

Minutes



Liaison Meeting with Community Councils

Date: 7 December 2023

Time: 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Bishton, Graig, Marshfield, Michaelstone-y-Fedw, Rogerstone and Wentlooge

In Attendance: Leanne Rowlands (Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), Taylor Strange (Governance Officer), Simon Richards (Governance Officer), Elizabeth Bryant (Head of Law and Standards), Charlotte Pring (Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner), Chief Superintendent Carl Williams (Gwent Police)

1 Apologies

John Wagstaff (Penhow)

Julie Foster (Wentlooge)

2 Declaration of Interest

None

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting held 05.10.23

The Minutes from the previous meeting held 5th October 2023 were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

4 Police Update

The Chief Superintendent provided an update on the key issues within Newport.

Key Points

- There has been a rise in acquisitive crime, but this is not unique to Newport and other forces are seeing an increase. Shoplifting makes up most of these crimes and this is related to drug use as high value items are usually targeted. Collaborating with retailers to mitigate shoplifting incidents such as installing superior quality CCTV.
- An update was provided on the convictions and prosecutions in recent management of these issues.
- The Chief Superintendent provided assurances concerning robbery and knife crime and stated that the strongest possible action using specialist officers is taken to bring offenders to justice and prevent further offences.

This document is available in welsh / Mae's ffurflen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg

- The Chief Superintendent advised that e-bikes and off-road bikes are a perpetual problem but not specific to Newport and the Gwent area. Community intelligence is key in the management of this challenge.
- The Chief Superintendent informed the Committee that their residents can report any use of e-bikes anonymously through Crimestoppers and assured Committee that the information provided and the person providing the information cannot be seen together, even by the Police. Any reports made through Crimestoppers are passed through to the Police for them to take immediate action.
- The Chief Superintendent assured Committee that this is their major focus currently as it is in the public interest, and they are committed to acting against those who are using these bikes for criminal purposes.
- The Chief Superintendent informed the Committee that there is currently legislation that give the Police powers to stop and confiscate these bikes, but that more legislation is needed around the sale of these bikes.

Questions

A Community Councillor raised their concerns that no Police Surgeries have been taking place in their ward. The Chief Superintendent advised the Committee that he was concerned that no surgeries had been taking place and would find out why. A Neighbourhood Policing Performance Framework will be put together that will make it clear when there will be police attendance at future surgeries and the Chief Superintendent assured the Committee that there will be a presence at upcoming meetings.

A Community Councillor stated that they used to receive Police Reports, but these seem to have stopped and enquired whether these can be reinstated and provided either to the Community Councillor or Ward Councillor to be circulated. The Community Councillor stated that they have seen on social media a post from Gwent Police about e-scooters and enquired what has been done about use of these on public roads. The Chief Superintendent assured the Committee that they will make it clear what report they will be receiving, when and from whom. The update on e-bikes also applies to e-scooters as they are illegal to use on public roads.

A Community Councillor stated that the reports they receive are not user-friendly and enquired whether these could be presented differently to show trends. The Chief Superintendent informed the Committee that they will share a draft report to Community Councils for feedback on the format and content.

A Community Councillor enquired whether it is possible to get reports with current information rather than in a retrospective format and can this information be broken down to a village level, rather than the ward. The Chief Superintendent informed the Committee that they can pinpoint data down to individual households, but this is not possible to report on due to the sensitive nature of the data in the reports and the potential risk of identification.

5 Health and Safety

Verbal Update by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner

Key Points

- - The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner gave an overview of the duties on employees in terms of Health and Safety and provided information and links to further information and guidance from the Health and Safety Executive website <https://www.hse.gov.uk/>. They informed the Committee that the Institution of Occupational Health and Safety (IOSH) Managing Safely is good training.
 - A Community Councillor enquired about who would be responsible if an accident happens while the hall has been hired out. The Head of Law and Standards informed Committee that Terms and Conditions can be added in the contract for the hire of the premises including that a risk assessment should be completed for the type of activity or event that the premises have been hired for. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner informed Committee that if there are less than 5 attendees then there is no legal requirement for a risk assessment. They informed Committee that the basics can be found on the HSE website and One Voice Wales is the principal organisation for Community and Town Councils in Wales.
 - The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner informed the Committee that specialist risk assessments can be tendered out to external companies, and they will be able to provide examples and templates of risk assessments. They informed Committee that if they need more support, they would need to buy in to One Voice Wales or a similar company. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager highlighted to the Committee the importance of sharing experiences and best practices between themselves rather than seeking out specialist advice. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Business Partner informed Committee that within Newport City Council there is collaboration and work done with neighbouring local authorities and sharing of best practice.

6 One Voice Wales

Verbal Update by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Key Points:

- - The invitee from One Voice Wales was unable to attend due to ill health. In the interim if any of the Community Councils require further information or are considering becoming a member of One Voice Wales, they are able to contact them directly.

7 Review of Charter

Verbal Update by the Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

Key Points:

- - The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed Committee that they are intending to send out the Charter to representatives and will ask for any comments to be emailed before the next meeting. If there are no changes required that it will be signed off with a revised date.

8 Community Council Review

Key Points:

- - The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee that a Community Council Review is due to take place in January 2024 which will include a review of the Code of Conduct Compliance and Register of Interests check that statutory registers are being properly maintained and procedures for declarations have been completed by Community Councils, following the elections (subject to current legislation and guidance). They informed Committee that there will be engagement with Community Councils to ensure compliance and to identify any training and development needs and that changes to declarations of interests are now in place.
 - A Community Councillor highlighted that their contact information might be out of date and asked whether it can be reviewed following the meeting. The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager assured Committee that the contact information can be checked following the meeting and will ensure that this is then filtered through to internal departments within the Council.
 - The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager informed the Committee of the consultation taking place for the Independent Remuneration Panel report and that the closing date for feedback is the 8th December 2023. The draft report has recommendations that would apply to Community Councillors in respect of mandatory allowances.

9 Forward Work Program

- One Voice Wales
- Personal Safety Session
- Outcomes of the Community Council Review