

Present: Councillors Councillor Karen Lee (*in the Chair*), Chris Burke, Bob Bushell, Gary Hewson and Edmund Strengiel

Apologies for Absence: Marion Cooney and Chief Inspector Lee Pache

Also in Attendance: Mr M Corrigan and Inspector Patrick Coates

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 17 December 2013

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2013 be confirmed.

2. Declarations of Interest

None declared.

3. Extract from Committee- Performance Scrutiny Committee - 20 March 2014 - Crime Data Figures

The Committee considered the minute from the Performance Scrutiny Committee held on 20 March 2014 relating to the crime data figures for Lincoln and specifically to the fact that Lincoln was in the bottom quartile per 1,000 of population of total recorded crime offences(excluding fraud) compared with Northampton, Nottingham, Derby and Leicester.

Inspector Patrick Coates advised as follows:-

- It is difficult to compare forces due to different levels of reporting not every force follows the crime reporting standards
- Crime is reducing in Lincoln.
- HMRC are currently looking at other forces to consider the credibility of their crime recording.
- The population figure being used to compare is the problem, Lincoln has a smaller population compared with the other authorities.

Members commented as follows:-

1. Comment – We need to make sure that the figures are comparable otherwise they are meaningless.
2. Comment -The statistics on page look about right.

Response – In respect of Lincoln’s figures there is a health warning as they are only reported when someone found in possession or a warrant is issued.

3. Comment – A point of reference is required for all of these issues. No information means it is difficult to address problems – we need a benchmark.

Response – Lincolnshire Police do not compare any more as it is difficult to compare like for like with other forces.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

4. Policing in Lincoln - Update (Verbal Report)

Inspector Patrick Coates updated the Committee on policing in Lincoln and advised as follows:-

- Tabled for members information relating to Lincolnshire Police's performance from 1 April 2014 to 31 May 2014
- One of the big issues for the Police in 2013 was shoplifting this has reduced by 32.9% because of the work undertaken by the Police, Lincoln BIG and shops approach to dealing with the issue
- Anti Social Behaviour in the County has reduced with 10 less reported incidents this year. The Police are now looking at 3 year trends.
- The recent operation in respect of begging and street drinking has had a significant impact in the City Centre.
- There is no criminal sanction for street drinking, Anti Social Behaviour contracts are used. Street drinking has reduced in the City Centre but moved to other places. There is a process to try and assist repeat offenders but not all of them sign up to it.
- Crime is reducing in Lincoln

Members commented as follows:-

- Would there be any value in extending the current DPPO area?.

Response – Additional enforcement would be a problem, however Council Officers will have new powers under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act .

Any extension to the existing area would have to be evidence led. At the present time an extension would not be recommended in view of the new arrangements detailed above as there is a need for the Council to consider how the new enforcement powers can be resourced. The new legislation would replace a lot of the current orders and byelaws.

- The 5 year trend for all crimes shows it is reducing, the figures also show that there is an increase in summer and a reduction in winter. It would be interesting to see if this is an historical trend. The figure are only for this year and last year, has the compilation of figures only just started?.

Response – The Performance Officer has access to older data which could be provided at a future meeting. Historically there is normally an increase in the summer.

- Anti Social Behaviour issues appear to be spread around the City. There was always a perception that once the Urban Rangers stopped there would be an increase of problems- this does not appear to have happened. There are off road motor cycling issues in the north of the City.

Response – There are more problems in the north of the City. The off road motor cycling problems are centered around the quarry and it is not clear

whose responsibility the area is. The Police do not have any off road capability to deal with the issue.

- Crime in Lincoln this year has seen a 5.4% reduction however there are issues of concern e.g Burglary dwelling which has seen 79% increase.
- In the St Catherines area there was an increase in burglaries, however following the issue of awareness leaflets there was a reduction. Most of the burglaries had been opportunistic.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. Lincoln BIG (Verbal Report)

Matt Corrigan (Lincoln BIG) provided an update on the work of Lincoln BIG and advised as follows:

- There were three areas which he would cover:
 1. Shop Theft
 2. Begging/Homelessness
 3. Evening Economy
- Shop Theft – Lincoln BIG were pleased with the reduction in shoplifting within the City Centre. However it was still the volume crime in the City Centre. Lincoln BIG were keen to keep a focus on it. With a good flow of information they were able to target persistent offenders. Lincoln BIG have purchased 3G tablets and distributed them to businesses to assist in providing information on offenders, however a lot of businesses do not have conventional internet access which has prevented some businesses using the tablets.
- Begging/Homelessness – The business perception is that this is connected with shoplifting. Operation Applaud was a success. There is an issue with persistent and early evening begging. There has been a reduction in street drinking in the City Centre. Legal highs are an issue and it would appear that some street drinkers and beggars are using them. National legislation is awaited on this issue.
- Evening Economy – Work has been undertaken with the Police and a seminar is due to be held on the 16 July 2014. A number of workshops will be held and the future business plan will be discussed. There will be speakers on different topics including “Purple Flag” and “ Best Bar None”. Alan Hardwick the Police and Crime Commissioner will be opening the seminar. Already one outcome has been identified which is the holding of regular Liaison meetings in respect of the evening economy. The first one is to be held on 30 July 2014.
- City Square appeared to be more of a young persons hang out and they didn't appear to be causing a problem or committing any offences.
- Sincil Street – there appeared to be to many “To Let” boards on display which does have a negative effect on the area. Due to current proposals for the area the properties are let on short term basis and need works to be undertaken before they can be opened. Lincoln BIG are willing to lease the shops and let them on a short term basis – “Pop Up shops”.

Unfortunately the landowners need to agree to this and the property management world does not like this sort of letting.

Members commented as follows:-

1. We desperate to get the legal high shop in the High Street closed.

Response – Legislation currently does not exist to prevent the sale of legal highs. Trading Standards powers are currently being used. The shop insists that the substances are not for human consumption and authorities need evidence to support action against the owner. The Government’s response is still awaited on this.

2. The Police carried out some work identifying individuals who were begging and had suggested they were homeless when in fact they were living in houses. The statistics produced did have an impact on the public and there has been a reduction.

3. The evening economy has expanded from the late 1990’s and comments had been made that certain ages appeared to be excluded from certain parts of the City.

Response – There has been a change in what is provided in the City. New investment has targeted different areas. The Brayford area is more family orientated.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

6. Briefing - Public Protection and Anti Social Behaviour Services

Sam Barstow, Public Protection Service Manager provided an update on the Public Protection and Anti – Social Behaviour Service and advised :

- that the service was formed in January 2013 following a lean review of enforcement services.
- on the various matters that the service dealt with.
- on the total number of requests received by the service broken down in to individual areas
- on projects and initiatives the service is involved in including:
 - Alcohol Intervention
 - Fixed Penalty Notifications
 - Shop Watch
 - New Psychoactive Substances (Legal Highs)
 - Housing Partnership
 - Fly Tipping
 - Out of Hours Noise Nuisance
- that the Anti- Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act came into force in March 2014 and sees the removal of 19 powers, which had been used to tackle ASB and replaces them with six new and more flexible powers.

- that training on the new powers has been delivered to all staff and the team is involved in developing county-wide and local policies and procedures.

Members commented as follows:

1. Whilst not suggesting the main anti-social behaviour offenders are council tenants is there anything that can be provided within the Tenancy Agreement to address problems eg Probationary periods or rent penalties.

Response – People do suffer more from anti-social behaviour in deprived areas. The Tenancy Agreement is there for a purpose and it is difficult to seek possession on ASB grounds.

2. Animal issues figure quite highly in the statistics – what do they include?.

Response - Stray/lost cats and dogs, animal welfare and pet shops. Public nuisance relating to the keeping of cats and dogs. This is a significant area of work which has seen an increase probably because of the Dangerous Dogs Act.

3. PCSO's powers need to be consistent across the County.

Response – Inspector Coates advised that a County wide agreement on the powers to be used by PCSO's was being tried to be obtained. However procedure commonality cannot be agreed as there is a difference in policy between the districts.