



Notes of evidence

Name of meeting	POLICY COMMISSION FOR SAFER COMMUNITIES
Date and time	THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2008, COMMENCING AT 6.00 PM
Venue	COMMITTEE ROOM ONE, FLOOR 4, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Commission	Cllrs David Williams (Chair), Mike Cunningham, Susan Scoccia, Jilly Wood
Officers Present	Zoryna O'Donnell, Stuart May, April Ross, Richard Stone, Simon Wiggins, Kevin Winchcombe
Stakeholders	Mark Bell & Dave Gledhill, Protection Prevention and Response, Stuart May, IW Fire and Rescue Nikki Shave & Sarah Fitch, Probation Service
Apologies	Cllrs Henry Adams, Heather Humby, Stuart Love (Director for Environment and Neighbourhood Services)

1. **Notes of Evidence**

- 1.1 The Minutes from the previous meeting should show Cllr Cunningham in attendance and not Cllr Taylor.
- 1.2 Following the above amendment the Notes of evidence arising at the meeting held on [16 October 2008](#) were agreed (Paper A)

2. **Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 Cllr Susan Scoccia declared a personal interest in item 4 as she was the Chairman of the Licensing Committee.
- 2.2 Cllr Mike Cunningham declared a personal interest in Item 4 as she was a member on the Licensing Committee.

3. **Public Question Time**

There were no public questions received

4. **Crime and Disorder and Fear of Crime Enquiry**

Evidence was received about the Probation Service from Nikki Shave and Sarah Fitch

- 4.1 The Commission were told that the Probation office which was situated in Sea Street in Newport formed part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight probation area, which was one of 42 areas in England and Wales operating under the Ministry of Justice.
- 4.2 The department was made up of a mixed grade team consisting of Probation Officers who had attained a Diploma in Probation Studies whose role was to provide reports to the courts and a number of Probation Service Officers who were lesser qualified staff who provided assistance with the administration.
- 4.3 There were also a number of Case Administrators who carried out a multi functional role this role required partnership working with Intervention which dealt with unpaid work, education, training and employment, and offender management and purchased services which would deal with their client's offences.
- 4.4 A profile of offenders who commenced supervision and had been released on license or started a community order between 1 October 2007 and 31 August 2008 was given to the Commission. It was noted that there were 484 Commencements of which 86% were male, these were then further broken down into sub categories;
 - 34% were between the age ranges 22 – 29, which formed the largest group.
 - 22% were spread between 30 – 39 years old.
 - The smallest group was between 18 -21 making up 20%.
- 4.5 The Probation Officers provided the Commission with a breakdown of the numbers of offenders that had commenced supervision against the type of offence that had been committed showing amongst others:
 - 21 offenders had committed burglary
 - 7 offenders had committed robbery
 - 14 were sexual offenders
 - 58 were offences of Violence
 - 44 drugs offences
- 4.6 The Offender Assessment System (OASys) was a computerised program that was used to assess any cases for risks of the person re-offending and the risk of harm they presented to others. The program was also designed to assess the reasons why people chose to offend and took into account a number of factors including their employment, education, finances, relationships and drugs/alcohol. The Commission were told that the program operated a scoring system and the higher the score the greater the risk of offending.
- 4.7 It was noted that of the 316 OASys cases over 51% required assistance regarding drug misuse and evidence suggested 141 people within the scheme required assistance with alcohol related issues.
- 4.8 The Probation Service operated a tiered process to manage its cases according to risk, need and the court order applied. 9.5% of these cases were within tier four which

was the highest level and these people posed a higher risk of harm to children and members of the public. 32% were within tier three which were those within medium risk of harm, tiers two and one were at 30% and 26% respectively.

4.9 The National Probation Service also worked with other agencies such as the prison service, health services and social services to assess and manage the risks posed by violent and sexual offenders living in the community, of which there were three categories. This was achieved by Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (Mappa). There were three levels of Mappa management which were used to determine the level of multi-agency co-operation required, with those with a higher risk tending to be managed by higher level managers.

4.10 Services offered by Interventions were used in all cases and assistance could be offered in a number of ways although the offender had to be motivated. Items on the program included:

- Drugs Rehabilitation – Based on low, medium or high requirement
- Alcohol Treatment – Based on the same levels of requirement as Drugs
- Essential Skills – Assistance from IOW College to gain qualifications
- Aggression replacement – To deal with anger management issues

4.11 The Commission noted that the Probation Service had statutory responsibilities for those under 21 prior to their release from prison and the service would also work with those sentenced to over 12 months. Those that were sentenced to less than this and were released on license could be recalled by the Probation Service if they believed that person was going to cause harm or re-offend.

Evidence was received from Stuart May from the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service

4.12 The Commission were told that the Isle of Wight Fire and Rescues Service (IWFRS) had been working in partnership with other agencies, both within the Local Authority and the Police for a number of years in order to achieve the objectives from the Strategic Assessment that had been produced in line with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

4.13 The IWFRS was directly represented on the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and the Partnership Tasking and Co-ordinating Group (PTCG) and within the current CDRP action plan the Fire service was the lead agency for the delivery of Local Intervention Fire Education (L.I.F.E), which was funded by the Youth Inclusion Forum.

4.14 The LIFE programme was designed to reduce criminal damage and to reduce youth nuisance and anti social behaviour which was within the aims of the CDRP. This was achieved by enabling fully trained fire staff to run courses in house at the service learning and development centre in Ryde, providing a five day course for up to twelve people between the ages of 13 and 17.

4.15 The format of the course was a basic recruit's course and was designed to provide discipline, boost self esteem and to show parents how confidence, teamwork and a sense of pride could be developed. Following the pass out parade the Commission

were told that attendees were offered a place on a watch in order to monitor their progress. The Commission congratulated the IWFRS on the good work that was being achieved on the LIFE scheme.

- 4.16 It was noted that funding for the LIFE scheme from the Youth Inclusion Forum was due to end in March 2009 although it was hoped that by achieving targets further reward money could be claimed for the following year.
- 4.17 The Commission noted that several members of the fire service had received training on the use of the PRIME software which was a police managed web based system which allowed multi agency access to criminal activity and allowed the fire service to identify any trends for example in arson.
- 4.18 The IWFRS had been assisting at PURE events which were designed to reduce substance misuse and this had given the service an overview on the issue and allowed for increased awareness when attending an incident that may involve substance misuse.
- 4.19 It was further noted that the IWFRS had been working in partnership with the Crime Prevention Officer which had meant that the Fire Safety Checks scheme had been expanded to assist with the "lights on" campaign. This provided advice on the reduction of domestic burglary through provision of timer plugs and low energy bulbs in dwellings that appear uninhabited.
- 4.20 It was recognised that the IWFRS was undertaking fundamental change on a national scale with more emphasis on education and prevention; in line with this the IWFRS were providing a two pronged approach to education. The Home Fire Safety Scheme continued to provide advice and assistance to those who were identified as vulnerable or elderly and they were being identified through the use of Mosaic and Social Services to identify groups.
- 4.21 Fire safety was also included on the school curriculum which allowed the fire service to encourage safety at an early age and educate the fire safety message so it could be communicated to parents and grandparents.
- 4.22 Arson Alert Boards had been purchased to highlight the issue in the local neighbourhood following an arson incident and information regarding these incidents was being collated so target areas could be identified. It was noted that the Island did not however have a high level of arson incidents.

Evidence was received from Mark Bell and David Gledhill from the Hampshire Constabulary

- 4.23 The Commission were told that there was a downward trend on all types of crime with the number of crimes being committed falling by 751 between 2006 and 2008. It was further noted that vehicle crime was also less than the same period last year although this figure did not include damage to vehicles.
- 4.24 Figures for house burglary were presented to the Commission and a number of peaks were shown above previous year figures between April and October. The Commission were told that this was possibly related to prison release times and not related to the

tourist season. 63% of dwelling burglaries were against insecure premises e.g where windows or doors had been left open or unlocked.

- 4.25 Violence against people was at a lower level than previous years and between April/October the figure only rose once above 250 incidents reported whereas 2007-08 had peaked at over 350 for a period of two months. A similar constant trend was noted for incidents of Criminal Damage, which showed to be lessening as the year progressed. It was noted that the figures for Criminal Damage formed part of the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) targets.
- 4.26 The underlying figures for drug offences on the Island between April and August remained steadily below 50 per month. It was noted that this figure peaked considerably in June of each year and this was attributed to the IW Music Festival and the preventative measures that were put in place at the event by the Hampshire Constabulary.
- 4.27 It was noted that passive drugs dogs were deployed outside of the Festival to prevent drugs entering the event and identified offenders were offered the opportunity to receive advice on methods of treatment available. If the Police opted not to be proactive with regard to drugs the Islands drug problem would not be highlighted but would still exist.
- 4.28 Levels of burglary related to drug abuse continued to be a problem on the Island but the police were working closely with partners on the CDRP to bring these figures down and it was noted that the area had hit its burglary target. The police also used a bronze action system which was used when information was received that could not be corroborated which would restrict the issue of a search warrant from a magistrate. This information would action a visit to the property and the alleged offender, who would then be advised that the police were aware of drug activity and to offer assistance of a treatment advisor before further action was taken.
- 4.29 The Commission were told that of the 6000 arrests that were made over the past year over 50% had been alcohol or violence related. Research from America and Holland had proven a link to a higher level of crime in areas with a run down appearance including broken windows and graffiti compared with well maintained areas. The Police had worked in partnership with the Islands Housing Associations to deal with any areas with a perceived shabby appearance.
- 4.30 The Demographic of the Island community was thought to impact on the perceived increase of crime and whilst young people congregating were not a serious problem, the perception of fear of crime was affected owing to the ageing island population. The police, under the CDRP, conducted an annual strategic assessment which was used to establish local priorities. To deal with these a number of sub groups had been formed that were working well with the PCSO's and Town Centre Managers.
- 4.31 The Commission were shown how the Island compared to 15 areas of similarity on iQuanta which was an internet based tool used by the police to provide graphical and tabular summaries of performance trends, the results indicated:
- All Crime 11 of 15
 - Criminal Damage 10 of 15

- Drug Offences 15 of 15
- Assault with less serious injury 14 of 15

4.32 It was noted that CCTV had contributed considerably in reducing the fear of crime in the areas where it had been introduced where it fulfilled a number of roles. This included being an early alert preventing serious injury, increasing the likelihood of a guilty plea in court and proving a persons innocence. It was recognised that the area covered was expanding but that its installation was a large investment financially.

Evidence was received from Kevin Winchcombe, Principal Licensing Officer

4.33 The Commission were told that the Licensing Department were running a number of initiatives that would impact on crime and the fear of crime.

4.34 Licensing was currently dealing with the issue of alcohol substitution which involved the replacement of products for those which were both cheaper and of a stronger alcoholic content. This was being achieved through the investigation of “tip offs”, pro-active sampling of products for sale and joint visits with the Police to maximise the impact of the issue.

4.35 The department were also assisting in the management of the Islands 4 Designated Public Places Orders (DPPO) which allowed either the Police or a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) to advise people to stop drinking or to confiscate any alcohol from persons within the designated area. The success of these areas was monitored by the Police but it was noted that care had to be taken regarding the introduction of these areas as it could move the problem on and must be evidence based.

4.36 It was noted that drinking in public was not a criminal offence and that action would only be taken where there was a perception of crime taking place. This action could either be confiscation or in more serious cases arrest.

4.37 The under 21 scheme was currently running in Ryde at weekends and presently 16 off licenses were taking part which had resulted in a perceived reduction in crime. It was envisaged to possibly expand the scheme to Sandown and Shanklin. Licensing had been working in partnership with the Police on this initiative and during a test purchasing exercise conducted in August only one failure was logged.

4.38 The reduction of Violent crime in pubs/clubs was being tackled in a number of ways including innovative use of Health and Safety Legislation which required employers to ensure they had made efforts to combat the risk of abuse of staff and of their obligations under duty of care for their customers whilst they were using the premises.

4.39 Police crime data information was being used to target premises which had a high level of reported issues which then allowed for a joint visit from the Police Crime Prevention Officer and the Environmental Health Officer to assess the whole building and to advise on CCTV installation and the introduction of adequate procedures.

4.40 It was noted that the HSE’s website offered these premises the opportunity to download tools that provided industries with a wealth of guidance to help businesses.

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- 4.41 The Commission were told that Licensing were heavily involved in the 2008 Safer Christmas Campaign which encompassed the national drink campaign, working with Traffic Education and targeting rural pubs with promotional material regarding drink driving.
- 4.42 Christmas parties would also be targeted through partnership working with the Chamber of Commerce, promoting drinking within the recommended limits or the use of public transport.
- 4.43 Drinks promotions which were offered by pubs/clubs and supermarkets remained a social issue and it was noted that Licensing continued to discourage “happy hours” and loss leader drink promotions by working with both local and national suppliers.
- 4.44 The Best Bar None Scheme was also being rolled out across the Island which was a National accreditation scheme for licensed premises which awarded premises with a five star rating similar to those awarded to food establishments. Each premises would undertake an annual assessment against predetermined targets for reducing alcohol related crime and disorder, minimising binge drinking and improving profitability. 34 premises on the island had requested an assessment to gain advice on the removal of bad practises.

Evidence was received from Richard Stone, Trading Standards Manager

- 4.45 The Commission were told Trading Standards were tasked with enforcing a wide range of legislation although they preferred to deal with issues before they reached the enforcement stage through the promotion of compliance with the law for both retailers and consumers.
- 4.46 Underage sales was an area the department were concentrating on and the Commission were told that this involved a number of age sensitive products, the supply of which had obvious links to crime. It was noted these sales covered a number of items and was not just in regard to alcohol sales but including:
- Knives
 - Spray Paints
 - Solvents
 - Tobacco
 - Certified Entertainment
 - Fireworks
- 4.47 Ensuring compliance with the legislation on the sale of these items was achieved through providing information and education via a number of methods including at trade seminars, attending retailer meetings, regular patrols and community alcohol partnerships. Work was also taking place with young consumers including involvement during child safety awareness week inviting year six schoolchildren to take part in an interactive shopping experience and then explaining why legislation was in place for certain items, the risks involved and the possible anti social behaviour that followed.
- 4.48 It was noted that through joint funding from the Youth Inclusion Forum and a number of other agencies it had been possible for over 1,100 year nine students from all five High Schools to attend a Theatre production which was presented as a popular talk show to highlight the consequences of purchasing goods whilst underage.

- 4.49 Compliance was also monitored through test purchasing with the current failure rate for the purchase of all goods at 14.3%, although the Commission were told that this was on a downward trend with the failure rate for 2007 being 16.5% and significantly higher in the past. The failure rate on alcohol alone stood at 7.4% for 2008, which in 2005/6 had been 38%.
- 4.50 Rogue traders were also operating on the Island including Paving/Tarmac gangs, Roofers and Doorstep salesmen all of which charged inflated prices and were also involved in theft of money or goods. These traders were particularly skilled at assessing the type of occupier of a property and preyed on the vulnerable and elderly, increasing their fear of crime.
- 4.51 Trading Standards on the ground response to these traders included the provision of a rapid response team which could provide an immediate joint response with the Police to the area rogue traders were in operation.
- 4.52 The Commission were told that over 15,000 homes island wide were incorporated into No Cold Calling Zones, which was a scheme supported by Parish/Town Councils and offered the opportunity to make personal visits to home owners to provide personal safety information and promotional material.
- 4.53 Legal issues regarding human rights had meant it was not possible to designate the entire island as a No Cold Calling Zone and that the application for these areas required an evidence based case including the numbers of those at risk. The Commission noted that it was not illegal to Cold Call at a property in a no Cold Calling Zone.
- 4.54 It was noted that there were other ways of combating rogue traders including participating within the Community Advice Network, which allowed for a good understanding of the various roles of different groups such as Town Centre managers and PCSO's. Trading Standards also provided a theatrical show called "Trickster" to educate on the impact of rogue traders and the methods they used to trick people.
- 4.55 250 Island trades had applied to join the Buy with Confidence Scheme which vetted businesses to a high standard and whilst this scheme was open to all trades it was particularly encouraged in areas such as gardening services.
- 4.56 Counterfeit goods was another issue that was high in order of priority for Trading Standards and it was noted that this was neither a quaint cottage industry nor a victimless crime. It affected both local traders and consumer's alike but to crime organisations it provided a high yield low risk means of making vast profits. The Commission were told that it was estimated that 7% of all world trade was in counterfeit goods which, had impacted on over 100,000 jobs in the EU alone.
- 4.57 It was noted that Trading Standards expected an increase in criminal activity owing to the current economic climate and were actively monitoring a number of activities including;
- Scams and Cyber Crime
 - Fair trading
 - Credit and misleading prices
 - Weights and Measures

5. **Members Question Time**

No member's questions were received