

Extract from Minutes of the 28th August 2014 North Area Committee

Policing and Safer Neighbourhoods - North Area Committee

The Committee received a report from Acting Inspector Wragg regarding Policing and Safer Neighbourhood Trends.

The report outlined actions taken since the North Area Committee of the 8 May 2014. The current emerging issues/neighbourhood trends for each ward were also highlighted (see report for full details).

Members of the public and members of the committee made the following comments:

Councillor Price: Is the increasing in violent crime due to better reporting methods?

Acting Inspector Wragg: A lot of officer discretion has been taken out of the reporting system and this could be one reason that the figures for violent crime appear to have gone up. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) figures have decreased and it is felt that these incidents are now being recorded as violent crime instead. To emphasise this, the A&E department has not reported any increase in this type of incident.

Safer Communities Section Manager: As this is a pattern across the City, the Alcohol and Violent Crime Group are undertaking some detailed analysis on the figures.

Councillor Sarris: Is there any more detail on the high number of needle finds in Nuffield Road?

Safer Communities Section Manager: This was an unusual case that I am unfortunately unable to go into more detail on, however no-one was put at risk. With a large find such as this a lot of work is undertaken with the ASB team to identify the users involved.

Councillor Benstead (Chair of City Council Licensing Committee and member of East Area Committee): How much of the ASB and alcohol related crime is associated with the Mitcham's Corner area of West Chesterton?

Acting Inspector Wragg: As the area is heavily policed and a lot of enforcement work is undertaken with licenced premises, surprisingly little is directly associated with Mitcham's Corner. What ASB is present is mostly low level.

Councillor Pitt: Burglary is still a concern in the area.

Acting Inspector Wragg: Lots of day to day work is undertaken in this area, and it is a local priority in the North and the East.

Councillor Bird: 'Laughing gas' canisters are still being found in the area. What is being done to address this?

Acting Inspector Wragg: The Police are making ongoing enquiries and retail premises have been spoken to. It is not illegal to have these canisters but it is illegal to sell them to under 18's.

Lil Speed: I am concerned that we will be losing our PCSO. Engagement with local residents is important and it would be a good idea to set up more Street Surgeries.

Acting Inspector Wragg: Two additional PCSO's will be starting in the area shortly and will engage with local residents as part of their regular patrols. Street Surgeries have been held in Arbury Court but unfortunately they were not well attended.

Michael Bond: Nitrox Oxide canisters are an ongoing issue and are very dangerous. So called 'legal highs' are simply substances that have not been properly tested and education is needed to address the problem.

This comment was noted.

Councillor Sarris: It is hard to address the issue unless the Police can identify who is selling the product. The Metropolitan Police are working with Trading Standards to address the issue which is a good way forward.

This comment was noted.

Mr Whyte: The redesigned Hills Road junction has not been a success. The lack of a filter lane causes delays.

This comment was noted.

Shirley Fieldhouse: The 20mph limit on Green End Road has resulted in slower traffic and has been successful.

This comment was noted.

Resident: More publicity regarding Area Committee meetings is required. I had no idea that they happened.

This comment was noted.

Councillor Manning: I have looked at successful traffic schemes in New York and will report back to a future meeting.

This comment was noted.

Acting Inspector Wragg thanked the Chair for his letter regarding enforcement and penalty notices for vehicles parking on pavements and causing an obstruction. It was noted that the bulk of enforcement work in this area was undertaken by the County Council and local bye-laws were in place to help address the issue. The Police become involved if there is a specific obstruction caused, but unfortunately an 'obstruction' can be difficult to define.

Councillor Smart: Are the Police actively enforcing the new 20mph limits in the City?

Acting Inspector Wragg: As this has been a recent change it is taking time to embed within the City. Education is the first step but enforcement is taken where necessary. With regards to cyclists, every winter a scheme is undertaken to educate about the dangers of having no lights.

Councillor Smart: Does this mean that a softer approach is taken with cars compared to cycles?

Acting Inspector Wragg: No. Speeding tickets for cars are also given out routinely as part of the Police's day to day work. The Police do not take a side in the car vs cycle debate.

Councillor Manning: A dangerous driver is of more concern than a dangerous cyclist. The Association of Chief Police Officer (ACPO) guidance on pavement cyclists should be followed.

Acting Inspector Wragg: Poor signage and dangerous roads can lead to cyclists using the pavements and we therefore follow the ACPO guidance and use discretion where required.

Councillor Sarris: It is a difficult balance as many members of the public do have safety concerns regarding ASB cycling on pavements.

This comment was noted.

Councillor Austin: Cycle theft in the City is a big issue and it is now becoming more and more difficult to get cost effective bike insurance because of this.

It was agreed that separate votes would be taken on the recommendations.

The Committee:

Resolved (unanimously) to prioritise the following:

- i. Continue with the work against drug dealers: this is a situation which could easily escalate and attracts other, potentially more serious, criminality. As an organisation, we are now putting more resources into this and linking with other Forces; the Met being one.
- ii. Continue with the support of the 20mph limit to assist in embedding it in local culture.

Councillor Todd-Jones proposed the following amendment to recommendation iii):

Delete and replace with:

Address cycle crime: this has gone up and focussing on this will also assist in addressing anti-social cycling

3 members voted in favour of this proposal

Councillor Sarris proposed the following amendment to recommendation iii):

Delete and replace with:

Address cycle crime and anti-social cycling

8 members voted in favour of this proposal

Councillor Manning proposed the following amendment to recommendation iii):

Delete and replace with:

Address cycle crime

1 member voted in favour of this proposal

The Committee:

Resolved to prioritise the following:

iii. Address cycle crime and anti-social cycling.