

Environment and Living Scrutiny Committee

28 MARCH 2018

PRESENT: Councillor M Winn (Chairman); Councillors S Jenkins (Vice-Chairman), M Bateman, S Chapple, A Cole, S Cole, P Cooper, B Everitt, R King and B Russel (In place of B Foster). Councillors A Macpherson and Sir Beville Stanier attended also.

APOLOGIES: Councillors B Foster and T Hunter-Watts.

1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes from the meeting held on 13 February 2018 be approved as a correct record.

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2018/19

The Committee received a report which informed Members of 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. It was highlighted to Members that the crime figures were not finalised until the end of figures became available after 31 March 2018.

The draft Annual Plan for 2018/19 and the Community Safety Strategy 2017 – 2020 were included as appendices to the Committee report. The AVCSP had met on 15 March, 2018, and had amended the Annual Plan to include:-

- Expansion of the action around joint Night-time Economy activity with police and AVDC enforcement.
- Exploration of Civil injunctions in partnership with VAHT.
- Removal of Cyber Segmentation activity, pending further from the Home Office.
- Addition of supporting Community Warden schemes.
- Amendment to wording around Modern Slavery statements.
- Addition of action around communication of reporting methods in regards anti-social behaviour.

Crime had been generally falling in Aylesbury Vale over the past two years but there had been an increase in violent crime, thefts of pedal cycles and theft from motor vehicles, most notably theft of tools from unattended work vans. These had been a focus of AVDC and the partnership on the reduction of acquisitive crime, which included home burglary, through working with the community and supporting Crime Reduction events in rural and urban areas. Activities at the events included home safety and tool marking advice. The police had called a public meeting in response to concerns raised in Buckingham following theft from contractor vans. The result was that burglary rates remained lower than those in neighbouring areas and forces.

The Thames Valley Police Commander for Aylesbury Vale attended the meeting and provided Members with more information and context to the crime figures.

The Annual Plan 2018/19 was currently in draft and had been updated following the Community Safety Partnership Strategy Group on 15 March 2018. Highlights from the current Plan included the retention of Purple Flag status since 2010 which signified that Aylesbury Town Centre was a safe place for residents and visitors throughout the day, evening and night. A group called 'Night Moves' had been re-established to focus on supporting the 2018 Purple Flag assessment that was taking place on 6 April.

In November 2017, the Community Safety Partnership had commissioned a Locality Review focussed on County Lines drugs and exploitation, and involved wider partners from Social Care, Drug and Alcohol services, youth services and voluntary groups. This report had fed into the Safety Plan. Campaigns on a national level regarding security and personal safety had been supported in the plan and messages to the key demographics had been sent through social media. These national campaigns included the 'White Ribbon' campaign which aimed to reduce male violence against women and girls, as well as Thames Valley Police's 'Hidden Harm' campaign around modern slavery.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) was often a complicated issue within families and communities and had the potential to lead to homelessness if not resolved. 2017/18 had seen a 29% increase in ASB and reports had increased by 8% over the last three years. This trend had been reported in all Local Policing Areas across the Thames Valley aside from two. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 emphasised prevention through early support and intervention so the ASB Tactical Advisory Group worked with partners to offer earlier intervention and sign-post perpetrators to appropriate support agencies to reduce the risk of homelessness. It had been identified that private landlords may need advice and support on ASB so work would be undertaken on this. The Police and Crime Commissioner had provided funding to Youth Concern, Thames Valley Police and AVDC to run partnership youth projects to engage vulnerable young people. The projects would raise awareness of grooming and exploitation and would address social cohesion between BME and white communities. The practice of 'Stop and Search' was also discussed.

Members sought more information and were advised:

- (i) That there had been an increase in racial incidents reported, which was in line with national trends following the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. However, the increase was potentially due to people now being more likely to report incidents than they had in the past.
- (ii) That there had been a spike in thefts from motor vehicles, particularly around Buckingham, in October to December 2017. Resultantly, a number of people had been charged and a large amount of tools recovered.
- (iii) That the increase in violent crimes was partly due to County lines drug dealing issues, changes in police recording of crime and relating to some incidents at Aylesbury Prison. Members were informed that the Governor of Aylesbury Prison was currently an invited member of the AVCSP.
- (iv) That there had been a 34% increase in people detected carrying offensive weapons and a 104% increase in drug trafficking offences detected during the period, partly due to a more proactive approach taken by the police. The Committee was provided with details of some of the proactive work that had been done to detect and prosecute for drug dealing / trafficking.
- (v) That work on child sexual exploitation and modern slavery were a focus for the AVCSP. A Modern Slavery statement would be put onto AVDC's website in due course.

- (vi) On the prevention and other work being done regarding cyber crime (cyber enabled, phishing, cyber dependence via denial of service), including working done with Trading Standards.
- (vii) That Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) had identified that some issues that had previously been recorded as incidents should be recorded as crime figures, which had increased crime figures.

Increases in crime figures over the last year for some crimes was due to a number of factors including crime figures being at a historic low, and greater reporting by people of issues including domestic violence, hate crimes, and for some historic crimes.
- (viii) That like other areas of the public sector, the Thames Valley Police would need to find savings of £14m in the next year. The police continued to look at ways in which they could work differently and smarter, which included the use of Crime Prevention Orders and work on cyber crime prevention. There were also occasions when it was necessary to prioritise how Officers were most effectively deployed. Policing budgets were published annually on their websites.
- (ix) That while a Public Space Protection Order had been issued for the town centre, it was not believed that any prosecutions had been made under it.
- (x) That the AVCSP and work of the Council community safety team was looking at ways to build the strength and resilience of communities, which was an excellent way to combat crime. Community cohesion in Aylesbury was good and efforts were being made to build on this through the Community Warden scheme and Inter-faith network.
- (xi) That CCTV was an excellent asset and assisted with detecting and reducing crime.
- (xii) On the demand management work that had been done with some partners to reduce the number of calls to the police, which had led to a 30% reduction in calls from Stoke Mandeville hospital and a 40% reduction in calls from the Whiteleaf Centre, Aylesbury.
- (xiii) That a rigorous assessment process had to be undertaken to keep the Purple Flag for the town centre. An appraisal on the benefits of continuing to keep it would be made in due course.
- (xiv) On the work that was being done, through 2 dedicated Schools Officers, and with Head Teachers, schools and students regarding anti-social behaviour occurring in the vicinity of secondary schools at the end of the school day.

The Committee considered comments that they wanted to be passed to Cabinet when they considered the item which were:

- (a) That while 50% of fraud was committed on-line, it was also important to educate people on issues such as door step cold calling (particularly for the elderly), fraud over the phone or via mail, and on courier fraud.
- (b) Aylesbury Town Centre – a number of Members expressed concerns on a range of Community Safety issues that were frequently occurring within the town centre including anti-social behaviour (particularly outside McDonalds), instances of

fighting/violence/threatening behaviour (both during the day and of an evening), thefts/shoplifting from shops (who did not employ security staff or have CCTV installed, or did not report some incidents to the police), motor vehicles threatening pedestrian safety when driving through the town centre or through unlawfully parking, . It was advocated that a higher police (PCSO) presence in the town centre, Traffic Wardens being more proactive and a greater emphasis on enforcement would all improve this situation.

Members were informed that the police were aware of hot spots in the town centre, and that it was important for all incidents to be reported. The Committee was provided with details of a police operation involving 12 Officers that had been conducted last weekend in the town centre. It was likely that the increase in shoplifting had links to drug addiction. Work had been undertaken regarding the anti-social problems and people loitering outside the McDonald premises in town that led to a 60% reduction in calls.

Members commented that the Aylesbury Town Centre Partnership should be asked to assist with developing measures to improve community safety in the town centre. This could include more actively engaging with businesses located in the town centre and looking at whether businesses had the appetite to introduce a Business Improvement District within the town centre. The Council was also currently reviewing the Parking Strategy which would be reported to scrutiny in due course.

- (c) That more work should be done by the AVCSP, AVDC and partners looking at how the demand for police services could be reduced through multi-agency working, i.e. by assisting partners to manage situations and, resultantly, reducing the number of calls for assistance made to the police.
- (d) That an assessment should be made on whether best use was being made of the Public Space Protection Order that had been made for the Aylesbury town centre.
- (e) That community leaders, in liaison with neighbourhood policing teams, had a role to play in both educating people on crime issues and helping to address people's fear of crime.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Thames Valley Police Commander for Aylesbury Vale be thanked for attending the meeting and providing Members with more information and context to the crime figures.
- (2) That the Scrutiny Committee's comments made at the meeting be referred to Cabinet.
- (3) That an agenda item be timetabled for the scrutiny work programme to discuss approaches to demand management / multi-agency working relating to community safety that can be actioned to reduce the demand for police services in the future. This could also look at the effectiveness of partnership working and whether any strategy might require pump prime funding.

3. MRF CONTRACT FOR MIXED RECYCLING

The Committee received an update on the new Mixed Recycling Facility (MRF) procurement undertaken regarding the materials recycling contract for Waste Services. AVDC had adopted a mixed recycling collection regime in 2012 which allowed residents

to place recyclable items into one recycling bin. The contract had been on a 3+3 year period and was due to expire on 3 September 2018 with no provision in place to extend the contract. The market had changed since 2012 when the materials recycling market was buoyant and AVDC had received an income of around £500,000 per year through recyclable materials sold at a fixed payment per tonne. By 2015, AVDC were required to renegotiate the fixed price per tonne fee which resulted in the income being halved to around £250,000 per annum. The market fluctuation had been a result of Chinese markets requiring less materials imported from recycling which therefore led to materials struggling to hold their value. This had resulted in a knock on effect down the supply chain and the market now was that Local Authorities were charged a fee for material to be processed.

AVDC had carried out a joint procurement exercise with Cherwell and South Northants District Councils in 2017. The tenders had now been returned and evaluated and a company based in Leicestershire called Casepack had won the contract. The contract was on a 3+3 year term as before.

The Committee sought additional information and were informed:

- (i) That the Council would need to continue efforts to educate people in relation to them not contaminating materials that were to be recycled. Work undertaken by the Council would include targeting higher contamination areas, more communications with residents, and training refuse collection crews in identify contamination.
- (ii) That the processing costs within the new contract would be reviewed annually. DEFRA would soon be publishing a 25 year plan regarding waste that would assist with future planning.
- (iii) That the costs of diverting waste to landfill were still very expensive so the option to offset the cost of some recycling via this means was not economical. The costs of diverting recyclates to EfW was also expensive.
- (iv) That legislation required the Council to collect 2 types of recyclates, although AVDC collected 8 types.
- (v) That while a joint procurement process had been used to put in place the contract, AVDC would not be impacted if one of the other Councils chose not to keep to their part of the deal.

Members requested that thanks be passed to refuse crews for all of their hard work over the winter period.

RESOLVED –

That Cabinet be recommended to approve the contractual arrangements for the Council's materials recycling facility, as contained in the confidential part of the Committee agenda.

4. WORK PROGRAMME

The agenda included items that were coming to Committee over the next three meetings. Members considered their Work Programme and saw merit in the following also coming to scrutiny:-

- (i) Demand management relating to policing (as discussed at the meeting).

- (ii) Arts Strategy including a live music venue (associated with the redevelopment of the Aylesbury Town Centre).
- (iii) VAHT Update (late 2018 / early 2019).

RESOLVED –

That the work programme, as discussed at the meeting, be approved.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED –

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Paragraph indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

6. MRF CONTRACT FOR MIXED RECYCLING

As part of the discussions at Minute 3, consideration was given to the MRF Contract for Mixed Recycling.