

Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel Thursday, 23rd November, 2006

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.00 pm

Democratic Services Officer: A Hendry, Research and Democratic Services
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Members:

Councillors M Cohen (Chairman), M Woollard (Vice-Chairman), D Bateman, P Gode, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs A Haigh, D Jacobs, R Law, R Morgan, Mrs C Pond, P Spencer, D Stallan and J Wyatt

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

(Head of Research and Democratic Services) To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Head of Research and Democratic Services). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

4. MINUTES - 12 OCTOBER 2006 (Pages 5 - 28)

To note and agree the minutes from the last meeting held on 12 October 2006.

5. CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM AND OVERLAPS WITH MENTAL HEALTH

The Panel has agreed that it wishes to explore the overlaps between criminal activity and mental health. In order to help the Panel, Alison Cowie, the Director of Public Health and Mike O'Keefe the Lead Commissioner for Mental Health from the West Essex Primary Care Trust and Steve Cook an Associate Director from the North Essex Mental Health Partnership Trust who specialises in the criminal aspects of mental health will be present at the meeting.

The Panel's concerns were first raised through your Chairman and centre around his experience that people with mental illness enter the Criminal Justice System and remain there until someone recognises their vulnerability and asks for "reports".

Often the nature of the offences centres around public order offences, disorderly behaviour, neighbour disputes, low level sexual misbehaviour (e.g. flashing), drugs and substance abuse etc. etc.

What, if anything, is done to train Police Officers and Custody Sergeants in particular, to help them identify these mentally disordered offenders and of equal importance what provision is made or available for early intervention. Is there any provision for a potential mentally disordered offender to discuss offending with a Mental Health Worker and does any protocol exist for those identified as potential mentally disordered offenders?

What assistance, if any, can health providers give to local initiatives and community action teams in identifying potential mentally disordered offenders? Is it possible to offer training to non-health professionals to help them spot such people and refer them on and is there somewhere or someone to refer them on to?

6. CONSULTATION WITH OTHER RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES WHO ARE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998.

The Panel has agreed to meet with representatives of the other designated responsible authorities who are required to participate in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership under the terms of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This is to seek their views on what the Council could or should do to help it achieve its objectives and better understand the interaction between the partners now and what, if anything, we could do to make things better in the future.

The responsible authorities are the District Council, the County Council, the Police, the Primary Care Trust and the Fire and Rescue Service. The Panel heard from the Police at its last meeting and tonight will meet with the West Essex Primary Care Trust and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service.

2A. West Essex Primary Care Trust

Ms Alison Cowie, who is the Director of Public Health, will represent the West Essex Primary Care Trust.

2b. Essex Fire and Rescue Service

Assistant Divisional Officer Peter Ashby will represent the Essex Fire and Rescue Service. Peter also chairs the Co-ordinating Group of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Any papers produced by Alison or Peter will be made available to Members in the early part of the week of the meeting.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY SECTION OF THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER (Pages 29 - 36)

The Community Safety Section of the current Government White Paper is attached as background reading to aid the panel in their deliberations.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

For the Panel to decide on a date for their next meeting.