

Joint Area Committee – West – 15th July 2009

8. Promoting Community Safety in Area West

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The following three items all relate to the same theme, the active promotion of Community Safety in Area West. The three short presentations should stimulate debate about tackling community safety issues in our area.

(a) Update on the Work of the Area West Community Safety Action Panel

Lead Officer: Zoë Harris, Community Regeneration Officer
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Purpose of the Report

To update the Committee on the work of the Area West Community Safety Action Panel (AWCSAP) since January 2009.

Recommendation

That members note the contents of the report.

Background

AWCSAP is made up of representatives from a variety of public sector and voluntary agencies, which work together to improve safety, reduce crime and alleviate the fear of crime in the local area.

Concerns regarding safety and crime are raised at grassroots level through the three Local Action Groups operating in Chard, Crewkerne and Ilminster. The Chair of each of the LAGs attends the AWCSAP and reports upon the issues and subsequent actions concerning residents in Area West. Where appropriate representatives from AWCSAP highlight those issues at the South Somerset Steering Group meeting, which reports to the Mendip and South Somerset Community Safety Partnership. This structure allows information to be communicated in both directions, which ensures a strategic approach across the agencies is taken when tackling community safety, crime and the fear of crime in Area West. Besides working with the LAGs, the AWCSAP supports community safety projects locally, recently this has included a football project with Yeovil Town Football Club.

Football Project – Yeovil Town

This partnership project was set up with Yeovil Town Football Trust and took place in five towns across South Somerset with all three market towns in Area West benefiting. The aim of the project was to encourage good behaviour through sport. Yeovil Town Football Club provided coaches to attend weekly training sessions for 12 weeks in each of the market towns. Each town put forward a co-ordinator of the project who was responsible for organising the sessions, in addition the PCSOs and Youth workers supported the sessions.

The 12 week course ran from February through to May and on average there have been 11 to 15 young people attending each session. The project has been seen as a success in all three towns with those organising them reporting that the sessions have had a positive impact upon the young people attending.

To ensure the project was sustainable and football sessions could continue beyond the 12 weeks, Yeovil Town Football Trust offered free Level One Coaching Training to two volunteers from each town. A number of those volunteers have now completed their training and have obtained their Level One certificates; the rest will be completing their training in the early autumn. Ilminster is continuing the football sessions beyond the 12 weeks for the rest of the summer term.

In addition to the coaching sessions Yeovil Town Football Club also provided free tickets to one of their matches and recently hosted a 5-a-side tournament for all the groups involved in the scheme.

Area West Youth Network

The Youth Network meetings are proving to be useful for those involved. At the last meeting James Divall, SSDC Play Officer, updated the group on the Play Days for children taking place in Ilminster and Combe St Nicholas over the summer holidays; two others have already taken place in Winsham and Merriott over the half term break. Now the Youth Network has been in operation for six months a consultation exercise is being carried out to ascertain whether it is meeting the needs of those who attend and to find out if it would benefit more people and organisations if the time of the meeting was changed.

Recent Work of the Local Action Groups (LAGs)

Crewkerne

The Alcohol Consumption in Public Places Order, which designates a public place (with the exception of licensed premises) where the drinking of alcohol becomes an offence, has now come into place. A successful meeting took place between all interested parties to decide where to locate the signs telling people they are about to enter the designated area. The signs are all now in place and the Order can now be implemented.

Ilminster

The Ilminster LAG joined forces with Ilminster Forum to hold an Open Day in the Market House and on the courtyard outside Tesco on Friday 8th May. In spite of the cold blustery conditions the day was successful in that there was a good representation from a cross section of organisations taking part and many people had visited the various stands.

At the May LAG meeting Ilminster Community Speedwatch reported that they had carried out 18 speed watches in various locations since the end of February 2009.

Chard

The police, along with the Chard LAG, have agreed the top 3 priorities to focus on in the Chard area and these are: harm reduction, crime reduction and the recruitment of volunteers to the Community Justice Panel.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications for Joint Area Committee - West.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

Ensure safe sustainable and cohesive communities, particularly target areas:

- 4.1 Develop specific programmes of positive activities for children, young people (especially those already at risk of exclusion or offending) and families designed to reduce anti-social behaviour by October 2010.
- 4.8 Improve dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police.
- 4.9 Develop and initiate a range of approaches and initiatives that build confidence and reduces fear of crime, by 2012.

Background Papers: *None.*

(b) Community Justice Panel - Update

Lead Officer: Valerie Keitch, Community Justice Panel Co-ordinator
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Purpose of the Report

To note progress of the Community Justice Panel in South Somerset.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members note and comment on the report to be given by Julia Cook (Assistant Co-ordinator) and PC Bill Geddes (seconded police officer).

Background

The Panel was set up in response to public perception of low Police numbers and the closure of the local Magistrates' Court. The local newspaper does not send a reporter routinely to Yeovil on the off chance of someone from this area appearing. They ran a campaign called Bring Justice Home; the initial intention was to get the court re-opened. Local councillors explored the possibility of setting up a local panel to deal with low level anti-social behaviour. After discussion with various agencies, agreement was reached and a steering group set up to take it forward.

The Home Office/GOSW/Mendip and South Somerset Safety Partnership provided funds to enable the scoping exercise to begin.

In July 2004, the former Area West Committee appointed two representatives to the Community Justice Panel Implementation Group. This has since been increased to three to include Crewkerne representation. The Panel went live in 2005 and progress reports have been submitted to the committee each year.

Val Keitch the Co-ordinator is based in the SSDC Area West Offices at Chard. The Assistant Co-ordinator (Julia Cook) and seconded police officer (PC Bill Geddes) will speak to the report.

Progress Report

Funding is in place from the Home Office until March 2010. There have been other contributions from Avon and Somerset Police and Yarlington Homes.

The Panel has dealt with some 135 cases in 2008/2009. Statistics and case studies are attached at pages 5-8 for members' information.

Training

Training courses have been delivered to Police staff, Volunteers, Councillors and Yarlington Homes staff.

Further Expansion of the Project

This is well in hand. The Justice Panel in Area East went live in May 2009 and work is in progress to expand into Area North. A police officer has been seconded to assist with this process. The Co-ordinator and police officer have been involved with Sheffield City Council in setting up two Justice Panels in two diverse areas of the City. The Co-ordinator continues to mentor the Wellington project.

The Management Group structure will change shortly and it is planned for there to be a Strategic Management Group to oversee all 4 Projects in South Somerset, but the local management committees will remain.

General

The Co-ordinator is a member of the Association of Chief Police Officers National Steering Group on Restorative Justice. Evidence has also been given to the consultant working on accreditation for staff working in Restorative Justice. The Restorative Justice Consortium has commissioned this work in an attempt to ensure consistency of delivery.

Financial Implications

The Council have supported the recruitment of both the Co-ordinator and Assistant Co-ordinator. Funding comes through the Home Office, Yarlington Homes and Avon and Somerset Police. Area East have provided some funds for the new Panel there as have Bruton Town Council. A funding committee has been set up to look at funding streams for the future. At some point the Community Justice Panel will be looking for funding from Area Committees.

Background Papers: *Progress report to former Area West Committee - 20th August 2008.*

(c) Police Performance and Neighbourhood Policing

Inspector Andy Pritchard and Sgt. Andy Lloyd will attend the meeting and give a short presentation on local issues, crime trends and initiatives.