



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM**

**THURSDAY 14 MAY 2009
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Community Planning Partners Present:

Councillor S Currie (Chair)

Mr G Aird, Community Safety Manager, Lothian & Borders Fire and Rescue Service

Ms C McArthur, Representative of East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel

Sgt R Erskine, Lothian and Borders Police

Ms N Smith, Partnership Analyst

Mr J Chaudry, East Lothian Ethnic Minorities Forum

Mr J Bruce, ELVON

Mr J Boyce, Health Co-operative

Council Officials Present:

Mr A Forsyth, Chair of Anti-social Behaviour Overview Group

Mr B Cooper, Representative of Road Working Group

Mr S Baxter, Association of Community Councils

Ms C Goodwin, Policy Officer

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Visitors Present:

There were no visitors present

Apologies:

Councillor K McLeod

Supt M Maciver

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, Councillor Stuart Currie paid tribute to Brian Duncan who contributed so much to the work of the Community Safety Forum. He also thanked the Council officers who had worked together to continue his work.

1. MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM HELD ON 16 MARCH 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2009 were agreed to be a true record.

2. CUSTOMER SURVEY 2009

Claire Goodwin, Policy Officer, updated the Forum on the initial analysis of the 2009 East Lothian Customer Survey carried out by Market Research UK, the company commissioned by the Council to undertake this work.

Ms Goodwin reported that the fieldwork for the 2009 survey took place from February to April and advised that a total of 1833 respondents were interviewed on a range of issues, including quality of life, social attitudes and community safety. Ms Goodwin intimated that initial results had now been received and analysis at multi member ward level, as well as analysis by specific demographic groups, would soon be available.

A selection of graphs showing some of the initial analysis was appended to the report in Appendix A. These showed that there had been a significant fall in the number of people who reported that antisocial behaviour was very common or fairly common. On the issue of personal safety, a large percentage of people reported feeling very safe or fairly safe in their communities, 97% during the day and 71% after dark, figures which compared well with the national average. Vandalism and deliberate damage to property showed a notable improvement when compared to 2005 figures. Of those surveyed, 77% reported that this behaviour was not common at all and only 9% believed that it was very common or fairly common. Respondents were also asked about their fear of crime, and a total of 92% reported that they felt threatened by crime 'not very much' or 'not at all'.

Ms Goodwin advised that data generated had already been used in relation to the 2009/10 Single Outcome Agreement and future uses would include providing data for the East Lothian Strategic Assessment.

Jalal Chaudry, who observed that the ethnic minority in East Lothian had increased considerably and included a large number of eastern Europeans, enquired if crime rates against ethnic minorities, and domestic violence and driving offences involving this group, would be included when the survey was published. Councillor Currie replied that it was important that statistics were seen in context, but any statistics which would be helpful, could be considered. Ms Goodwin advised that hate crimes were included in the Single Outcome Agreement and were monitored by the Police. Councillor Currie also announced that the format for Council reports would soon be amended to include an Equality Impact Assessment paragraph, and he expected that this information would soon filter through the system.

Cathy McArthur enquired if there had been any significant change in the volume of rubbish being discarded since the Council had introduced charges for special collections. Councillor Currie replied that there were now only 2 or 3 councils in the country which did not levy charges to meet the considerable cost of providing this service. He believed that the vast majority of fly tipping concerned commercial waste, otherwise he was not aware of any increase as a result of the charges. Mrs McArthur also reported that dog fouling continued to be a problem in local communities. Ms Goodwin advised that the Community Safety Partnership had decided to allocate £5,000 to the Amenity Services Team.

Councillor Currie advised that the Single Outcome Agreement had been a major driver in getting the data, and the results would enable the Council to allocate money to local issues where there was the greatest need. He considered that the survey had proved to be very worthwhile and suggested that a bigger sample could be commissioned in future.

Decision

The Forum noted some of the initial analysis now available in relation to the 2009 Customer Survey.

3. TASKING AND CO-ORDINATING PAPER

This report had been postponed.

Partner Updates

4. LOTHIAN AND BORDERS POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Bob Erskine presented the Police Report for May 2009 which recorded incidents reported between 26 February and 30 April 2009.

He advised that there had been a 2% increase in crimes within East Lothian compared to the previous year and that crimes were predominantly committed within the Musselburgh West Ward and Preston/Seton and Gosford Ward. Within the hotspots, the prolific crimes were Vandalism (both to vehicles and property), Breach of the Peace and Theft. There had also been an increase in both domestic violence reported to the police and road traffic casualties compared to the previous year. Of the 58 collisions, however, only two involved children and both of these were minor.

Jalal Chaudry referred to the increase in crime in the Musselburgh West Ward, and enquired if there were any statistics relating to the size of population and Sergeant Erskine agreed to investigate this. Mr Chaudry also enquired if more resources were required to address crime in the areas showing the highest crime figures. Councillor Currie agreed it would be useful to have figures per head of population and Sergeant Erskine confirmed that the graph showed 'spikes' in the Prestonpans, Musselburgh and Tranent areas because their population was greater and he advised that resources were already being directed into these areas.

Councillor Currie also observed that crimes of dishonesty tended to rise during a recession and he expected to see evidence of this trend across Scotland. Sergeant Erskine confirmed there had been a rise in opportunist thefts, especially in the east side of the county. Councillor Currie stated that it was important that Forum partners worked together on all these issues and that they and continually assessed if more action work needed to be taken.

In relation to the road traffic casualty figures, Brian Cooper advised that the police investigated accidents and reported any concerns to the Council's Roads Network unit. They also reported any evidence of 'clusters'. Mr Cooper also advised that an event was due to take place at North Berwick High School later in the month for learner drivers from the surrounding areas to attend with their parents, aimed at promoting road safety.

John Boyce enquired if there were any figures to indicate to what extent alcohol abuse contributed to the crime figures. Sergeant Erskine described alcohol abuse as a driving force which had a huge impact on domestic violence and public disorder incidents. Sergeant Erskine believed that these figures were widely available and Mr Boyce indicated that he would be interested to see them. Alan Forsyth advised that he had newly completed figures for homelessness, and alcohol addiction had figured strongly.

James Bruce enquired if there were any figures available recording the number of male victims of domestic abuse. Sergeant Erskine replied that round 10% of victims in East Lothian were male but this figure fluctuated.

Councillor Currie agreed to speak to colleagues in other authorities to ascertain if there was any more that could be done in East Lothian to be more effective in promoting responsible behaviour and road safety in local communities. He also suggested a number of measures which could prove useful for improving communication with local communities including the Council newspaper *Living* and the Community Education insert. Councillor Currie also proposed that the Forum could fund a 4-page supplement on community safety to insert in *Living* newspaper.

5. LOTHIAN AND BORDERS FIRE AND RESCUE PARTNER

Geoff Aird, Community Safety Manager, reported on the statistics and analysis for fire related activities in East Lothian over a 4 year period (April to April) and the four quarters of 2008.

Fire Activity

Mr Aird reported that there had been a 20% decrease in the number of Accidental Dwelling Fires compared with the same period in 2007/8 and it was hoped that this trend would continue as a result of the home safety check programme. Figures showed that there had been a 75% increase in the number of Deliberate Primary Fires but Mr Aird explained that this was a temporary blip, due to three categories of fire being reduced to two, eliminating the 'malicious' category of fire. Mr Aird reported that Deliberate Secondary Fires, which usually involved young people, had decreased by 34% compared to the same period last year and believed that this was in part due

to youth diversionary activities and a pro-active approach by the Fire Service. Fire casualties were down and there had been no fatalities.

Home Safety Check Programme

Mr Aird advised that Home Safety Checks had been renamed Home Safety Visits in the hope that it would encourage more people to respond. He reported that 12,000 Home Safety Visits had been carried out in 2008/9 bringing the total number in East Lothian to 40,000, and the target group had progressed from High Degeneration (well above average) to 'above average'.

Youth Activities

Mr Aird outlined details of the Cooldown Crew courses and the One-to-One Firesetting Intervention Programme set up in 1991, both an integral part of their early intervention and early interaction policy.

Jalal Chaudry enquired what the procedure was for a Home Safety Visit, asking if householders were contacted in writing in advance or if it was a system of cold calling and Mr Aird replied that it was often the latter. He also advised that, if they did not gain entry to a property, this would be recorded and they would leave information on home safety. If three refusals were received, they would not pursue a further visit. Mr Chaudry commented that, often people were alarmed when officers tried to gain entry to their properties, fearing that their gas supplies could be disconnected, for example. He therefore queried if there was any way to inform people that the fire service was there to help and not to enforce. Councillor Currie suggested that details of safety visits could be included in Community Council newsletters and Mr Aird advised that that was one of a number of proposals currently under consideration. Alan Forsyth advised that the Council forced access to Council owned properties once a year to carry out a safety check, when smoke detectors were checked and a programme of hard wiring detectors was undertaken. If gas supplies were found to have been turned off, he advised that the occupiers would not be left without heat or hot water.

Councillor Currie recommended liaising with other bodies and involving the wider community on the question of access. Claire Goodwin advised that, at a meeting of the Fire and Home Safety Sub Group, they had discussed how to target older people through local lunch clubs.

Working Group Updates

6. PUBLIC PROTECTION AGENDA

Alan Forsyth advised that a meeting of the Adult Protection Committee had taken place on 8 May. He reported that the Committee, still in its early stages, was attended by only three people, Dr Ross, her opposite number in Midlothian, and Mr Tom Wood who was appointed Chair. Mr Forsyth advised that monitoring of care homes was discussed and map meetings would continue to take place.

7. UPDATE ON FIRE AND HOME SAFETY SUB GROUP

Claire Goodwin tabled a report updating the Community Safety Forum on progress in relation to the development of the Fire and Home Safety Sub Group. She advised that a meeting had taken place the previous week when they had discussed joint projects and exchanged ideas. The remit of the group also involved identifying gaps and opportunities in relation to fire and home safety. Ms Goodwin advised that an Action Plan had now been drafted for 2009/10 covering a range of initiatives including Child Safety Week, the re-launch of the Message in a Bottle and the promotion of ICE (in case of emergency) numbers.

Ms Goodwin also advised that the group's Action Plan would help to fulfil the community safety commitments outlined in the 2009/10 East Lothian Single Outcome Agreement and that £3,000 had been received from the Safer East Lothian Fund to support their work.

James Bruce suggested that the group could consider publicising the work they do. Councillor Currie agreed and suggested that the Council newspaper *Living* would be a good medium for reporting the group's activities.

Decision

The Forum noted the progress in relation to the Fire and Home Safety Sub Group.

8. ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR OVERVIEW GROUP

Mr Forsyth, first of all, wished to express his appreciation for the work of PC Neil Forbes who was retiring from the Overview Group and the Police force after 30 years service. He will be replaced by PC Jim McLeod.

Alan Forsyth advised that the Antisocial Behaviour Group met on 24 April and approved the draft Antisocial Behaviour Strategy which would be considered by Cabinet on 13 June. He proceeded to update the Forum on the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Overview Group, advising that 9 Interim ASBOs and 14 full ASBOs had been granted in East Lothian, and one child ASBO was also being considered. In addition, Mr Forsyth reported that there were 34 adults on the Antisocial Behaviour Monitoring Group and 6 children on the equivalent list. He also advised that, of the 72 Acceptable Behaviour Agreements signed in East Lothian, there had only been 6 repeats.

Mr Forsyth reported that the number of complaints to the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Helpline had gradually increased over the 4-month period between 1 January and 30 April, to a total of 431. He suggested that this trend indicated that the helpline service was proving to be successful and added that all calls to the out of hours helpline received on Thursday to Sunday evenings were now being attended to immediately by the Night Time Noise Teams. Mr Forsyth also advised that the Joint Police/Council Tasking and Co-ordinating Meeting, which had the power to deploy the resources of the East Lothian Community Action team, continued to sit on a Wednesday.

Cathy McArthur commented that the introduction of community policemen in 2004 had made a huge difference. Also, letters to parents signed jointly by the Council and the Police were clearly having an impact.

Councillor Currie stated that, in the two years since the ASB Group had been set up, the momentum in East Lothian had built up and it was important that that continued. He therefore asked if Mr Forsyth was yet in a position to know if more resources needed to be deployed. Mr Forsyth replied that he could consult his colleagues but it might be advisable to wait until the wardens had been in place for a year.

9. ROAD SAFETY WORKING GROUP – UPDATE

Brian Cooper, Senior Transportation Manager, gave a verbal update following their recent meeting on Tuesday 5 May.

He advised that the Walk to School week 11-15 May was currently underway and reported the results of the Sustrans National 'Hands Up' Survey. He advised that East Lothian Schools had the 2nd highest percentage (64.8%) of pupils walking, cycling and scootering, the 2nd lowest percentage (14.4%) of pupils being driven and the 3rd highest percentage of pupils cycling (5.4%) when the national averages were 50.3%, 21.4% and 3% respectively. Mr Cooper described the figures as very favourable for East Lothian.

Councillor Currie stated that there was a key role for the CSF to monitor and respond to these statistics.

Mr Cooper also intimated that the annual Young Drivers Challenge 2009 event was scheduled for Saturday 13 June in Dalkeith and the 2moro's Driver 2009 multi-agency event was scheduled for 1-3 September at the Brunton Theatre.

Councillor Currie recalled that the A1 Haddington to Dunbar road had been put forward as a potential candidate for an average speed camera and enquired if there had been any response to this request. Mr Cooper replied that he had not yet received a reply, but there may be news after the next Board meeting due to take place in August.

10. EAST LOTHIAN SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

Claire Goodwin, Policy Officer, updated the forum on the completion of the 2009/10 Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) and highlighted the significance of the SOA in terms of the strategic direction of the Community Safety Partnership.

Ms Goodwin reported that the development of the 2009/10 SOA had taken place over the last 6 months, building on the previous SOA and involving the full range of Community Planning partners. The Agreement had been finalised at the end of April and would be signed of by partners and sent to the Scottish Government at the end of May.

Ms Goodwin advised that National Outcome (9) '*We live our lives safe from crime, disorder and danger*' was the outcome which related most closely to the work of the CSF and an extract from the Agreement on this Outcome was attached to the report. Ms Goodwin stated that the detail in this Outcome highlighted the priorities in this area and indicated baseline information and targets.

Decision

The Forum noted the progress made in relation to the 2009/10 SOA and was made aware of the significance of the SOA in terms of the strategic direction of the Community Safety Partnership.