

Amanda Scarce

From: Peter Rowbottom [peterrowbottom66@yahoo.co.uk]
Sent: 16 July 2012 20:36
To: BDC Scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Subject: Topic Proposal for Overview and Scrutiny Board

Committee Section,
Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Bromsgrove District Council

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DATE: 16 JULY 2012

I hereby respectfully propose that the following topic be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board for further investigation:

TITLE OF PROPOSED TOPIC:

Community engagement obligations of the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership under its statutory duties under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, whereby the police and district council are required to work together to implement strategies to reduce crime and associated problems related to crime.

SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREAS TO BE INVESTIGATED:

The level of community engagement with residents via either the formal PACT process or under obligations of the Community Safety Partnership Plan.

REASONS WHY THIS SUBJECT NEEDS TO BE CONSIDERED:

To ensure that the community are fully involved and consulted with, regarding local crime and disorder issues that affect the whole community, and in order to comply with statutory obligations.

EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE NEED FOR THIS PARTICULAR INVESTIGATION:

(I note that the current work programme (2012/13) of the Overview and Scrutiny Board includes "continued scrutiny of crime and disorder.")

The Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Plan 2008-11 remains the latest plan available on the district council's website so I have used that as evidence, as follows:

1. For all 4 identified priorities (youth-related ASB, Environmental Issues, Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime), the Community Engagement section lists **PACT meetings**.

2. The individual section headed "Communication and Community Engagement" mentions the following 4 levels of engagement:

Informing , Consulting , Involving and Collaborating , Empowerment.

Currently, at least in the **Hagley and Rural** area of Bromsgrove district, there are the following **failures** in community engagement:

1. No current PACT chair (since March 2012) as the former chair (a councillor) was obliged to stand down after an insistence from the West Mercia Police Chief Inspector (for Local Policing in North Worcestershire) that the chair must be independent.

2.No PACT meetings have been held since January 2011,and even their supposed replacements **PACT Street Surveys have not been held since October 2011** when they should have been held in February and June 2012.

As a result,PACT priorities for the Hagley and Rural area have remained the same for the **last 9 months**,when every other local policing area within the district consults directly with its residents (and updates its priorities)**every 3-4 months**.

3.No police officer/CSO attendance in person at advertised PACT surgeries during 2012,despite the West Mercia Police website giving the definition of such a surgery as "where local people can have a one-to-one conversation with their local police officer or CSO".

4.No rotation of venues for PACT events(all PACT events in 2012 have been advertised as being held at Romsley Primary School to coincide with Romsley Parish Council meetings).Hagley,Clent and Belbroughton are currently being ignored.The aim of PACT events is to reach the maximum number of residents across the **entire area**.

5.Lack of understanding and appreciation of their responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 of at least 2 parish councils,namely Romsley and Clent,which results in residents raising issues on crime with those parish councils who fail to obtain answers from police.

6.No feedback on previous PACT priorities(from October 2011)to residents via Hagley Village News,the PACT link on the H(agley)C(ommunity)A(ssociation)website,or PACT posters on parish council noticeboards(which was previously agreed with local residents).

A 16-name Hagley residents' petition highlighting these failures and calling for action to remedy the situation was submitted to Hagley and Rural PACT panel members,Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnershipand the West Mercia Police Chief Inspector for Local Policing on 7 July 2012.**This provides evidence of the local public interest.**

COUNCIL PRIORITIES IT LINKS TO:

A current council priority is "Sense Of Community and Well Being."

POSSIBLE KEY OUTCOMES:

1.A full engagement,consultation and communication with local residents,which is the whole aim of the formal PACT process and is the stated aim of the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Plan.

2.A clarification that all parish councils are also fully aware of their responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act so that local authority partners at parish,council and county level can all work closely with police to reduce crime and disorder.

yours faithfully
Peter Rowbottom