

SHEFFIELD CITY CENTRE RESIDENTS' ACTION GROUP

Minutes of meeting held 8th of November, 2016 at Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind, Mappin Street

PRESENT:

Peter Sephton (Chair), Steve Lee (Vice Chair), Olusola McKenzie (Secretary), Wendy Zealand, Mark Booth, Cllr Douglas Johnson, Cllr Rob Murphy, Graham Chidlaw, Gareth Slater, Alex Mercer, Richard Godley, Des Scott, David Hussey-Yeo, Donna Ding, Tracey Ford, Teresa Bond, Pauline Egerton, Anabela Araujo, Chloe Gray, James Merrylees, Kim Swan, Jean Cromar and Christine Sephton

1. Welcome and Apologies

1.1 Peter welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies were received from Diana Stimely, Julie Wilson and Cllr Moya O'Rourke

1.3 Peter acknowledged the receipt of funds from the City Ward pot and thanked the councillors for their continued support of SCCRAG's work

2. Matters Arising from last meeting

2.1 There were no matters from the meeting held on the 4th of October to discuss as the guest speaker; Paul Blomfield MP was going to deal with and respond to the points raised

3. Street Community Issues: the plan to deal with anti-social behaviour impacted by alcohol, drug use and begging

3.1 Peter introduced the main topic of the meeting and Tracey Ford the guest speaker but showed a video of the extent of the problem to set the scene. An example of the problem captured on video shows a gang cursing and shouting late at night

3.2 Tracey Ford of Sheffield Drug and Alcohol Coordination Team (DACT) presented an overview of the issue and acknowledged that the problem had got significantly worse in the last 18 months.

3.3 The problem includes the following:

- Social meeting points in areas of the City Centre that have become problematic
- The group are commonly referred to as "street drinkers" but there are other individuals with much more complex needs found on the streets which include mental health problems, drug users, the homeless and street beggars
- Some of the individuals within this group have multiple support needs, lead chaotic lifestyles and support services find they are hard to engage with
- Actions that have been taken by DACT to address the problem as a result of increasing complaints from Sheffield City Centre Residents Action Group (SCCRAG) which include residents and local businesses

3.4 To tackle the substance misuse related Anti-social Behaviour in the City Centre, it was decided to explore a joint coordinated partnership approach. A meeting between DACT with Faith based groups, the British Transport Police, Third Sector organisations, Drugs and Alcohol SHSC, Public Health Adult Safeguarding Lead, SCC and Housing Independence took place

3.5 Action taken and results include the following:

- Soup kitchen located behind Division Street which attracted at least 30 people was relocated to behind Primark. It was identified that anti-social groups collected around the Devonshire Green

area of the city. Since the relocation of the soup kitchen, there has been a significant difference in the people congregating in the area.

- A Multi-agency Working Group Responding to ASB, Vulnerable and complex needs within the city Centre was established in March 2015 chaired and coordinated by Tracey Ford in response to a consultation exercise. The result of the exercise found that there were 8 out of 37 people found begging were sleeping rough, 13 of the 37 were persistent or prolific beggars whilst 17 of the 37 were in receipt of treatment.
- An anti-begging campaign was launched in September 2015 to educate the public of avenues of support in place for people who beg and to encourage members of the public to give directly to local charities instead. This was due to a rise in begging especially targeting students which made the City Centre a lucrative attraction.

3.6 Progress to date

3.6.1 Monthly multi-agency and rough sleepers meetings still takes place to address the following:

- Identify individuals of concern
- Understand their health and wellbeing needs
- Identify gaps in support needs
- Identify any duplication of support being offered
- Agree a coordinated approach to engage
- The Rough Sleepers meeting focuses on homelessness and getting the rough sleepers in to accommodation. This is ran by housing solutions and the meetings are attended mainly by voluntary sector groups working in the city around homelessness.

3.6.2 Outreach multiagency group

This is a new group that will focus on the following:

- Sharing the timetable of outreach provision on a weekly basis
- Share contact details of outreach providers
- Agree a method of collating the same data
- The intelligence gathered will be used to apply for a new outreach worker

3.6.3 A new outreach worker has been appointed from November to March to work specifically with individuals begging in the City Centre between 1.30pm to 5.30pm and this is known as 'Operation GAPE'.

3.6.4 In the last month, 8 arrests have been made for outstanding offences; 196 engagements have been made with 28 different individuals.

3.6.5 The 28 people engaged were signposted to help and 4 have taken up offers of housing/accommodation

3.7 Operation Quiz

This is a small team of dedicated officers operating in the City Centre, Abbeydale, Sharrow and Broomhall areas who undertake both high visibility and plain clothes patrols. Some of the officers are focusing on the City Centre targeting street drinking, begging and anti-social behaviour.

The outcome of their activities since September 2016 is as follows:

- Had a man imprisoned for 6 months for offences including spitting at a local resident

- Graffiti artist that received 16 weeks imprisonment suspended providing he completes 160 hours of community service, 10 days of supervised activity and pays £1500 in compensation within 12 months
- Restorative justice outcome where the offender cleaned the graffiti from a church they had vandalised.
- 8 people arrested in the City Centre

3.8 Activity during November

- Housing Solutions in partnership with the Rough sleeper service and City Centre Ambassadors are going to be carrying out assertive outreach and homelessness assessments from week commencing 7th of November.
- On the 11th of November, the 'Help us Help' campaign will be launched to support those who find themselves homeless and begging. The campaign is a joint by services that support these individuals and they will provide both practical and compassionate advice.
- To find out more about the 'Help us Help' campaign and what is available for a homeless person or beggar you are concerned about see the website <http://helpushelp.uk>
- At the end of November, City Centre licenced premises are doing an awareness drive for the 'Help us Help' Campaign

3.9 Marks and Spencers, Waitrose and the Sheffield train station are getting involved to address the issue. It was suggested that it might be worth approaching businesses to fund the different engagement activities addressing the problem of street begging and drinking.

3.10 Other suggestions made are getting members of the public to 'Pay it forward' i.e. donating a meal by paying for a sandwich at a Subway which any homeless person can have. Another suggestion is to look at what a sandwich shop called 'Social Bite' based in Edinburgh are doing as they employ homeless people.

These suggestions are to increase the number of businesses in Sheffield such as Nourish that work with homeless people.

3.11 People attending the meeting expressed their concerns about beggars and homeless people they come across in the Sheffield City Centre and they wanted to know if there was adequate housing provision available to them. Tracey assured them that anyone who is homeless and needs a place to sleep can get one.

They can contact Sheffield Housing Solutions at Floor 3, Howden House, 1 Union Street, Sheffield S1 2SH or call them on 0114 273 6306 or out of hours emergency number 0800 7311 689 to report anyone sleeping rough.

4. University Campus impact south of Glossop Road: TramGate problems & outcome of SCCRAG meetings with those responsible.

SCCRAG is meeting with the University of Sheffield and the planners to discuss different options of easing the problems residents and businesses are facing because of the changes to the road layout around the University of Sheffield campus. This is because Sheffield City Council has not accepted any of the suggestions put forward by SCCRAG.

In particular, residents living or businesses located on Gell, Regent and Cavendish Streets are affected as they are caught in heavy traffic or customers can't find their way to business premises.

5. PACT priorities

Policing are going through reorganisation again and Alan Billings the Police and Crime Commissioner has made vulnerable people his priority.

6. AOB

Richard Godley provided information about his project on the Sheffield Blitz. This project will commemorate the impact of the Second World War Blitz on the people of Sheffield and the city of Sheffield.

He plans to have an exhibition which will be interactive to engage children in particular at the beginning of February 2017. He has chosen 16 locations around the City Centre which include the National Emergency Museum, listed buildings, and the conservation area.

They have a facebook page and are receiving lots of interests from other countries, in particular, Germany. He recently spoke to a German pilot who flew over Sheffield to get his account.

For anyone interested in getting involved or want to hear more go to their website
<https://sheffieldblitz.wordpress.com>

7. Our next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 13th of December.**