

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Community Safety Scrutiny Committee**
held on Thursday, 25th April, 2013 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)

Councillors C Andrew, A Barratt, M Grant, G Merry and J Saunders

In attendance

Councillor L Gilbert

Officers

Inspector J Taylor – Cheshire Constabulary

R Edwardson – Senior Enforcement Officer

K Roberts – Consumer Protection and Investigations Manager

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M Parsons

10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

11 DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of a party whip

12 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public wishing to speak

13 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman

14 INTEGRATED OFFENDER MANAGEMENT

Consideration was given to a presentation by Inspector J Taylor on a strategic overview of Integrated Offender Management (Navigate) which involved:

- All partners tackling offenders together
- Delivering a local response to local problems
- Offenders facing their responsibility or facing the consequences
- Making better use of existing programmes and governance
- All offenders at high risk of causing serious harm and/or re-offending in scope.

The aim of Navigate was to identify and target prolific offenders to reduce reoffending which could be achieved by active management of statutory and non-statutory cases and individual sentence plans for each person. There could be up to 100 people on the scheme at any one time.

The reason for implementing Navigate was to break the cycle of repeat offending as 50% of all crime was committed by people who had been through the criminal justice process and 50% of all convicted offenders re-offended within 12 months of release.

The main reason for criminal activity related to substance misuse which resulted in a breakdown of lifestyle. Therefore if substance misuse was tackled, the associated antisocial behaviour would follow.

NACRO (National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) provided support staff to work alongside the team to carry out intensive support, such as drug testing, for offenders.

The Navigate programme worked by providing:

- An intensive package of support and monitoring
- A number of arranged appointments each week
- Drug testing
- 12 month registration period
- Management as a statutory or non statutory case
- A review each month at the JAG meeting
- A joined up approach with Probation/Drug Support/Housing/Police

It was acknowledged that accommodation provided stability for people, however it would not ordinarily be available for offenders as there was a shortage of single occupancy accommodation and the Registered Social Landlords may not be willing to accept offenders.

Under the Navigate scheme, people were managed in one of three ways; a traffic light system was used to distinguish the level of compliance and progress. Once an offender had reached red, all interaction from other agencies would stop, however there was success in 1/3rd of cases, either through a reduction in the levels of offending or the type of offending.

RESOLVED

That the Inspector be thanked for his presentation.

15 POLICE PARTNERSHIP UNIT

Inspector J Taylor reported on the structure of the Partnership Unit, which held a strategic role with a high level of expertise in the following areas:

- Football Management
- Crime Reduction
- Neighbourhood watch
- School Liaison
- Youth Offending
- Troubled Families
- Gypsy Traveller Liaison
- Co-located with the Cheshire East Partnership.

It was noted that the inspector was currently interviewing for a 2nd School Liaison Officer and that cyber crime was a priority for the Police and Crime Commissioner. Members agreed that this was an important issue, as children as young as three were affected. Parents also needed to play a role in protecting children and the possibility of schools providing training sessions for parents should be investigated.

It was noted that the Police and Crime Plan 2013-16 issued by the Police and Crime Commissioner, outlined that a Community Safety Fund and a Crime Prevention Fund had been established to help make Cheshire an even safer place to live. When questioned by the Committee, the Inspector confirmed that funding was available to him albeit from a separate funding stream, however the biggest resource related to staffing.

When asked if there was anything Cheshire East could do to help, the inspector highlighted that he had a positive relationship with the Council and that although it was disappointing that the funding for the Mediation position had been cut, the Safer Cheshire East Partnership had worked to fill the gap.

RESOLVED

1. That the inspector be thanked for his presentation.
2. That the possibility of providing training sessions for parents on cyber crime be investigated.

16 RESPONSE TO THE DISCOVERY OF EQUINE DNA IN THE FOOD CHAIN

The Committee received a progress report on the actions undertaken by Cheshire East Councils Consumer Protection and Investigations (Trading Standards) Service in response to the nationwide discovery of equine DNA in the food chain.

The Chairman commenced the debate by highlighting that the Committee were aware that this was a food fraud issue and not a public safety issue, however it needed assurance that lessons had been learnt and measures had been taken to stop mislabelling happening again in the future.

The Consumer Protection and Investigations Manager reported that comprehensive inspections were undertaken as a matter of urgency and a number of formal food samples were procured for testing by the public analyst.

With regard to paragraph 10.10 of the report, it was reported that a Cornish pasty containing less than 1% pork was due to cross contamination and not mislabelling.

In total, 16 comprehensive food business inspections had been undertaken and 10 formal food samples analysed. All samples were found to be negative for the presence of equine DNA. The response to this issue had been risk based and intelligence led, involving collaborative working with partners where appropriate.

Generally, ad hoc testing would also be intelligence led as random testing across all premises would be too expensive. However, now that the detection of food fraud had become a high priority, further resources may become available. There was currently a Regulatory Service Food Law Enforcement Plan being drafted, which may need to be amended to reflect any changes in national enforcement priorities.

The Consumer Protection and Investigations Manager reported that the current budget for food sampling was £6,000 which could be topped up from other budgets if required. A proportion of costs incurred to date from this issue would be recovered from the Food Standards Agency.

The Committee then went on to discuss the wider role of the team which included door step crime and e crime, which again was mostly intelligence led. The Chairman highlighted that cyber crime was one of the Police and Crime Commissioners top priorities.

The Senior Enforcement Officer highlighted that many of the traditional Trading Standards offences were now committed in the online environment or are facilitated by digital equipment. As such, the Cybercrime work the Service was engaged in related to the investigation of such offences and in particular, securing such digital evidence and reproducing it to the satisfaction of the Courts. The Officer added that, as regards the general threat of Cybercrime to East Cheshire stakeholders, this was an area in which he believed the Council as a whole could explore working with the Police and other Partners to provide relevant advice and education.

The Chairman highlighted that the Committee wanted to support the section, particularly as e crime may require a higher profile and questioned whether there were adequate resources in place. The Consumer Protection and Investigations Manager reported that the service was part of the Crime Prevention Panel and were investigating the possibility of establishing a forensic e crime service in house. This service could also be used to tackle other types of fraud, such as benefit fraud. Funding had been secured, however the logistics were still to be finalised. It was agreed that the Committee would receive an update report on 20 June 2013.

With regard to door step crime it was reported that the service could not dictate how people run their business but could offer advice on how to deal with cold callers. Campaigns such as the Knock Knock scheme were rolled out to schools which worked well, the aim of which was to advise, educate and empower.

RESOLVED

1. To note the contents of the report and the work of the Consumer Protection and Investigations (Trading Standards) Service in responding to this issue and supporting the wider Food Standards Agency (FSA) investigation.
2. That a report be brought to the Committee on 20 June 2013 on the progress of the in house forensic service, Regulatory Service Food Law Enforcement Plan and budget.

17 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme.

RESOLVED

1. That the work programme be noted.
2. That a report be brought back to Committee on 20 June 2013 on the progress of the in house forensic service, Regulatory Service Food Law Enforcement Plan and budget.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.30 pm

Councillor H Murray (Chairman)