

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF CRIME AND DISORDER TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY
PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 27 JUNE 2006
IN COMMITTEE 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.15 PM

Members Present: M Cohen (Chairman), M Woollard (Vice-Chairman), D Bateman, R Law, R Morgan, Mrs C Pond, P Spencer and J Wyatt

Other members present: (none)

Apologies for Absence: P Gode, Mrs A Haigh and D Jacobs

Officers Present J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), S Ford (Safer Communities Coordinator) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

Also in attendance: (none)

1. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

None.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor M Cohen declared a general personal interest by virtue of being Criminal Defence Solicitor. He declared that his interest was not prejudicial and he would remain in the meeting.

3. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The meeting debated the issues involved in reviewing the partnership provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It was noted that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) was to be made up of statutory authorities, including the District Council, the Primary Care Trust, the local Police Authority and the Fire Brigade. Currently consultation meetings are under way and the meeting will get feed back from these meetings by officers.

The review of the Crime and Disorder Act indicated that there would be an increased role for Scrutiny with a form of 'Scrutiny Plus' – involving the partner agencies to better reflect the multi-agency nature of community safety work. The meeting noted that the CDRP is organised into strata, at the top layer being a Strategy Panel made up of senior officers, with member level participation. Below this is a Co-ordinating Group and below that are about seven Crime Action Groups targeting specific areas of crime. There are also sub-groups called 'Problem Solving Groups' that look at crime hot-spots.

The Panel agreed that they would like to:

- a) interview the Police and establish areas where they can help and what are the real crime figures and the reasons for it;

- b) talk to the Probation Service – about restorative justice amongst other things;
- c) talk to the PCT about mental health and criminality;
- d) talk to Transport for London about crime in the South of the district, is it caused by people coming from the Metropolitan area via bus or tube;
- e) find out about the provision of Youth Services by talking to someone from 'The Box' in Epping.

The panel would also need to consider the proposal of a "Community Call for Action" as outlined in the draft. Examples need to be put to the Police to ask them what they would do if they got a community call for action.

The Panel would like to develop Neighbourhood Management Teams (NMT) that would consist of local people, the beat policeman, the ward councillor(s) and a Parish or Town clerk or representative. This would be the first port of call for people with problems, if could not solve it then they could refer it up to the CDRP. The NMT would act as a filter system.

The Panel also agreed to consider the following:

- Last year Cabinet Members agreed to support a joint Police / Council Community Safety Team – based within the District Council Offices. Since that time, due to difficulties around office space, the project has been slow to progress. Is suitable space able to be found in order to house such a team?
- Secondly, if a joint team does not come to fruition, it is vital that the Council's Crime Reduction Team are moved to suitable accommodation where the risk of sensitive data, and the day to day activities of the team can be conducted in a more secure environment.
- Graffiti is costing the Council more and more each year. It would be far more cost effective to employ personnel to remove graffiti than to continue to pay the increasing cost of external contractors. A report is due to go before cabinet shortly
- Resources. If the Council takes part in an active leading role in respect of the forthcoming agendas, consideration must be given to the current resources and staff available to deliver the proposals.

4. WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel agreed that:

- The next meeting of the panel would be set aside to question the Police, where using the National Intelligence Model they would hope to pinpoint areas causing concerns;
- A meeting should be devoted to the PCT with a view to questioning about the link between mental health and crime;
- A joint meeting should be held with the Probation Service and the Fire Brigade and Transport for London;
- A separate meeting should also be devoted to EFDC specialist officers such as the Anti Social Behaviour Officer and the officer responsible for CCTV coverage and the Youth Services Officer.

Following these meeting the Panel will need to collate the information gathered and relate it to the CDRP and how EFDC could help improve on it.

The Panel agreed that:

- All panel meeting will start at 7pm with a half hour briefing session to plan the questions to be asked. The question session with the invited organization to begin at 7:30pm;
- Question sessions to last up to 9pm and then an officer/members 'post meeting' session to take place;
- A time limit of six months for the duration of the Task and Finish Panel to be set with a final report to be written and agreed by end of December 2006 or beginning January 2007.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None raised.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Next meeting set for Tuesday, 1 August 2006 starting at 7pm. Representatives from the Police to be invited to this meeting.