take this back and get some advice for the committee.

A Birkhamshaw advised that she would be happy to do this and to get a statement of clarification.

**Action** – A Birkhamshaw to get a statement of clarification which will then be distributed to all attendees.

D Moore went on to present about the funding and highlighted the following points :

- Funding no longer comes from the Home Office
- Funding now comes from Police & Crime Commissioners Office
- Received £29,000 this year
- So far have spent £10,000 supporting the following projects : Swan Youth; Think Safe Project; Speeding; Fire & Rescue supporting Young People; Domestic Abuse (Letterbox guards); Vulnerable victims of crime (including trading standards working with older people and the provision of phone blockers); DENS; Police cadets and Neighbourhood watch
- Finally advised that the role of the Partnership had changed over recent years and was now part of the Counter Terrorism Advisory Group – sharing information
- Also involved with intelligence and information sharing for Operation Halo regarding child exploitation.

- **POLICE**

G Holland gave an update to the group, highlighting the following points:

- Vehicle Crime & Criminal Damage were the two areas of most concern
- Hemel Hempstead has been targeted for petrol tanks being drilled for fuel.
- There were approx. 70 offences of this kind.
- That individual has now been caught and the offences have stopped.
- In Tring, Sat Navs were being stolen from vehicles, however disappointingly the majority of vehicles had been left open, making it easy to steal.
- That offender has also now been caught and those offences have ceased.
- The theft of number plates are also a regular occurrence with the thefts taking place in order to commit more serious offences.
- As of 1 Oct – DVLA changed the laws around tax discs and no longer issue paper ones. There is a concern that this may also cause an increase in the number of registration plate thefts.
- Expectation that these figures will reduce over the next quarter as the individuals responsible have now been caught.
- Despite being 7<sup>th</sup> in the County in regards to Criminal Damage offences, we are one of 2 towns where figures have gone down.
- The common misconception is that criminal damage to vehicles is generally caused by youths, however in Hemel Hempstead this has not been the case.
- We have caught two retired individuals, one of whom has confessed to 70+ offences and the other who has confessed to 40+.
- Generally these offences were to do with where vehicles had parked
- Have been working with the Fire Brigade on the Keep Safe Project
- A new initiative was Street Safe / Silver Safe – working with older people to ensure that they have as much information as possible to remain safe and independent.
- The terrorism threat to the UK is currently at Severe, which places added pressures on the Policing.

### **Questions and Answers**

C Appleby asked, with regards to the elderly offenders that had been committing criminal damage to cars, what was the outcome? Were they cautioned?

G Holland confirmed that they are both going to Court so are currently awaiting sentence

C Appleby further enquired that now we no longer have tax discs on display – how we will be able to identify a vehicle without road tax and potentially then no MOT or insurance?

G Holland advised that the DVLA have been computerised for the last 10 years or more and that they have been testing their systems for some years. He advised you will still receive postal notification that your road tax is due, but that those offenders will now be picked up via the Automatic Number Plate Recognition system.

Councillor Harden added that you can go on to the DVLA website and enter any vehicle number plate into the system and it will tell you if it is taxed or not.

M Wallis commented that it appeared that the elderly perpetrators crimes appeared to have been born out of frustration and asked if that would make a difference?

Inspector Holland advised that it wouldn't and that in actuality – one gentleman had been obsessed by the whole situation and if people parked where he felt they shouldn't, he would scratch their cars.

T Coley noted that in past reports it stated that a lot of residential burglaries had been actioned by people from outside the Borough. Was this the case for the vehicle crimes ? Were they being carried out by people from outside the area or locals?

G Holland confirmed that the individuals were locals

Councillor Griffiths enquired about drug related crime as it was not visible from the figures we had seen and asked if, as a member of the public, we cannot see if crimes are drug related?

D Moore advised that if drugs are related as a reason for committing crime, this is not often recorded. Drug figures tend to highlight that there was Police activity in that area and confirmed that the data isn't great. He went on to say that this was a recurring problem nationally and that it only highlights drug enforcement activity.

He then advised that SPECTRUM give us the best data on drug usage in the area.

G Holland went on to say that the trend in recent years has been that drug users tend to commit shop lifting offences as the sentence is less and the money is quick. These figures have risen slightly

Mr Frank asked that when crime reports are marked up, did they not have boxes to indicate if they were drug or alcohol related?

G Holland advised that not since the processes changed back in April.

- **Fire Service Update**

I Markwell gave an update on the service, highlighting the following points :

- Hemel Hempstead Fire Station has 48 firefighters, 2 appliances and a decontamination unit.
- Kings Langley, Berkhamsted, Tring & Markyate all have retained services
- Dacorum currently has just over 100 firefighters and there are no plans to reduce that number in the coming 12 months.
- Arson is down in Dacorum by 5% on last year (57 as opposed to 60); County wide, arson is up.
- We have so far suffered **ZERO** fire injuries in 2014. County wide these figures have increased by 30%
- Primary fires in Dacorum were reduced by 16% (74 as opposed to 88) and is only down 5% county wide
- The Think Safe campaign has been very successful. It began as a pilot project in Tring and spread across Dacorum. This project is now active in the County and is being filmed to be taken nationwide.
- Active involvement in youth projects help reduce incidents of arson – projects such as the ASDAN project; Duke of Edinburgh and LIFE courses
- Installing fire proof letterboxes
- Currently auctioning 4 Home Fire Safety Visits per day across Dacorum.
- Also working with Herts County Council on the Coming Together Project. This project helps carers to identify concerns in the homes of the vulnerable people they visit and can then provide fire retardant bedding and other equipment as necessary.
- In the first half of this year they carried out a Risk Based Inspection Programme and inspected every Public House in the Borough prior to the World Cup.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the year will see every sheltered housing block in Dacorum being inspected.

## **Questions and Answers**

T Coley said that it was nice to hear that cases were down compared to other districts in the County, but asked how does this relate per instances, per capita head? As it would be interesting to see if there are any differences

I Markwell advised that he didn't have the stats to hand but that he would provide them

(attached with these minutes)

Mr Frank asked if the Fire Service had a website

I Markwell advised that they were on the Herts County Council website

Mr Frank asked if they produced or distributed a Newsletter or something similar?

I Markwell advised that on the website there is information on County figures and also the 5 districts – available on Herts Direct – Community Protection Directorate

Mr Frank asked how many of the county did he think were aware of that

I Markwell responded very few

Mr Frank suggested that he didn't think they were being recognised by hiding and asked if there was a flag on the front page of the Herts County website that took you to their page

I Markwell advised that there isn't and that you have to dog to find them

Mr Frank went on to ask if their services could be promoted better

I Markwell agreed that they could

Councillor Harden asked if they did do press releases

I Markwell advised that they did but could not always guarantee what the local press chose to report on

Mr Frank said that he was just thinking of the Think Safe project and how successful that had been

Councillor Harden advised that that had been promoted extensively

#### **4. ASB UPDATE**

- **Community Trigger**

N Bryant gave a presentation to the group, highlighting the following points:

- New legislation came into force on the 20 October 2014
- Gives ASM team new tools which include the 'Community Trigger'
- It came about as a result of the Fiona Pilkington case
- Community Trigger can be activated after 3 same issue reports of ASB in a 6 month period, or if 3 separate individuals report the same offence
- Can be instigated by individuals or appointed representatives
- Aim is to ensure that there is a joined up approach
- They have advertised this in the Dacorum Digest; press releases and on the website
- If activated an e-mail gets sent to the ASB team, their Group Manager and Dave Moore
- The person who activates it will receive a confirmation of receipt notification within 2 days
- Cases will be discussed at an ASBAN meeting held each month
- The key point that we will look at is – are we doing all we can to deal with this issue
- Would hope that the answer would be yes – but if not an Action Plan would be formed and fed back to the person requesting the trigger
- Encouraging people to go to the website to complete the e-form which requests all the information that we need, however it can be requested over the telephone or in writing.

#### **Questions and Answers**

Councillor Griffiths asked if a reply would be given to anyone, even if they hadn't had the 3 incidents in 6 months that we were aware and monitoring?

N Bryant advised that this already happens as part of the ASBAN meetings. She

advised that there are a lot of Housing Associations that only have 2 or 3 properties in this area and their tenants contact the ASB team as their own landlords are not interested. We would then take that to an ASBAN and invite their Landlords to the meeting to try and resolve the issue.

Councillor Harden asked if the 'trigger' could be used as a Complaint scenario

N Bryant advised that No this does not replace the complaints procedure and that the main requirement to activate the trigger is that the criteria is met

Councillor Harden went on to say that it was unfortunate that the Trigger had to be introduced, but a good opportunity for people who feel they are not being heard

N Bryant concluded by saying that we are good in this area at ensuring joined up working to look after our vulnerable tenants.

- **ASB Victim Support**

N Bryant gave a presentation to the group highlighting the following points:

- We are trialling a scheme where we have an officer who deals solely with the victims of ASB
- The effects of ASB can have a really negative affect on an individuals' life
- Part of the role of ASB officers is to provide victim support but that was becoming increasingly difficult whilst managing a case load of 15-20 cases each and they felt that the quality of care was being compromised
- So now have a dedicated Victim Support Officer, who currently has a caseload of 30 and who works with our most needy and vulnerable tenants
- She offers practical and emotional support
- This gives the ASB officers more time for enforcement work
- Cases are logged on a software package called 'Safety Net' and there is a tick box referral on there
- The victim support officer will usually make contact the same day
- Some ASB cases involve the Police; Civil Courts; Magistrates Courts and the ASB team
- The Victim Support Officer can help co-ordinate all of these services and ensure any special measures are put in place to make it a less traumatic experience for the victim
- Really proud of this service and the feedback it has been receiving

## **Questions and Answers**

Councillor Harden asked who was funding the project

N Bryant confirmed that it was a one year trial project at the moment being funded by Housing; Community Safety Unit & St Albans

## **5. TAXI LICENSING**

D Moore gave a presentation to the group, highlighting the following points:

- In the past year 5 test purchase operations have been carried out in Tring and Berkhamsted
- These have resulted in 2 cautions and 3 pending prosecutions of private hire drivers, licensed by Aylesbury Vale DC
- These operations were jointly organised with the local police
- Dealt with a number of complaints from the public about taxi drivers
- Issued Fixed Penalty Notices on several occasions
- Have also undertaken, jointly, police & Criminal Evidence Act recorded

interviews

- A DBC licensed Hackney carriage driver had his licence revoked by our Licensing Committee due to a number of matters, despite appealing to both magistrate & Crown Courts, the Council's decision was upheld
- The Judge, in summing up, highlighted the fact that the driver had been given a fixed penalty notice for defective tyres, was a major factor in his decision
- On approximately 10 late evenings we have worked with Police, stopping taxis, checking them for offences and Council conditions / documents
- On a number of occasions this has resulted in the temporary suspension of taxis and removal of taxi plates due to illegal tyres or damaged bodywork
- Carried out 2 operations at the Council Offices with Roads Policing and our Anti Fraud officers
- This resulted in 2 taxis being suspended from working and a number of Fixed Penalty Notices for various offences

### **Questions and Answers**

G Holland advised that 2 former traffic officers were involved in these operations. There had been major issues in Tring with a Private Hire company taking business from taxi drivers. However 2 weeks ago a Police Officer carried out an undercover operation and every single Private Hire refused to take the business which is a total turnaround. He went on to say that operations were undertaken in Hemel Hempstead last Friday, as we move into the festive season, it becomes even more important that vehicles are roadworthy and that individuals are licensed and complying. He concluded by saying that Dacorum has the most active taxi operations

T Linton asked how often tyres are checked in this area as he is aware that some taxis are using second hand tyres and remoulds which can be dangerous

G Holland advised that we do operations every other month and that a number of tickets that are served are for that type of thing

Mr Frank said that he was aware that we now have a new PCSO and asked if they openly check the tyres on taxis as they walk past the taxi rank

G Holland advised that they don't do that at present but that they could.

## **6. SPEED INDICATION DEVICES**

D Moore gave a presentation to the group, highlighting the following points:

- Whilst a Strategic Assessment highlights the areas that the DCSP should focus on – some things do not fall into that
- Speeding is a cause of local concern
- This project began in Markyate where there is a back road to Luton that has lots of changes in speed along that road
- So between us and the Parish Council we funded a Speed Indication Device
- It is solar powered and tells you your speed or tells you to 'Slow Down' or offers a smiley face
- They then received enquiries from a Neighbourhood Action Group in Gadebridge with concerns about Galley Hill
- The Local Councillor and us provided the funds and they too now have a Speed Indication Device
- One has recently been fitted in Kings Langley but has not been turned on yet
- It is however still collecting data and they hope to be able to compare this data once it is turned on
- There has also been one installed outside Hammond Academy that we half funded and the other half was shared between the school and the local County Councillors budget
- D Moore has recorded data on 3 occasions at the Galley Hill site and recorded

- 86% compliance from vehicles
- These appear to be more effective than the ones that just give a speed limit as children encourage parents to see a smiley face
- If anyone thinks they know of an area that may benefit from one of these devices, please let us know
- We work with Herts Traffic Management Unit to site the device.

## Questions and Answers

Councillor Harden asked how much the devices cost

D Moore advised that the cost was approximately £2750 with an installation cost of between £3-400

Everyone agreed that this was a very good price

## 7. POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER UPDATES

A Birkhamshaw gave an update with the following points being highlighted:

- Amie has been working at the PCC for the last month
- Updates on three projects that she is working on, which are – Victims Voice; Commissioning Services to better understand Domestic Abuse and Hertfordshire's Community Remedy Menu
- Victims Voice set up as a result of the Home Secretary making it a requirement for all PCC offices to commission services for the victims of crime
- PCC's Victim Commissioning Manager – Kevin McGetrick has been mapping the current landscape of service provision
- Has launched a new victims voice consultation to better gain insights from victims of crime
- Consultation was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2014: <http://www.hertscommissioner.org/news/latestnews/011014-040.aspx>
- Can also complete automated telephone survey or write in
- Really keen to hear from as many victims (and their relatives) as possible
- Victim Support will also be writing to 5000 victims of crime inviting them to participate
- Survey will be on-going until end of December 2014.
- Tackling Domestic Abuse by better understanding causes and consequences is a key priority
- CADD (Coordinated Action against Domestic Abuse) have been commissioned to conduct a review of domestic abuse services in Hertfordshire
- They will report back their findings in early November
- The PCC's office will report back to the Community Safety Partnerships and looking to assess service provision between November and January
- Hertfordshire's Community Remedy Menu came into force on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 as a result of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- Introduced new tools and powers for authorities in the way they respond to ASB
- Empowers the public and gives them more influence over how ASB is dealt with in their area
- Also allows victims to have a say (if they wish to) in any sanctions that the offender may receive if the offence warrants an out of Court settlement
- Citizens of Hertfordshire were given 6 options which would be appropriate for anyone engaging in ASB
- The three chosen options were
  1. The offender must make financial reparation to the victim
  2. The offender signs an agreement such as an Acceptable Behaviour or Good Neighbour Agreement which can include prohibition in taking part



- in certain activities or staying away from certain places; and
3. The offender makes a verbal or written apology to the victim
- The Community Remedy Menu will also form part of an overarching Restorative Justice Strategy

### **Questions and Answers**

N Bryant asked who would oversee the restorative piece of work

A Birkhamshaw advised that Paul McGee would be working on the Community Safety Portfolio

N Bryant enquired that if a piece of restorative justice, such as an agreement issued, how would we be notified? And how would it be enforced if it was breached

A Birkhamshaw advised that the shared software package – Safety Net would be the key to this, but to reduce duplication there needed to be really good links and should become a two way exchange.

### **8. AOB**

T Coley asked about the domestic arrangements for the meeting. He advised that it is a good networking opportunity but that some people come straight from work and therefore would it be possible to restore the tea and coffee that used to be available at these meetings? It may also help restore numbers of attendees as this is still depleting Councillor Harden said he would look into that

Mr Frank asked how and when this meeting was advertised

Councillor Harden advised that it was on the website and also on the OWL system

D Moore advised and apologised as he had only realised at the start of this week that it had not gone onto the OWL system so decided that it was better to advertise it then, despite it being short notice than not at all.

Mr Frank advised that it was due to him seeing it on OWL that had brought him here but that it was a restricted audience and asked if it could be better promoted on the website and in Dacorum Digest

Councillor Harden confirmed that he would like to see more members of the public attend

Mr Frank suggested that perhaps 2 weeks and one week prior to the meeting it could be on the front page of the local papers in a banner style

Councillor Harden agreed that they could notify the press

Mr Frank went on to suggest that another free advert would be on the Herts Police website and advised that we needed new ways of thinking to get people here

J Linton mentioned that he was concerned about parking at junctions in every road in Dacorum. He said that an excellent job had been done at the crossroads in Belmont Road and said he was unsure which meeting he needed to attend regarding this

G Holland advised that the Highway Code gives guidance on parking and that from a policing point of view they receive lots of contact regarding this very issue. He went on to explain that there are too many cars for the number of available spaces, so where do people park? If dangerous parking is reported, he confirmed, they do enforce with tickets, but that the problem was that the vehicle may stay there for a further 10 hours if the owner has parked up and gone into London. He further advised that they carried out their own survey 3 months ago in Boxmoor, where they sent an officer on one day and he issued 20 tickets. He then received multiple complaints from the people who had received a ticket, saying that they had been parking there for years. He concluded by saying that if there were particular issues in a particular area to send him the details.

D Moore went on to advise that DBC were not responsible for the painting of yellow lines but that Herts Highways were responsible for this. Vinci were responsible for the enforcement of parking fines on behalf of DBC. He went on to say that if there were specific areas that it was felt needed to be addressed that he would recommend

contacting your elected member or County Councillor and reiterated that parking in a dangerous position is an offence

Mr Frank asked what the Council's position was with regards to overgrown front gardens that reduce pathways width by half

Councillor Harden advised that this would be the responsibility of the landowner but that DBC does have powers to encourage them. He suggested that if there were specific cases to let DBC know

M Wallis gave an update on the Street Pastors. Following a recruitment drive he advised that they now have 46 street pastors on their team who are out in Hemel Hempstead on Friday & Saturday nights until 2am or later if needed. He went on to say that they are now looking to set up a team in Berkhamsted

Councillor Harden said that he had been impressed by the attitude that people appear to have towards the street pastors

G Holland confirmed that it has been one of the most successful initiatives

M Wallis went on to say that after the first England match of the World Cup, where we lost, the team helped to diffuse some difficult situations.

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The chairman thanked everyone for attending. He said it was great to see the reduction in crime and thanked the partnership for all of their hard work.

The meeting ended at 9.27 pm.

Issued by Trina Lawson

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