

ENVIRONMENT AND LIVING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 MARCH 2017

PRESENT: Councillor M Winn (Chairman); Councillors S Jenkins (Vice-Chairman), M Bateman, S Chapple, S Cole, B Everitt and B Foster. Councillor A Macpherson attended also

APOLOGIES: Councillors P Agoro, A Bond and A Cole

1. LONDON TERRORIST INCIDENT

Prior to the commencement of the formal business of the meeting, a one minute silent tribute was held to the memory of those killed in a terrorist incident in London earlier in the day.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 December 2016 be approved as a correct record.

3. COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE / STRATEGY 2017-2020

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Committee received an update from the Assistant Director for Community Fulfilment outlining the staffing structural changes that had taken place within the Community Safety team as part of the Commercial AVDC programme. They were also introduced to Mr Chris Oliver who had joined the team as the Community Safety Advisor.

The Committee received a report and was informed about current crime levels, a summary of activity on the delivery of the Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership (AVCSP) Plan and also updated on some of the recent and future changes taking place in connection with community safety. The Annual Plan for 2016/17 and the draft plan for 2017/18, as well as the Community Safety Strategy 2017 – 2020 were all included as appendices to the Committee report.

Members were informed that recorded crime in 2016/17 had increased by 4.4% (286 crimes, year to date) compared to the same time in 2015/16. This was partly due to changes made by the Home Office in how crime figures were recorded and which had been introduced from April 2015. Increased had taken place in the following categories:

- All crime (excluding fraud).
- Violent crime.
- Robbery.
- Burglary (homes).
- Homophobic crime.

It was reported that Racially or Religiously aggravated crime had fallen despite the national trend which had seen an increase attributed to Brexit. It was, however, recognised that both hate crime and homophobic crime was under reported. As well as this, Homophobic crime was greatly under reported so the increased figure was interpreted as an indication of increased victim confidence to report incidences.

The Thames Valley Police Commander for Aylesbury Vale provided Members with more information and context to the crime figures. It was explained that the number of

reported burglaries had been falling over the past few years and the increase now was due to numbers returning to a normal level. It was believed that the perpetrators were organised 'professionals' who operated deliberately on the edges of District jurisdictions and that had led to the increase of burglaries in rural outbuildings. The Police were working with Community Safety Officers to address this through offering support and advice on keeping homes safe and offering tools and other property marking equipment. Members were also informed that the Community Safety team supported campaigns that had been conducted nationally through social media, an example of which was the "White Ribbon" campaign which aimed to reduce male violence against women and girls. In addition, a local Prison Governor had joined the Bucks Community Safety Partnership to support the rehabilitation of offenders.

The Committee was informed of upcoming projects for 2017/18 which focussed on tackling crime and creating resilience within communities. Prevention was also a key aspect of the projects, an example of which was the Vulnerable Tenancy Group. This aimed to support those who were at risk of losing their homes and of being exploited by criminal gangs. Another aspect of the project was tackling anti-social behaviour, which was often a symptom of complex issues within families and communities. AVDC officers were working with the Police and Crime Commissioner, housing providers and the police to intervene and offer a Community Based Resolution.

Members sought additional information and were informed:-

- (i) that there were no plans to reduce the number of PCSOs, although part funding provided by the County Council for some posts had been reduced.
- (ii) that the final outcome of the ongoing Thames Valley Police review of CCTV was still awaited. It was acknowledged that CCTV was useful for evidence gathering and as a crime deterrent.
- (iii) and given an update on the Restorative Justice Service operated by the Thames Valley Partnership.
- (iv) that Ward level information on individual crimes was accessible on-line from www.police.uk and by entering a local postcode.
- (v) that enthusiasm for communities being resilient was expected to be maintained through frequently engaging with the local volunteers. As it stood, the team had more volunteers than could be trained.
- (vi) that the CSP had obtained some "Sportivate" funding that could be used for 'diversionary' activities for young people, i.e. to support local football/cricket/sport activities.
- (vii) that although 42% of people had stated that they felt safe or very safe in the Aylesbury town centre during the evening, this survey had only covered a small sample and the town centre was a safe place to visit in the evening.
- (viii) that the Neighbourhood Policing teams were continuing to work in communities, which included educating people on the difference between calling '101' to report crime and other concerns that did not require an emergency response and '999' to report emergencies when a crime was happening or someone was in immediate danger.
- (ix) that new students to Buckingham university were provided with a welcome pack to help them assimilate into the local community.
- (x) on the types of actions and responses the police were able to take regarding off road motor bikes (anti-social behaviour) in some parts of Aylesbury.

Members also commented:-

- that they would like to see the police more practically involved with large town centre events, with particular reference made to the Christmas parade in Buckingham.
- that it would be helpful for local Councillors to be provided with a guide to anti-social behaviour / safeguarding / prevent, which explained who they should contact and how to feed back information to the Community Safety Partnership

and the police. This would also help Councillor with their Ward work and being able to signpost local residents.

- that consideration was of the potential ASB impacts due to an influx of workers caused by HS2 and any other large infrastructure developments in Aylesbury Vale.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Thames Valley Police Commander for Aylesbury Vale be thanked for attending the meeting and briefing Members on current issues and the new strategy.
- (2) That the scrutiny committee was supportive of the Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership (AVCSP) Strategy 2017-20 and the Annual Plan for 2017/18, as submitted to the meeting.

4. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered their future work programme as submitted to the meeting. Members commented that future agenda items could include receiving an update from the County Council on road repairs, Housing acute needs and the Food Service Plan 2017-18.

RESOLVED –

That the current work programme be noted.