

Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 12 September 2018

Time: 7.00 - 9.23 pm

PRESENT: Councillor D Knights (in the Chair)

Councillors K Ahmed, H Bull, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, A E Hill, M E Knight, Mrs W J Mallen, H L McCarthy, R Newman, Ms C J Oliver, R Raja, D A C Shakespeare OBE and C Whitehead,

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M C Appleyard, J A Savage, P R Turner and R Wilson

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

12. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Review commission held on 20 June 2018 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

13. WYCOMBE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP 2018/19

The Chairman welcomed Superintendent Kevin Brown, Local Police Area Commander and Sarah McBrearty, Community Safety Team Leader, WDC.

The Commission was provided with an update on the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership priorities and actions for 2018/19. The priorities and key actions for 2018/19 were as follows:

- **Tackling anti-social behaviour and crime** – Work would be undertaken in partnership to deal with street drinkers and aggressive beggars. A multi-agency communications campaign would be delivered to educate and raise awareness with members of the public in relation to begging. To reduce repeat victims of burglary support would be provided with advice, home surveys and property marking schemes. Also crime reduction advice would be provided to residents via various methods of communication such as a Pop-Up Police Station.
- **Safeguarding our communities** – It was explained that there were different forms of exploitation in communities, and crime statistics in the district and county indicate this as a key priority. Further work would be undertaken to

support the victims of domestic abuse and to provide information to signpost victims to support agencies. There would be training with staff from bars, pubs and late night eateries on safeguarding issues. Also initiatives and campaigns, such as taxi and private hire checks, and monitoring and enforcement of alcohol licensing conditions. Multi agency work with The Willow Project, who support victims of exploitation in Buckinghamshire, would be undertaken to raise awareness and tackle modern slavery.

- **Working together to address Child Sexual Exploitation** – Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation locally including a campaign and training materials provided to late night eateries and taxi driver training. Thames Valley Police would lead on a multi-agency safeguarding meeting. Also test purchase operations would be carried out on hotels/licensing premises within the town centre.
- **Building community resilience** – There would be promotion of the Safe Place scheme. Also support and work with Neighbourhood Watch and raise awareness of scams particularly with the elderly and vulnerable.

Partnership work so far had included Operation Goat dealing with anti-social behaviour issues, a two day licensee event, a campaign around spring crime and garden security, taxi safeguarding training package and schools safeguarding work.

Referring to a power point presentation Superintendent Kevin Brown outlined the key crime statistics for the District, picking out the major reductions and the major increases in 2017/18 from below:

Wycombe LPA Crime Data					
	Outcome Rate Last Year April - August 2017	Outcome Rate This Year April - August 2018	Number of Crimes Last Year April-August 2017	Number of Crimes this year April-August 2018	% Change
Rape	8%	2%	53	47	-11%
Burglary Dwelling	18%	6%	114	163	+43%
TFMV	1%	2%	254	300	+18%
TOMV	7%	3%	83	130	+56%
Robbery Personal	22%	12%	32	43	+34%
Robbery Business	25%	50%	4	8	+100%
Criminal Damage	8%	8%	544	515	-4%
Arson	0%	0%	23	29	-26%
Violence against the Person With Injury	20%	15%	343	491	+43%
Violence Against the Person Without	16%	8%	583	961	+65%

Wycombe LPA Crime Data					
	Outcome Rate Last Year April - August 2017	Outcome Rate This Year April - August 2018	Number of Crimes Last Year April-August 2017	Number of Crimes this year April-August 2018	% Change
Injury					

It was reported that anti-social behaviour in the District had decreased in comparison to the previous year. However there had been an increase in the Marlow area and it was expected that this was due to the World Cup celebrations. It was noted that crime across the country was rising with an increase in the demand for policing. In the Wycombe area burglary dwelling had increased but the low starting point was noted and some burglaries were due to offenders being released from prison. Personal robbery had increased due, in some part to perpetrators on mopeds, however six people had been arrested. The robbery of businesses had increased but the small numbers were noted. It was also noted that crime recording had been reviewed and this had led to domestic violence being recorded differently hence the increased figures. Regarding modern slavery only two people had been referred via the National Referral Mechanism. It was noted that many victims did not want to be referred.

Members made a number of points and received clarification on a number of queries as follows:

- The training for taxi drivers would be delivered by a trainer and was in relation to children in the vehicles.
- Regarding burglars reoffending it was noted that there were mechanisms in prisons to educate offenders, however it was reported that this was dependent on the availability of courses. Notification of the release of prisoners had improved so that police could visit and check on offenders after their release.
- It was noted that police resources had reduced significantly and that only 20% of policing was dealing with criminal acts.
- The Public Spaces Protection Order in the town centre was now in force and new signs were being updated. Work was being undertaken on a clear plan for enforcement. It was noted that the town centre was now a no drinking zone.
- The Sensible Change Text Giving scheme would again be promoted to help encourage members of the public not to give money to beggars. The scheme enabled a text donation to a local charity rather than giving change directly to a beggar.
- It was requested that HWBIDCo be included in the joint communications work.

- Regarding deception of vulnerable individuals it was noted that this was not robbery which required an element of violence but classed as theft from vulnerable adults or sometimes reported as fraud crime.

The Chairman thanked Sarah and Superintendent Brown for the presentation.

RESOLVED: That the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership priorities and actions for 2018/19 be noted and supported.

14. REPORT OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE DISTRICT TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Commission considered and discussed the report and draft recommendations of the Anti-Social Behaviour in the District Task and Finish Group. The report featured 10 draft recommendations for consideration for onward referral to Cabinet.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group: Councillor Chris Whitehead guided members through the report.

It was reported that the ASB in the District Task and Finish Group had been set up by the Improvement and Review Commission following a motion by the Leader of the Council to Council on 18 December 2017, as follows:

“WDC notes the increasing concern of councillors and members of the public regarding an apparent rise in instances of anti-social behaviour across the district and within Wycombe Town Centre in particular.

WDC believes giving greater prioritisation to the enforcement of available anti- social behaviour measures by Thames Valley Police will improve the situation before it becomes overly detrimental to the residents, businesses and visitors to the district.

WDC resolves to seek swift re-prioritisation of TVP resources to tackle this issue in conjunction with improved partnership working with other stakeholders to improve neighbourhood policing.”

The Task and Finish Group considered the whole of the district and attempted to address three questions, as follows:

- I. How does ASB in our area compare with crime in other similar areas?
- II. How does ASB in our area compare with ASB in the Thames Valley Police Force area?
- III. How has ASB changed over time in our area?

The draft recommendations were divided into four headings, Wycombe District Council, Enforcements, Support and Communications. The draft recommendations along with the reasons for the recommendations were outlined as follows:

Wycombe District Council

1. WDC demonstrates its commitment to tackling ASB by:
 - a) Appointing a Cabinet Member (or Deputy Cabinet Member) with specific responsibility for ASB, and that progress is reviewed at every Cabinet meeting.
 - b) Identifying a single officer with lead responsibility for ASB, to be responsible for monitoring and reporting progress on tackling ASB.
2. That the working of the Community Safety Partnership be reviewed and tightened up to provide a stronger focus on tackling ASB.
3. WDC improve the quality of data and information in relation to ASB by:
 - a) Creating its own database of incidents, similar to the Police Repeat ASB/Signal Crime Callers and Locations report, plotting their locations precisely on a map, indicating exactly where and when they occurred.
 - b) Developing performance measures to enable progress in tackling ASB to be monitored.
4. WDC close its public toilets on an experimental basis and that pubs and local businesses should be encouraged to allow members of the public to use their toilet facilities when needed.

Enforcement

5. TVP should be encouraged to enforce against ASB as follows:
 - a) WDC support TVP to achieve their full manning levels in Wycombe town - to match the proposed investment in Street Wardens (see items 6 & 7 below).
 - b) WDC support TVP to improve responsiveness to the 101 emergency number.
 - c) WDC explore options for supporting TVP to carry out successful recruitment to vacant posts including free parking.
 - d) The feasibility of the Council having access to a TVP computer should be explored.
6. WDC should employ Street Wardens to enforce PSPOs, who would be directed by WDC officers, but would work closely with the Police. The numbers suggested were four in Wycombe and two in each of Marlow and Princes Risborough.

7. The appointment of Street Wardens be accompanied by a stricter enforcement of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) to demonstrate that the Council will not tolerate ASB.
8. FPNs continue to be issued even if only PCs and the Council's own ASB officer are authorised to issue them.

Support

9. WDC put more resources into the understanding of these links (between begging, mental health and substance misuse), and actively support those agencies working to alleviate the problems.

Communications

10. The Council have a co-ordinated campaign in relation to street begging involving posters, banners, press, social media and radio to cover the whole of the District, the purpose of which would be not only to educate the public as to what the Council is doing, but also to try to remove the source of funding in the hope that it may persuade beggars to seek help from agencies and deter begging.

The Commission considered and discussed the recommendations and a number of points were made as follows:

- The recommendation regarding the closure of public toilets should be amended to request that thorough investigation be undertaken and implications be considered.
- In response to a query it was reported that data was already available for WDC to have its own database. The issue was that there was currently no central source of data to access to help direct resources.
- Once in post street wardens could be used to monitor and manage any issues around public toilets. This information could then be used as evidence base for any investigations.
- It was suggested that the working of the Community Safety Partnership be reviewed and monitored by the Cabinet Member appointed with responsibility for ASB.

The Chairman and the Commission thanked Councillor Whitehead and the members of the Task and Finish Group for their report. It was noted that the comments would be taken into consideration and recommendations amended to reflect the discussion. The final report would then be submitted to Cabinet on 17 September 2018.

15. REPORT OF THE RETURN OF THE RIVER WYE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

The Commission considered and discussed the report and draft recommendations of the Return of the River Wye Task and Finish Group. The report featured eight draft recommendations for consideration for onward referral to Cabinet in November 2018.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group: Councillor Hugh McCarthy provided the Commission with a short presentation and guided members through the draft recommendations.

The Task and Finish Group was set up by the Improvement and Review Commission on 21 June 2017. The terms of reference were agreed by the Task and Finish Group as follows:

To conduct a review of the proposal that the River Wye between Westbourne Street and the Archway roundabout should be re-made and opened up as an amenity within the town.

The draft recommendations of the Task and Finish Group considered by the Commission were as follows:

1. To recognise that the technical feasibility of remaking the river has been established.
2. To recognise the extent of support for remaking the river.
3. To recognise that the wider economic, social and environmental benefits justify the remaking of the river.
4. To recognise that the financial returns which will accrue directly to Wycombe District Council resulting as a direct consequence of remaking the river will exceed the costs in most scenarios.
5. To agree that highway works within Phase 7 (Oxford Road) should not be progressed if they prejudice remaking up the river and that it would be most cost effective and publicly acceptable to undertake both the road and the river together.
6. That it has been established that the remaking of the river between Westbourne Street & Archway Roundabout will cost approximately £3 million more than highway works alone.
7. To consider funding the works from its CIL & capital programme.
8. That funding be made available to commission the detailed design, costing and consultation of public realm work including the river for the phase 7 area.

The Chairman of the Task and Finish Group thanked Neil Marples, MWH Global, Dan Fenn, DRF, Phil Simpkin, WDC and all the officers involved for their work and support.

The Commission considered and discussed the recommendations and a number of points were made as follows:

- The roads around the proposed area for opening the river would be narrowed however access to the Marks and Spencer loading bay would still meet the highway standards. Due to the town centre Masterplan works there should be less traffic going through the town centre.
- This was a visionary scheme and fit for the future. It was suggested that more cyclists and pedestrians would use the town centre in the future.
- It was commented that the town centre flyover could be a problem and the river should have been included in the Eden shopping centre designs.
- It was suggested that recommendation 7 regarding funding should be made clearer and strengthened.
- The economic benefits to the town were questioned. In response it was suggested that there could be increased ground rents and property values. The town centre experience was changing nationally and towns would become more of a leisure destination. There would be a long term gain to the town centre.

The Chairman of the Commission thanked Councillor McCarthy and the Task and Finish Group for their work.

16. COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME AND CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Commission considered the work programme report featured along with the appended Cabinet Forward Plan and Commission Work Programme.

The Chairman of the Commission asked for volunteers for the Budget Task and Finish Group. The following members volunteered for the TFG: Councillor Hugh McCarthy, Councillor Matt Knight, Councillor Rafiq Raja and Councillor Chris Whitehead. Final details would be arranged and dates would be circulated to the TFG members.

The Chairman also requested the Commission to consider the Cabinet Forward Plan and if there were any items that they would like to take to a task and finish group. The Vice-Chairman suggested the Joint Waste Contract Extension and the Use of S106 Affordable Housing Funds as potential items for future discussion.

17. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no Councillors Calls for Action.

18. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS

There were no supplementary items.

19. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Jemma Durkan	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Elaine Jewell	- Head of Community
Sarah McBrearty	- Community Services Team Leader
Philip Simpkin	- Natural Environment Officer
Catherine Whitehead	- Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy.