

Improvement and Review Commission Minutes

Date: 13 September 2017

Time: 7.00 - 9.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillor R Gaffney (in the Chair)

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

Standing Deputies: Councillors H L McCarthy

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss S Brown, C Etholen and R Wilson

Also present: Councillors D A Johncock and L Wood

9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

10. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Review Commission held on 21 June 2017 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

11. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed the all Members to the Commission meeting.

12. COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

The Chairman welcomed Daniel Sullivan – Prevent and Community Safety co-ordinator, Sarah McBrearty – Community Services Team Leader, and Superintendent Kevin Brown, Commander Wycombe Local Police Area, Thames Valley Police. It was noted that Superintendent Brown was new to the role.

The meeting provided information on the three year Wycombe Community Safety Partnership Plan for 2017-2020. By using two analysis documents: The Thames Valley Police Force Strategy Assessment and the Buckinghamshire Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment, these helped to inform the priorities outlined in the Plan. The priorities for 2017-2020 and actions were as follows:

- **Tackling anti-social behaviour and crime** - Public consultation showed that crime and anti-social behaviour was still a concern for residents of the district. As certain crimes occur in peaks and troughs the Community Safety Partnership would continue to plan for the peak times and limit increases in these types of crime. Also new tools were being developed to be used effectively to deal with anti-social behaviour.
- **Safeguarding communities from exploitation** - It was explained that Modern Slavery was a growing issue and the Partnership were working to raise awareness and provide training for practitioners to identify victims and perpetrators. Research had shown that people who were homeless were vulnerable to becoming victims of exploitation. It was noted that work was being undertaken with a variety of agencies to support homeless people with issues that contribute to their situation. Also as domestic abuse was considered an under reported crime the Partnership would be supporting victims and encouraging them to report incidents and help to prevent further incidents of abuse.
- **Working together to address Child Sexual Exploitation** – Work had been undertaken on a ‘Hotel Watch’ scheme with local hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation to educate staff and to encourage them to report suspicious activity to the police. Further training would take place and the police and licensing team would undertake checks and take action if necessary. Training would be provided to taxi drivers, hotel staff and late night eateries. Raising awareness of Female Genital Mutilation and support for victims would also be undertaken.
- **Building community resilience** – Working with local business and communities to implement the ‘Safe Place’ scheme. This scheme helps to provide suitable places for vulnerable people to seek support. Consequently, having access to a ‘Safe Place’ would help vulnerable people lead independent lives and feel safe in Wycombe District. More support and promotion of Neighbourhood Watch within communities and raising awareness of scams. A successful Community Cop Card scheme had taken place with year 6 pupils at a Marlow school where pupils collected stickers on a variety of community safety related topics. An evaluation and report was being produced.

Wycombe continued to be identified as a priority area for Prevent, which was part of the Government’s Contest Counter Terrorism Strategy. It was noted that it was very rare to have extremist speakers in the area and there was no evidence of problems with speakers in local Mosques.

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 2016/17 and 2017/18 from the below:

Offence Type	Number of Offences During 2016/17	Number of Offences During 2017/18	% Change	% Change - Force
All Crime	2330	2433	4.4%	15%
Violence Against the Person	526	528	0.4%	8%
Sexual Offences	70	71	1.4%	13%
Robbery	8	17	112.5%	51%
Burglary Dwelling	73	-	-	-
Burglary Non-Dwelling	123	-	-	-
Residential Burglary Dwelling –	-	56	-	-
Residential Burglary – Sheds/Garages	-	74	-	-
Business and Community Burglary	-	69	-	-
Theft of Vehicle	58	47	-19%	27%
Theft from Vehicle	127	130	2.4%	27%
Shoplifting	315	334	6%	16%
Arson	21	15	-28.6%	-11%
Criminal Damage	301	331	10%	7%
Drug Offences	93	96	3.2%	-5%
Public Order Offences	82	89	8.5%	11%

It was reported that a new operational model was now in place this included a larger investigation team and improved neighbourhood policing. There had been a few problems with the new model during the summer due to officer leave and a 12% increase in the demand for policing. This had now stabilised and was now improving. The Wycombe Local Police Area priorities were Safeguarding, Engagement, Professionalism and Development.

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

- The Prevent Strategy included statutory duties on schools, Local Authorities and elected members.
- There were no further reports of local residents travelling to Syria.
- The new Police Operation Model enabled officers to meet demands at the right time, officers now started shifts at staggered times and when needed.

- It was noted that the presentation of statistics regarding domestic violence, cybercrime and modern day slavery could be developed in the future.
- Officers explained that GMAP had been effective but required improvement. Work was being undertaken to establish a local process.
- It was suggested that hate crime could be reported via third party organisation such as charities and victim support agencies, and it was noted that hate crime was under reported.
- The enforcement of PSPOs were carried out by police officers or WDC officers. A fixed penalty notice was issued to perpetrators or they could also be arrested. However it was noted that enforcement was difficult to pursue in court and many offenders had complex needs. Partnership working with agencies and best practice schemes around the country were being investigated to provide the best outcomes.
- In response to a question on the use of drones it was explained that this was an expensive option due to the licenses involved. However the digital policing agenda was being examined for future options.
- Training was being undertaken with hotels for the 'Hotel Watch' scheme and police officers would be undertaking tests on establishments within the next few months.
- It was noted that honour based violence could be reported to partnership agencies however this was an under reported crime.

The Chairman commended the Partnership on their work and thanked them for their informative and comprehensive presentation.

The meeting then:

RESOLVED: That

- (i) the report of the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership and the data contained therein be noted; and
- (ii) the priorities of the Wycombe Community Safety Partnership for 2017-20 be noted and supported.

13. VERBAL UPDATE ON ICT STRATEGY

Councillor Lawrence Wood, Cabinet Member for HR, ICT and Customer Services provided the Commission with an update on the Digital First strategy. A report had been presented to Cabinet on 18 September 2017 providing information on the vision concept. Cllr Wood invited the Commission to view the report which outlined the vision and key themes for Digital First.

It was noted that stakeholder meetings had taken place with members and officers across the organisation in order to develop the vision. The meetings had been facilitated by Eduserv a not for profit organisation. Topics at the stakeholder meetings were to discuss problems and provide future aspirations. The aim of Digital First would be for the Council to become more efficient and provide better customer services.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Wood for the update.

14. REFRESH OF OUR CORPORATE PLAN (2015-19)

Catherine Whitehead, Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services presented a report on the refresh of the Council's Corporate Plan. The Chairman requested that a separate session be arranged to allow for Members to have full input and provide feedback to Cabinet and Officers to inform the refresh of the Council's priorities to 2019.

RESOLVED: That a workshop session be arranged for all Members to provide input to help inform key focus areas of the Council's Corporate Plan to 2019.

15. LOCAL PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP WORK UPDATE

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Johncock, Cabinet Member for Planning; Councillor McCarthy, Chairman; and Councillor Collingwood, Vice-Chairman of the Local Plan Task and Finish Group for all their considerable work on the draft Local Plan over the past four years.

Chairman of the Local Plan Task and Finish Group; Councillor H L McCarthy introduced a report that informed the Commission of the recent work of the Group. The 'Sweep-Up' meeting took place on the 1 August 2017 after an 11 month interval and this was the last meeting of the series.

It was noted that the plan would not address existing infrastructure deficiencies and some Members expressed their concerns at the lack of strategic planning in this area. However it was reported that a draft Local Infrastructure Delivery Plan was being undertaken and would soon be available on the public website.

Councillor Johncock, Cabinet Member for Planning, thanked the Task and Finish Group for all their work and input into the Local Plan. He confirmed that the draft Local Plan would be submitted to Cabinet meeting on 18 September and onto full Council on 9 October for final approval. After this there would be a 6 week public consultation period for any final comments. These would be collated and then submitted with the Local Plan to the planning inspectorate in March 2018. This deadline was crucial as after this time the planning and delivery revisions were expected to be increased by central Government. Councillor Johncock explained that infrastructure was the biggest challenge and discussions were taking place with Buckinghamshire Council and Highways England.

It was requested that the Task and Finish Group report be submitted to Cabinet on 18 September as part of the Local Plan documentation for consideration.

The Commission noted and thanked the Task and Finish Group and Councillor Johncock for their contribution and work on the Local Plan.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Local Plan Task and Finish Group be noted and submission to Cabinet be supported by the Improvement and Review Commission.

16. COMMISSION'S WORK PROGRAMME AND FORWARD PLAN

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

The Chairman requested that Councillor Mrs Julia Langley be invited to the next meeting and provide an update report on the situation regarding Houses in Multiple Occupation and Saunderton Lodge.

The Chairman also noted that due to the existing workload – no further T&F groups would be considered for the time being

In respect of the featured Task and Finish Groups the following was noted:

Local Plan Task and Finish Group

See notes under Local Plan Task and Finish Group Work Update.

Budget Task and Finish Group

The Budget Task and Finish Group held its first meeting on 6 September. A final recommendation report would be provide to Cabinet on 13 November 2017 for the budget preparation.

Remaking the River Wye Task and Finish Group

The first meeting of the Group would take place on 11 September 2017. The Chairman expressed his support for the project and confirmed that he would provide regular updates to Cabinet on the work of the Group. It was planned that the final recommendations from the Group would brought to the Commission meeting in January 2018 and then onto Cabinet in March 2018.

RESOLVED: That the update on the Work Programme and current task and finish groups be noted.

17. COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION

There were no Councillor Calls for Action.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

- Jemma Durkan - Senior Democratic Services Officer
- Sarah McBrearty - Community Services Team Leader
- Daniel Sullivan - Prevent Strategic Co-ordinator
- Catherine Whitehead - Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy.