

MINUTES

of the

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

held on 10 February 2020 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Galley (Chair)

Councillors L. Ashley, N.A. Dudley, S.M. Goldman, I.S. Grundy, R.J. Hyland, D.G. Jones, J.C.S. Lager, J.S. Lardge, L.A. Mascot, M.S. Steel, M.D. Watson and S. Young

1. **Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sismey and Whitehead. No substitutions were made.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. **Public Question Time**

No questions were asked or statements made.

4. **Decisions Called-In**

The Committee noted that no decisions taken by the Cabinet had been called-in.

5. **Declaration of Interests**

All members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

6. **Cabinet Portfolio Update**

Councillor Deakin provided an update on her duties as the Cabinet Member for Safer Chelmsford. The Committee heard that the Climate and Ecological Emergency impacted all directorates and that Full Council would be updated once regular data was available, other ideas were also welcomed. In Building Services, the Coval Lane window replacement program had been completed, some further refurbishments were due and it was noted that electricity was now 100% renewable across all City Council owned buildings. It was also noted that the Council had won a gold standard award for its travel plans which encouraged the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

It was noted that a full report on Waste and Recycling was due at the April meeting. Cllr Deakin informed the Committee that route optimisation had been rolled out and households were to continue to be supplied with one clear plastic bag per week for plastic recycling. It was also noted

that Freighter House continued to carry out MOT's and the possibility of EV/Hybrid MOT's was being explored. It was also noted that officers had been working closely with event organisers to ensure as much waste as possible was separated and recycled.

The Committee was informed that street care teams had continued to maintain public areas across the City and the anti-littering campaign from Love Your Chelmsford had been well received. The Committee also heard that partnership working had started with ECC on a car littering campaign. It was also noted that the market refurbishment had been completed on time and on budget.

Councillor Deakin informed the Committee that all 14 Council owned parks held the Green Flag award and work was due to begin in March, to widen the bridge for pedestrians and cyclists between Admirals and West Park. The Committee also heard that the tree planting scheme had been underway and by the end of this season 13,500 trees should have been planted. The Committee noted that anyone interested in volunteering to plant trees or suggest suitable areas should email luc@chelmsford.gov.uk.

The Committee were updated on Leisure and Heritage Services, it was noted that Membership levels at Riverside had exceeded expectations and a new feedback system had been under development. It was also noted that some building work was still to be completed. The Committee were informed of a pilot Health and Wellbeing initiative 'With You in Mind' taking place at the Sports and Athletics Centre. It was noted that Hylands House continued to be very successful with weddings and corporate hires and had won the Best Historic Wedding Venue for the second year in a row. The Committee also heard that bright new signage had been developed which would be up very soon in the Hylands Estate.

Councillor Deakin also updated the Committee on Public Health and Protection matters. It was noted that Air Quality continued to be monitored and a clean air strategy was due to be looked at later in the year. It was also noted that the Health and Wellbeing Plan had been adopted and continued to be a living document and the work of the Mid Essex Livewell partnership had been ongoing.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Cabinet Member for a Safer Chelmsford confirmed that;

- Extensive recycling for large events on Council premises would involve separate recycling bins being available which should make a significant difference.
- Littering from cars could be reported either directly to ECC or to the Public Health and Protection team at CCC. The email address environment.protection@chelmsford.gov.uk was noted by the Committee. It was also noted that dashcam footage had been very helpful in terms of successful prosecutions and that reliable witnesses such as Councillors or Council officers were helpful.
- The decision to provide one clear plastic bag a week for plastic recycling had been made as a result of the Council's intention to reduce single use plastics and after discussions with officers at Freighter House. It was noted that for the majority of households this was sufficient, but that any clear plastic bag purchased elsewhere could also be used.
- Dog waste bags were not provided as it was felt that this should be part of the responsibility of being a dog owner rather than for the Council.
- The works to the footbridge between West and Admirals Park would involve a short closure for a few days and ECC would be asked to help publicise this to residents.

The Committee discussed whether written reports should be provided for future Cabinet Portfolio updates. The Committee were informed that the initial decision had been that the decision was for the individual Cabinet Member. Some members of the Committee felt it would be useful for a written report or notes to be provided by the Cabinet Member rather than just a verbal update.

RESOVLED that the Committee's thanks for the update by the Cabinet Member for a Safer Chelmsford be noted.

(7.01 pm to 7.27 pm)

7. **Annual Presentation by Safer Chelmsford Partnership**

The Council's Public Protection Manager gave a presentation on behalf of the Safer Chelmsford Partnership, regarding its statutory duties, key priorities, key projects and funding in 2019/20.

The Committee was reminded of the Partnership's statutory duties, which were;

- Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan
- Co-Ordination of Partnership activities
- Strategic Priorities plus Reducing Reoffending
- Prevent, Modern Day Slavery and Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Face the Public – combined with Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Essex Police.
- Survey Public opinion – fear of crime and perceptions
- Annual presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee was also reminded of the Partnership's strategic priorities for 2019/20, which were:

- Tackling violent crime
- Driving down anti-social behaviour in public places
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable people
- Delivery of the Essex Police rural crime strategy

The key projects carried out in the last 12 months included;

- The Community Safety Hub going live on 26 March 2019.
- Partnership response to tacking Anti-Social Behaviour associated with rough sleeping and supporting our most vulnerable.
- Violence & Vulnerability – supporting young people being criminally and sexually exploited, Operation Enlightenment, Crucial Crew and StoryLab.
- J9 domestic abuse awareness training
- Education, awareness and community engagement
- Night time economy interventions – street pastors, taxi marshals, SOS project and Drinkaware Crews, Best Bar None and Purple Flag
- CCTV digital transformation – more intelligence led.

The Committee was informed about the funding arrangements which varied from the PFCC contribution to the Late-Night Levy. The Committee also heard about the strong links in the Community Safety Partnership Hub with Essex Police which had led to improved partnership buy in and joint working opportunities. In terms of Community Engagement, it was noted that this had

involved proactive work with neighbourhood watch groups and the use of WhatsApp by residents and police. The Committee was updated on the City's Purple Flag status which had been confirmed after a full overnight assessment in July 2019. It had been noted that there were good quality public areas with thoughtful design and the SOS bus and support for the vulnerable had been key. The Committee heard that the SOS project continued to be a significant success in assisting those using the night-time economy and regularly helped prevent expensive trips to A&E.

The Committee was updated on the work that had taken place to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour, which included the effective use of the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and effective use of enforcement tools and powers. The Committee also heard of the ongoing work around violence and vulnerability which included strategic and operational responses alongside preventative work with school students such as the Crucial Crew scheme. The Committee was informed of responsive work that had been taking place in hot spot areas, targeted education and the effective use of data and intelligence.

In response to questions from Members the Committee was informed that;

- The majority of preventative education was at Secondary level, but primary school students were still involved. It was noted that it was an important area and various options would continue to be explored, but that it was key to not duplicate work already undertaken by primary schools themselves.
- It was possible for local level CCTV, for example in parish areas to link up to the Councils monitoring centre. This was already in place with some parish councils and was something that the partnership would be keen to expand upon further.
- It was not easy to provide direct statistics on the success of schemes such as the preventative ones in schools. However, positive feedback was regularly received and stats that detailed the use of other services such as the SOS bus proved it was an effective service.
- In the future, Councillors could be invited to some events to detail further the type of work taking place.

The Committee thanked the Council's Public Protection Manager for attending and their presentation.

RESOLVED that;

1. the report be noted and;
2. the Committee's appreciation for the excellent work of the Safer Chelmsford Partnership and the detailed presentation from the Council's Public Protection Manager be noted.

(7.28 pm to 8.09 pm)

8. **Annual Presentation by Essex Police**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Temporary Chief Inspector for Chelmsford. The Committee were informed that the latest figures were from the end of December and detailed a rise of 14.6% in crime in Chelmsford. However, it was noted that there were circumstances that had led to this. He stated that, this was due to changes in the way certain crimes were logged, therefore leading to some duplications. It was also noted that the rise in figures could be attributed

to an increase in the amount of proactive work being undertaken by officers. It was highlighted that this had been very important and had led to increases in the amount of drugs and weapons being taken off the streets and helped to spread the message that it would not be tolerated in Chelmsford.

The Committee heard that burglary rates had decreased by 7% and that there had been a 16% increase in theft from motor vehicles. It was noted that this was due to more proactive officer patrols alongside an increase in stop and searches in Chelmsford. It was also noted that there had been 178 stop searches last month in Chelmsford of which 33% had a positive result such as an arrest or something being found. It was also highlighted that each one was scrutinised by the Independent Advisory Group and there were no demographic based issues. The Committee was informed that staff numbers had continued to increase along with a significant number of hours being worked by special constables voluntarily too.

In response to questions from Members the Committee was informed that;

- Regular patrols had taken place in certain areas when requested by Parish Councils, but the difficulty was in covering areas 24/7. It was key for issues to be reported however so resources can be in the right area at the right time.
- The take up in Community Special Officers for dedicated areas such as parishes had not been as successful as hoped. It was noted however that work would continue to develop this area.
- The '101' phone service wait times had been reduced from 17 to 11 minutes due to an increase in staff numbers.
- The use of WhatsApp had proved to be successful and it was hoped that a proposal to widen the approach would be approved. It was noted that despite not leading to high numbers of arrests, it had been a very important factor in satisfying public perception that issues would be investigated.
- Successful prosecution rates in Chelmsford had increased, in line with national rates.

The Committee noted that the work by Essex Police was of great importance and thanked them for their continued hard work in making Chelmsford a safe place for its residents.

RESOLVED that;

1. the Committee's appreciation for the work of Essex Police be noted and;
2. the Committee's thanks for the attendance of the Temporary Chief Inspector be noted.

(8.10 pm to 8.31 pm)

9. **Community Safety Communication (Interim Report)**

The Committee received an update on the work undertaken so far by the Community Safety Communication Task and Finish Group. It was noted that significant progress had been made against the set objectives, but it was a very broad area of work with a wide variety of data. It was also noted that a key aspect so far had been that different sets of people required different sets of information and the group were therefore filtering the requirements. It was highlighted that next stage of work was to focus on the provision of ward level police data and the development of a Member Sharepoint site to host the information. It was also noted that the group would continue to explore the most effective forms of communication with the public and stakeholders such as neighbourhood watch.

Members of the Committee and the Task and Finish Group, thanked officers and Essex Police for their work so far and welcomed the full report at a future meeting.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(8.32 pm to 8.40 pm)

10. **Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report on its work programme which had been updated following the Committee's meeting on 13 January 2020.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11. **Urgent Business**

There were no matters of urgent business brought before the Committee.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm.

Chair