



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 16th December 2021

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

11th November 2021 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)
Councillors Aisthorpe, Batson, Patrick (substitute for Goodwin), Pettigrew,
Sandford, K Swinburn and Westcott (substitute for Woodward)

Officers in attendance:

- Helen Isaacs (Assistant Chief Executive)
- Carolina Borgstrom (Assistant Director Environment)
- Guy Lonsdale (Finance Group Manager)
- Spencer Hunt (Assistant Director of Safer and Partnerships)
- Zoe Campbell (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Eve Richardson-Smith (Legal Team Manager and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Paul Caswell (Head of Young and Safe)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Ron Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor S Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Councillor Shreeve (Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets)
- Superintendent Paul French.

SPC.28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillors Goodwin and Woodward.

SPC.29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SPC.30 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 16th September 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

SPC.31 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

SPC.32 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the current forward plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

SPC.33 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Assistant Chief Executive tracking the recommendations of the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED – That the tracking report be noted.

SPC.34 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 - QUARTER 2

The panel received a report from the Executive Director for Environment, Economy and Resources providing key information and analysis of the Council's position and performance for the second quarter of the 2021/22 financial year.

Members were concerned about the reduction in the reserves and the impact if there was to be another emergency like COVID. Councillor Shreeve highlighted that the country was in unprecedented times and funding was welcomed from central government. While he did not expect a repeat, he was conscious that there were the day to day pressures and, in particular, winter pressures in Adult Social Care but there was still COVID support funding in the reserves.

A member was concerned about hitting the buffers and asked whether other Local Authorities were in the same situation. Councillor Shreeve responded that these were challenging financial times affecting all local authorities and he reassured the panel that Cabinet and officers were working on addressing the balanced budget after a challenging year. Intense scrutiny and monitoring of the budget at all levels was on-going.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.35 COUNCIL PLAN

The panel considered the Council Plan as referred by Cabinet on the 8th September 2021, seeking engagement and feedback prior to Full Council adoption.

Members commented that there was a lot of detail within the plan and felt it would be hard to scrutinise. Ms Isaacs explained that the level of detail was required to give members the confidence around the ability for the council to deliver the plan. She confirmed that the plan would help inform the future work of the scrutiny panel and regular performance reports would be received by the panel.

A member queried how performance was measured and whether the plan was over ambitious. Ms Isaacs confirmed the challenge would be considered before the final version of the Council Plan was presented to Full Council for sign off.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.36 CRIME STATISTICS FOR NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE

The panel received the reported crime statistics from April to September 2021 in North East Lincolnshire.

Members were extremely concerned about open drug dealing on streets and felt it was going unchallenged. Superintendent French recognised the concern and agreed it was unacceptable. He confirmed that drug offences were on the increase and would welcome any intelligence from local residents, which could be anonymous through crime stoppers. Members felt that if the police were visible on the streets it would act as a deterrent. Superintendent French explained it was difficult without intelligence to be at the right place at the right time but the increased police presence on the streets, with drug dogs and dome hawk cameras, was making an impact.

Superintendent French referred to the place-based partnership approach and education that was going on with partners on the top 10 drugs on the market so that people were aware and had the knowledge to identify the dangers of the drugs to help keep people safe.

A member was concerned about recent spiking cases and asked for reassurance on how this was being tackled, particularly with regard to the licensing arrangements and landlords taking the initiative and ownership of monitoring activity on their premises. Superintendent French confirmed that support was being offered to venues to take action and put measures in place to stop spiking occurring. The initiatives included drink covers and tester kits. The police were working with taxi companies and Stagecoach to ensure that young people were kept safe

when using transport and immediate action taken if they were vulnerable or taken ill.

Visibility of community policing was a high priority for the panel, and they queried the police's approach. Superintendent French reassured the panel that community policing was a high priority and at the heart of the policing model. He confirmed over the last five years, Humberside Police had increased the number of police officers on the front-line. Eleven new Police and Community Support Officers had recently been recruited and he recognised the impact that police visibility on the streets would have on the local communities, particularly when they could see action being taken. Mr Caswell added the council was working with the police in collaboration to stem the flow of young people going into the criminal justice system.

Members were concerned around harassment and begging in the town centre. Superintendent French explained that stalking was recorded with harassment in the crime statistics. He explained that begging in the town centre was a complex issue to resolve and not unique to Grimsby. Work was being undertaken in partnership to provide local support to people who were begging. He confirmed that the police could take action if necessary, however, he highlighted that the police were keen to tackle the complexity of the behaviours that were often displayed by people who were begging. It was difficult if they were not willing to engage but he reassured members that enforcement action, where appropriate, was taken.

The use of motorbikes for crime and then being burnt out in the streets was a concern and a member queried if the bikes were being ceased. Superintendent French reassured the panel that through operation yellow fin and the use of the fire service drones there was work ongoing to establish where the bikes were being stored and fuelled up. He asked the panel to encourage members of the public to report any known activity, which could be done anonymously through Crime Stoppers.

A member referred to bicycle theft particularly in the town centre. It was felt that this could discourage residents from coming into the town centre on their bikes, which would impact the local economy. Superintendent French confirmed that action was being taken and there were key discussions ongoing with the town centre partnership to tackle crime and encourage people to bring their bikes into the town with confidence.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.37 ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

The panel received a scrutiny briefing paper updating the panel on the enforcement review.

Members asked for confirmation if the CCTV strategy report would come back to scrutiny. Mr Hunt confirmed that it was scheduled for the next Communities Scrutiny Panel meeting in January 2022. Members would have the opportunity, once the CCTV procurement exercise was completed, to understand the proposed locations for new cameras, the control room plans and how the system would work with partners.

A member referred to the safer streets fund and queried if it would help with the CCTV provision. Mr Hunt confirmed that was a specific fund and the cameras from that would become part of the new system.

The Chair suggested that members had a site visit to the Enforcement Team in the future to gain a better understanding of the different types of enforcements and how the team worked in the communities which was welcomed by the panel.

RESOLVED –

1. That the briefing paper be noted.

2. That a site visit be arranged for the scrutiny panel to visit the Enforcement Team.

SPC.38 COVID-19 RECOVERY UPDATE

The panel received a COVID-19 recovery plan update report from the Recovery Task Group. Ms Isaacs explained that from April 2022 the COVID recovery would become part of business as usual and reported through the council plan updates. She confirmed that North East Lincolnshire was doing well on the uptake of vaccines and messages around the prevention of the spread of COVID-19 were ongoing. The council would continue to administer grants and support packages until the end of March 2022.

Members of the panel were given the opportunity to ask any questions.

RESOLVED – That the updated be noted

SPC.39 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the portfolio holder at this meeting.

SPC.40 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from members of this panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and portfolio holder meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.12 p.m.