

THREE RIVERS LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

MINUTES

Of a meeting of the Local Strategic Partnerships Board held on 18 October 2023 at 10am.
Held at Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth WD3 1RL.

PARTICIPANTS:

Bob Jones (Chair), Watford and Three Rivers Trust,
Becky Young, Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Sarah Nelmes (Leader), Three Rivers District Council
Cllr Steve Drury, Three Rivers District Council,
Kimberley Grout, Three Rivers District Council
Peta Mettam, Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers
Tamara Valmas, Homegroup
Karen Stephanou, Watford FC CSE Trust
Peter Cogan, Watford Community Housing
Keith Harland, Herts Fire and Rescue Service
Priti Patel, Community Learning Partnership
Debbie Stone, Intensive Family Support Team
Shivani Dave, Three Rivers District Council
Sophie Lawrence, Hertfordshire County Council
Helen Flavell, Probation
Michelle Wright, Three Rivers District Council
Dan Bhamra, Herts Constabulary

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Chris Luff, Watford Chamber of Commerce
Elspeth Mackenzie, Thrive Homes
Jo Marovich, Herts Mind Network
Kevin Hallahan, ICB
Lena Brooks, Watford Job Centre
Margaret Gallagher, Ascend
Sophie Linington, Homestart
Kips Green, Services for Young People
Marie-Louise Nolan, ASCEND
Danielle Levy, Herts Mind Network

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2023 were agreed to be an accurate account.

OPEN FOR CONTRIBUTION

Cllr Nelmes raised concerns about community tensions related to Israel/Palestine. At the full council meeting held on 17th October all Councillors agreed that they should not do anything to inflame tensions. The Chair made a statement abhorring what has happened and terrorist activity, and asking for humanitarian aid for both sides. Our duty to calm civic tensions.

The partnership should respond rapidly to arising tensions.

Michelle Wright stated the Council are involved in meetings with police and HCC to review the situation. Three Rivers has relatively low tensions, but we are aware things might change and quickly. There is a local plan with the police.

Sophie Lawrence added there was significant community tensions prior to the conflict. It's difficult to navigate – need to ensure that people don't connect Palestine with Hamas.

Keith Harland shared that Fire, Police and Council have Monday meetings and they will be able to share issues and concerns on a regular basis.

Peta Mettam shared that CASTR has high number of Jewish staff and volunteers. One member of the team had a concern raised about the Israeli flag being raised by TRDC and potential tensions this could bring. PM asked the Leader how long the flag would be flown for. Cllr Nelmes shared that the flag came down on Friday evening. TRDC tend to fly a flag in recognition of an incident and it would have been inappropriate not to, considering we do for other incidents. Central Government did not require this, but council offices could if they wanted to. 3 councils within Hertfordshire flew it, and Herts County Council lit building blue and white.

Helen Flavell shared information on a Ministerial statement that was released on Monday, the Prison system is now at capacity. Some prisoners (in category c and d prisons) will be eligible for release 18 days in advance of release dates. There are some categories of offenders who will not be eligible for this.

This statement will impact on CGL, police and housing.

Three Rivers Police receive information on people in prison currently who are due for release.

BIG DOOR KNOCK

Peter Cogan shared a presentation on the 2023 big door knock.

This is the 4th year Watford Community Housing (WCH) have done the big door knock, whereby all staff knock on doors of all tenants.

Knocked on 4366 properties, completed 1261 surveys. 77% satisfaction rating, virtual surveys come back 73-77%.

Identified 45 new cases of damp and mould that hadn't been previously reported

Customers want WCH to improve communication. Predominantly around repairs – still experiencing some back log from covid, and struggling to access some resources as a result of Brexit.

Cllr Drury stated saw some comments on socials that some people didn't believe that WCH were doing this work.

PC confirmed that residents were emailed and sent letters in advance of the door knock. Staff were wearing WCH t-shirt and had their lanyard, they also arranged for call back if people weren't comfortable to engage at that time. There were also staff who were not used to speaking to customers on a daily basis, so perhaps lacked confidence.

SN had been informed in previous years so she could do some engagement and show partnership working, but was not informed this year. Action: Peter to follow up as they wanted to reach out to all stakeholders.

MW asked whether any ASB had been uncovered?

PC had picked up on some illegal sub-letting which highlighted gap in knowledge around tenant fraud. As a result they're beginning to develop processes around this. It's becoming more of an issue nationally.

They identified neighbour nuisance cases as opposed to high risk ASB or crime.

WCH is sequentially working through all actions that arose on that day. Not doing this would impact on credibility in future years.

Shivani Dave (ShD) queries what was included in the survey?

Predominantly those shared within the presentation. They did identify that a lot of customers didn't speak English. Action. PC to share what languages were identified within Three Rivers.

People were concerned about cost of living, rent increases. More collaboration can be done with partners before the next event to ensure the right questions are being asked.

PC added that communication around community events and initiatives needs to improve, especially to those who aren't already involved.

COMMUNITY STRATEGY: CONSULTATION

ShD talked through the results of the consultation

1030 people visited but only 40 people completed the consultation.

Overall people agreed, with 6 people being the highest number disagreeing. This was in relation to the theme thriving environment. However, working towards net zero came 6th out of the 12 objectives.

Some comments received related to including young people and older people. Some responses felt partnership working should be more explicit.

Chair asked for agreement to adopt the community strategy, all partners agreed.

ACTION PLAN

ShD shared the 2023-25 action plan with the board.

Priti Patel stated they had the South Oxhey community support meeting last week. Foodbank expressed people are becoming dependent on household support funding. Is something being done about this? SD has had a conversation with foodbank to explore this. SD will ensure this is escalated with county board.

Peta Mettam suggested that within safe and well communities – something should be about partnership events, e.g. CASTR are attending the slipper swap this week. There are a lot of partners involved with this event and there are several objectives crossing over.

Bob Jones informed the group some coordination around the cost of living was happening at county, but there are long wait times for CAS. PM shared there is no waiting time for benefits check at CASTR.

SN suggested working with Herts Growth Board in relation to the Stable Economy theme.
Action: SD to contact Herts Growth Board.

Kimberley Grout suggested extreme weather initiatives already in place should be added to the strategy, e.g. climate change work happening, hot and cold weather from housing team (SWEF).

PM suggested to advice into the cost of living section e.g. advice & support as many organisations already provide this.

With the suggested changes the action plan was agreed. Action: ShD to share with the partnership

Funding options for Community Strategy delivery

ShD presented a report outlining options for the LSP to raise some funds in order to resource the work to deliver community strategy. Cllr Drury asked how the other areas find it?

ShD advised the group that Watford had started earlier this year but already had received some income, and Hertsmere were able to cover costs and contribute towards existing grants pots.

PM asked BJ whether their existing the donations were successful?

BJ shared some are very successful e.g. £15k and Watford and Three Rivers Trust can claim gift aid in addition to this.

BJ asked Three Rivers District Council officers whether CIL funding could be used, as other districts have been successful in this.

SN answered CIL is capital money so can't be used.

Debbie Stone suggested a donation or lottery platform would work better if people know what they're giving towards. Need to make this clear when promoting.

SN stated they wouldn't want the lottery to be council branded.

PM shared CASTR has been doing a lot of work around gambling aware in recent months, so would need to consult county CAS on their involvement.

The Board agreed for ShD and BJ to explore donations and feed back to the meeting at the next LSP.

SD suggested trying for HS2. BJ could lead this bid. PM and PP would like to be involved in the development of the bid and prioritising what to bid for. Any decisions would be circulated to the board via email.

National Prevent Overview

Sophie Lawrence, Hertfordshire Prevent Manager, provided an overview of the current situation. The UK is currently at threat level substantial. In France the threat level has increased most likely as a result of Israel Palestine tensions. Last UK terror attack was anti-immigrant attack in Dover.

Highest ideology through national prevent referrals is Extreme Right Wing (ERW) followed by Islamist. Presence of incel and school massacre ideologies are also within referrals.

Independent Review of Prevent published in February 2023.

In prevent space there are more ERW referrals made, but Islamist cases are at a higher number at investigation stage. SL is involved in exploring why there is this disparity.

Seen an increase in anti immigration activity. Stabbing in Hartlepool fyi : [Hartlepool: Terror probe murder accused appears in court - BBC News](#)? This investigation involves counter-terrorism policing which has led to headlines that could be considered inflammatory.

Direction of prevent: independent review picked up on 34 recommendations, some highlights were discussed..

Why is there a discrepancy between Islamist and XRW concerns (referral numbers vs threat)?

Friends and family – e.g. of parent being concerned about their child being radicalised. Trying to boost awareness of prevent within our communities.

Prevent duty guidance has been updated

Terminology – now looking at susceptibility rather than vulnerability. Changes perspective to put some decision making onto the person.

Permissive environment – looks at venues, e.g. faith groups, sports halls – to ensure we're not allowing radicalisation to be promoted in these spaces.

Hamis is a proscribed group in the UK. Hamas and Palestine are two different entities – we should not be considering them one and the same. Hezbollah is a proscribed terrorist group – they have started to get involved in the Israel/Palestine conflict.

Stabbing in France and shooting in Belgium relating to Israel/Palestine. Starting to see tensions globally.

Organisations encouraged to contact Sophie if they would like a briefing or training relating to prevent. sophie.lawrence@hertfordshire.gov.uk

All partners are reminded to contact Sophie if they see any concerning images or graffiti. This would not be considered a prevent referral.

AOB

N/A