

Walsall Strategic Community Reference Group

Minutes of meeting held on Thursday 28 November 2013 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
Mr R K Mehmi (RM)	S.G.R.T.D.
Ashley Lovell	Darlaston South
Cllr. Rose Burley	Councillor Bentley/Darlaston South
Cllr. Allah Ditta	Councillor Palfrey
Bill Ellens	CUSP
Sue Parker (SP)	Walsall Police
Kevin Pitt (KP)	Walsall Police

Apologies:

Madeleine Holland
Pauline Beckett
Michelle Small
Elizabeth Vodden
Kate Dziuba
Elizabeth Kardynal
Sharon Fogarty

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting were read and accepted.

Matters Arising and Action Updates.

There were no matters arising.

New Contact Centres – presentation from Force Contact Department

Unfortunately force contact had to cancel their attendance at short notice. This presentation will be re-scheduled for a future meeting.

Stop and Search Update

As KP was busy, agenda items 6 and 7, stop and search update and performance update, were taken next.

SP gave update of hate crimes reported which showed an increase of 4 this month over November last year and of 60 offences during the year to date (from 1 April). Just under 50% of hate crimes were detected, which makes

Walsall the best performing LPU in the force. The majority of hate crime reported was racial and much of that was verbal, e.g. name calling.

ACTION – KP to circulate list of third party hate crime reporting centres.

SP also gave other performance data and then addressed two issues of community concern.

1/ The humane killing of two horses in Coalpool. SP outlined the circumstances that had led to the deaths and the ensuing protests. A discussion of the incident and the roles of the police and council followed.

2/ Review of the police estate. West Midlands Police has an extensive estate including many buildings (police stations and bases) that are used inefficiently so opportunities to downsize the estate were being explored. A review of police stations is being undertaken. Walsall police station is already earmarked for closure with staff being split between the Civic Centre and Bloxwich police station. Consultations on the futures of other police stations will begin in January, with proposals to close Darlaston, Willenhall and Brownhills police stations being discussed. SP and the rest of the command team recognise that there will be community concerns and are committed to offering the best possible service wherever the police are based.

RB had heard that Darlaston neighbourhood officers may be based at Bilston police station which is too far away.

SP pointed out that at the recent Neighbourhood Policing Workshop the Chief Constable had given a commitment to keeping neighbourhood teams as they are. Options as to where to base officers and staff are being considered and no decisions have yet been made. The LPU is committed to finding a base in Darlaston for neighbourhood policing teams.

A discussion around police visibility and the cost of keeping the buildings took place.

The police are also considering the use of mobile police stations or the Council's One Stop Bus.

VA asked if it was worth keeping Brownhills police station open, and should the neighbourhood team be moved into the Community Safety House. SP replied that this option was being seriously considered.

BE asked if an environmental impact assessment had been made, i.e. the use of additional fuel in vehicles. SP said yes, everything was being considered and costed. In reply to a question from NS, SP stated that the police would endeavour to keep a base in Willenhall.

Detailed proposals for the estate will be shared with the group at the next meeting in January before being made public.

SCRG promotion update.

KP showed the group the SCRG's Facebook page and urged members to put forward items for inclusion to himself or Sharon. The group also has a Twitter feed (@walsallscrg) and e-mail address, walsallscrg@outlook.com.

KP also explained that he is seeking to set up a page on the LPU's intranet site for the information of police officers and members agreed to provide profiles for inclusion and have photos taken. KP to circulate a profile form and take photos at the next meeting.

ID cards for members were also discussed.

ACTION – SP and KP to investigate the issuing of ID cards to group members.

AOB.

VA asked if officers could pay visits to a youth group in Brownhills. KP to contact neighbourhood sergeant.

HR explained how he has liaised with a PCSO to have anti-drug patrols at Wolverhampton University's Walsall Campus. KP to confirm times with NH sergeant.

KP reminded members that West Midlands Police are again running the Diamond Awards to recognise good work by police officers and staff, and also members of the public. Nominations can be made until the end of December by visiting the West Midlands Police website, or paper forms are available.

Date of Next Meeting.

Thursday 16 January at Walsall Police Station, starting at 6pm.