

Overview and Scrutiny Committee
14 March 2022

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE held on Monday 14 March 2022 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors B.Fitzsimon (Chairman)
L.Chesterman (Vice-Chairman)

S.Elam, G.Hayes, A.Hellyer, S.Kasumu, F.Marsh,
G.Michaelides, J.Quinton, P.Smith, C.Stanbury,
T.Travell, R.Trigg and M.Norman (non-voting co-optee).

OFFICIALS Head of Resources (R. Baker)
PRESENT: Head of Public Health and Protection (J. Harding)
Head of Community and Housing Strategy (S. Chambers)
Neighbourhood and Enforcement Manager (K. Clifford)
Community Partnerships Manager (B. Moreira)
Hertfordshire Constabulary Chief Inspector (K. Hussain)
Legal Services Manager (S. Saunders)
Interim Governance Advisor (B. Bix)
Information Governance and Member Support Assistant (K. Houston)

24. SUBSTITUTION OF MEMBERS

The following substitution was made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules:

Councillor Jane Quinton for Councillor Helen Quenet.

25. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor H. Quenet.

26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 January 2022 (previously circulated) were approved as a correct record.

The Chair provided an update on staff turnover data, which had been requested at the last meeting, and subsequently provided by email to Members. The Chair and Vice-chair had met with the Chief Executive, and the HR Manager, and noted that the pandemic had changed peoples' perspectives; that the council

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was competing against the wider market; and that staff turnover was comparable with that of other organisations. It was recommended that OSC Members be involved in the design of organisational values and behaviours, and it was noted that this was a suitable scrutiny topic for consideration at the work programming workshop in preparation for the forthcoming municipal year.

27. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE 2021/22

Members received a presentation from the Head of Public Health and Protection on the work undertaken by the Council in partnership with colleagues in the wider health system to protect and improve health and wellbeing. In particular, the Committee were asked to note:

- The impact of Covid-19 and the rollout of the vaccination programme by Ward
- Vaccination priorities, including the challenges of low uptake within some communities
- The challenges of living safely with Covid-19, and working in collaboration to keep transmission low
- Tackling Health Inequalities through Healthy Hubs and the Health Protection Board structure

Officers clarified the following points in response to Members' queries:

- The data relating to vaccinations was representative of the eligibility criteria for vaccinations, along with GP registrations, and had to be reported consistently for funding purposes and analysis
- The Strategic Health Asset Planning and Evaluation (SHAPE Atlas) application was one source of data
- Additional resources had been provided for targeting those in low vaccination uptake groups, but it remained a challenge for the Council, along with other councils, to recruit environmental health officers and staff
- The Council, and its partners, continued to work with local community and voluntary groups on health initiatives.

A motion to agree the recommendations set out in the report was proposed by Councillor A. Hellyer and seconded by Councillor S. Kasumu.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee note the work undertaken, and the content of the report.

28. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP 2021/22

Members received a presentation from the Community Partnerships Manager on the work of the Community Safety Partnership over the last 12 months. In particular, the Committee were asked to note:

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- The eight principles that guided the work of the partnership, as set out in the report; and
- The five priorities reviewed and refreshed in September 2021, set out in detail in the Strategic Action Plan, and summarised as:
 - To help people to feel safe within their homes
 - To help people feel safe in their community and local environment
 - To identify and protect vulnerable people
 - To support, protect and identify victims of domestic abuse whilst also tackling the root causes and preventing harmful relationships; and
 - Supporting the community through Covid-19 recovery.

Officers clarified the following points in response to Members' queries:

- The reporting of anti-social behaviour, and neighbour disputes had increased due in part to the public health measures to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, and consequentially, *Operation Brillo* had been re-invigorated to successfully tackle youth ASB hotspots
- The 12% reduction in burglaries could not be correlated with the prevalence of people working from home, as the figure was compared to 2019 data pre-pandemic
- There remained a challenge to secure participation from the probation service on the Responsible Authorities Group
- Diversionary activities were provided for the whole community, in addition to being actively promoted to tackle youth anti-social behaviour.
- The *Crucial Crew* event had not taken place during the pandemic, and a home learning pack had been utilised
- The Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator post is fixed – term and externally funded
- The 3-year plan 2019/22 was scheduled to be refreshed in September 2022
- The CSP remains open to working with all partners and the voluntary sector.

Members queried how the success of raising confidence and awareness would be measured. Officers responded that the raising of public confidence would be measured through Echo Link, and the evaluation of responses from priority setting forums. Those vulnerable people not online, would benefit from the OWL engagement leaflet which was distributed by Officers. Raising awareness would be measured by the number of views, likes and downloads from various social media campaigns.

Members asked whether the Annual Monitoring Report relating to development management and the Local Development Scheme, was used in understanding and targeting crime hotspots. The Executive Member for Leisure and Community Safety responded and undertook to continue to liaise with the Executive Member for Environment, Planning, Estates and Development. Officers assured Members

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that the data used by the partnership was dynamic rather than a backward look, and the work of the partnership was guided by the Strategic Needs Assessment.

A motion to agree the recommendations set out in the report was proposed by Councillor A. Hellyer and seconded by Councillor R. Trigg.

RESOLVED (unanimously)

That the Committee note:

- 1) The report and presentation of the Community Safety Partnership's successful work over the past 12 months
- 2) That the risk of crime in the local area remained low; and
- 3) That the Partnership continued to work to reduce crime, and the impact that crime had, on residents of the Borough.

29. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/22

Members noted that the waste and recycling contract scrutiny item had been deferred to the next municipal year, for the service provider to continue to focus on its service provision.

As required by the Constitution, Officers would draft an Annual Report on the discharge of the Overview and Scrutiny function by the Committee during 2021/22, including any recommendations made by the Committee. The draft Annual Report would be shared with all Committee Members prior to it being considered at Annual Council in May.

It was anticipated that once the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for 2022/23 had been appointed at Annual Council in May, Officers would liaise with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee to organise a work-programming workshop for Committee Members prior to the first formal meeting of the Committee.

Meeting ended at 9.28 pm
BB