

Walsall Strategic Community Reference Group

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 16 January 2014 at Walsall Police Station.

In attendance:

Nirmal Singh (NS)	Sikh Community
Vivienne Aston (VA)	Brownhills
Desmond Jones (DJ)	Brownhills
Harnik Rama (HR)	University of Wolverhampton
Sandeep Singh (SS)	Sikh Forum
Michael Gladstone (MG)	Mencap/Walsall College
Thomas Hargroves (TH)	Mencap/Walsall College
Pete Griffin (PG)	Mencap/Walsall College
Alison Davies (AD)	Mencap
Mahmood M Sacha (MMS)	Muslim Welfare Society / UMO
Imran M Sacha (IS)	Darlaston Youth Club
Ashley Lovell (AL)	Darlaston South
Cllr. Rose Burley (RB)	Councillor Bentley/Darlaston North
Bill Ellens (BE)	CUSP
Madeleine Holland (MH)	STAR
Elizabeth Vodden (EV)	Over 50's Forum
Elizabeth Kardynal (EK)	EWA CIC, Polish Community
Vasant Mistry (VM)	Hindu Forum
Sue Parker (SP)	Walsall Police
Kevin Pitt (KP)	Walsall Police

Apologies:

Pauline Beckett
Michelle Small
Kate Dziuba
Sharon Fogarty
Darren Letman

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting were read and accepted.

Matters Arising and Action Updates.

There were no matters arising.

Stop and Search Update

SP gave an overview of the latest training for police officers following which the arrest rate (November) has increased to 41% from 8.8% in October 2013.

NS brought the groups attention to an Express and Star article that indicated that the police were making more genuine arrests following stop and searches. In reply to a question from BE, SP explained the tasking process, matching resources to crime data. Currently Blakenall is receiving extra police attention due to an increase in crime. There was a discussion of stop and search, including the introduction of new electronic recording.

Performance Update.

In December 2013 13 hate crime offences were reported, up 3 on last year. 11 of these were detected. So far in January 6 hate crimes have been reported. Knife crime – in December 2013 18 crimes were reported, so far in January 9 have been reported.

ACTION – SP and KP to investigate bringing more detailed information about stop and search and knife crime to the group.

SP then gave an overview of domestic abuse in the borough.

Estates Update.

The public consultation has been halted on the instruction of the Police and Crime Commissioner and will now take place in April or May. Work is still going on but no decisions have been made beyond the proposed closure of Walsall Police Station. SP outlined the Community Assets Bill which gives community groups the right to purchase 'community assets' if they can raise the funds.

A discussion took place around the possible closures of police stations and bases.

New Contact Centres – presentation from Force Contact Department.

Chief Superintendent James Andronov gave an overview of the rationale behind the recent move to new non-emergency contact centres.

Recruitment.

SP explained that over the next two years WMP is planning to recruit 450 new police constables. The proposed minimum qualification will be two A levels or equivalent and the force will be especially encouraging applications from BME backgrounds, with members of this group being asked to assist. It expected that the process will begin in the summer.

Policing Plan

SP explained how the policing plan should address community concerns. A survey in October 2013 attracted 240 replies from Walsall residents, with issues such as speeding, 'teenagers hanging about' and burglaries coming out top. Other concerns expressed included drug dealing and inconsiderate parking. Walsall's policing plan for 2013/14 will therefore seek to address these concerns as well as overall reducing crime and increasing detections.

Any Other Business

SS raised the issue of prostitution moving to different locations, it is currently a problem on the industrial estate where he has a business.

NS spoke about the recently released papers indicating that the British Government had some involvement in the 1984 Golden Temple raid by Indian forces which resulted in the deaths of about 400 people. NS stated that whilst there was some concern among Sikhs locally this was not currently likely to spill over into any action.

KP reminded the members to please fill in their profiles and to have their photos taken for the police intranet page about the group.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 20 March, 6pm at Walsall Police Station.