

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON 11 MARCH 2019 FROM 7.00 PM TO 8.45 PM**

Committee Members Present

Councillors: Guy Grandison (Chairman), Mike Haines (Vice-Chairman), Rachel Burgess, Clive Jones, Dianne King and David Sleight

Other Councillors Present

Councillors: Pauline Jorgensen

Officers Present

Graham Ebers (Deputy Chief Executive), Clare Lawrence (Assistant Director, Place) and Neil Carr (Democratic and Electoral Services Specialist)

54. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Bill Soane, Shahid Younis and Shaun Virtue (Thames Valley Police).

55. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 January 2019 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 11 February 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

14 January 2019 – Minute 41: Wokingham Town Centre Regeneration Update be amended as follows (in bold):

.....the currently agreed retail leases in **Peach Place** were legally binding.....

11 February 2019 – Minute 51 – Impact of Planned Rail Changes (Councillor Sleight Report) be amended as follows:

- The Borough has a total of **five** railway lines operated by two train companies;
- The Local Authority could part fund the regeneration or construction of train stations in **conjunction with the train operating company**;
- Wargrave was the Borough's quietest station (by **passenger usage**).

56. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

57. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

58. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

59. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 21 to 38, which gave details of progress against the priorities established by the Community Safety Partnership.

Graham Ebers (WBC Deputy Chief Executive and Co-Chair of the Community Safety Partnership) attended the meeting to present the report and answer Member questions.

The report reminded Members that Community Safety Partnerships had been established with a statutory duty to implement a partnership strategy to reduce crime, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour. The Community Safety Strategy was informed by a strategic assessment of crime and disorder related needs in the local area.

The report gave details of progress relating to the current Community Safety Partnership priorities as follows:

Priority One: Addressing Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG).

The VAWG Strategy was designed to enable WBC to meet its statutory duties in relation, for example, to the Care Act 2014 and the Children and Families Act 2014. The main role of the Community Safety Partnership was to hold the Domestic Abuse Strategic Group to account in relation to delivery of the Domestic Abuse Strategy.

The Borough's main domestic abuse service provider was Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA). BWA provided a range of services including outreach, a family support programme, one to one support for victims, a helpline and refuge provision. BWA also worked closely with Children's Services to ensure that children at risk of domestic violence received support.

Priority Two: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Harmful Misuse and Organised Crime

These issues were often interlinked and the priority aimed at preventing residents from exploitation and their involvement in anti-social behaviour and misuse escalating to involvement in serious organised crime.

The report stated that there had been growing concern about instances of anti-social behaviour across the Borough. The Community Safety Partnership and Thames Valley Police were working together to identify the causes through a Problem Solving Task Group. Neighbourhood Policing Teams had also launched initiatives aimed at tackling anti-social behaviour hotspots.

The report stated that, nationally and locally, rates of organised crime, specifically county line dealing, had impacted on the increased levels of crime in the area. The police had been proactive in addressing county line dealing through initiatives such as Operation Stronghold which reduced the risk from organised crime by reducing vulnerabilities and criminal opportunities.

Priority Three: Reduce and Prevent Exploitation and Address the Needs of Vulnerable Victims and Offenders

The report stated that the Police and Crime Commissioner had recognised that vulnerability of both victims and offenders had an impact on demand for police and other emergency services. Supporting victims, particularly repeat victims, improved their resilience whilst support for vulnerable offenders reduced the risk of them reoffending. Vulnerable offenders had more than average levels of substance misuse, physical and mental health needs and were more likely to have lower rates of engagement in education, employment and training.

Priority Four: Empower and Enable the Resilience of Local Communities

The report stated that the focus of this priority was the relationship with the wider community to reduce the fear of crime, improve community cohesion, build the relationship with the voluntary and community sector and support community engagement. Involve (the support organisation for voluntary, community and faith groups) would be working with the Neighbourhood Action Groups to progress this work across the Borough.

Graham Ebers also referred to the new Statutory Guidance (July 2018) which required stronger links with the work of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and new linkages with the Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements.

In the ensuing discussion Members raised the following points:

- Berkshire Women's Aid (BWA) – had there been any cuts to funding for BWA? How was the effectiveness of BWA services measured?
- In relation to reports in the national press relating to the impact of austerity on community safety (e.g. the reduction in police numbers) were there any local trends emerging, such as the reported increase in anti-social behaviour?
- Substance abuse – successful completions in drug treatment. The report referred to a reduction in successful completions from 89% to 57% linked to the low number of young people engaging with Substance Misuse services. Members requested more information on the steps being taken to increase engagement and the number of successful completions in drug treatment.
- The tables on Pages 24 and 25 indicated an increase in Domestic Abuse repeat victimisation and an increase in domestic crimes involving children. At the same time, the number of cases discussed at MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) was reducing. Members asked for clarification on the trends indicated in the tables and details of actions being undertaken to tackle any emerging issues.
- Reporting of Hate Incidents. In relation to the table on page 28 – Members asked for further information on the four Red indicators which showed a reduction in the number of incidents reported. Members also asked if there was any connection between Brexit and the number of reports of racist incidents.
- In relation to the table on page 29, Members asked for a breakdown of the incidents relating to violence against the person. Was there an increase in knife crime? Was there a link between the reduction in police numbers and the increase in specific incidents impacting on crime and the fear of crime?
- The report indicated a year on year increase of 9% in fly tipping incidents. What steps were being taken to tackle fly tipping? Graham Ebers reported that the new Localities model was improving local intelligence on issues such as fly tipping and the Council was using its legal powers to take enforcement action. Similarly the Council had strengthened its procedures to ensure a quick response to traveller incursions.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Graham Ebers be thanked for attending the meeting to answer Member questions;

- 2) the Community Safety Partnership update report be noted;
- 3) Graham Ebers provide detailed responses to the specific issues raised by Members at the meeting;
- 4) the Committee receive a further update on the Community Safety Partnership's work at its meeting in March 2020.

60. BOROUGH-WIDE PARKING MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 39 to 44, which gave details of the growing number of parking-related challenges facing the Borough and the proposed development of a Borough-wide Parking Management Plan.

Pauline Jorgensen (Executive Member for Highways and Transport) attended the meeting to answer Member questions along with Clare Lawrence (Assistant Director, Place), Matt Gould (Lead Specialist, Highways and Transport) and Martin Heath (Senior Specialist, Traffic Management).

The challenges facing the Borough included increasing car ownership, increased demand for on-street restrictions, changes to the road network and the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement. These challenges had resulted in an increasing number of requests and complaints to the Council relating to parking management issues.

The report stated that there existed a requirement and an opportunity to address parking management issues in a more holistic manner through the development of a Borough-wide Parking Management Plan. The Committee was requested to support the development of the plan through "critical friend" challenge and support.

The report outlined a process for developing the Borough-wide plan which would set out the Council's Vision for parking management in support of the regeneration and economic development of the Borough. Members' views were sought in relation to:

- On-street parking – including Residents' Parking, parking standards, disabled parking, footway parking and obstruction and bicycle and motorcycle parking.
- Off-street parking – including charges, permits and concessions, technology and systems, disabled parking, and bicycle/motorcycle provision.
- Parking enforcement issues – including enforcement protocols; penalty charges; enforcement activity and approaches to obstruction and anti-social parking.

The report stated that Members' comments would be sought until mid-April 2019. Officers would then use the feedback received to inform the drafting of the new plan which would be considered by the Committee later in the year.

During the ensuing discussion Members raised the following points and suggestions:

- Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) – could more resources be deployed across the Borough to tackle issues such as parking outside schools? Could there be greater transparency about the frequency of visits to different wards? Members requested further information on the CPE service in order to understand the financial impacts

relating to service changes such as additional enforcement activity. There needed to be a balance between income generation and tackling local issues of concern (which did not generate income).

- Members noted the high level of enforcement activity at Dinton Pastures and California Country Parks. Was all the penalty notice income from Dinton Pastures and California Country Park returned to the Countryside Service?
- On Street Parking – could more Residents’ Parking Permit schemes be introduced for “hotspot” areas of the Borough. The potential for Visitor and Trader parking within Resident Parking areas should also be investigated.
- The Council should adopt a more “joined up” approach to parking issues, for example in relation to the design and delivery of new school sites – involving planning and education policies.
- It would be key to understand the latest updated estimates of supply and demand for parking space across the Borough in order to make informed decisions about future provision, charging, etc.
- It would also be useful to understand the implications of policies implemented by neighbouring authorities and other transport providers – rail, bus, etc.
- The Committee was already looking at the Business Case for the proposed Coppid Beech Park and Ride site. What was the strategy for future Park and Ride provision?
- The Council should seek to learn from best/innovative practices in other areas, such as the approach taken in Marlow.
- Could town centre parking be incentivised through links to discounts in shops, cafes, restaurants and leisure facilities?
- Could the new plan be linked to a review of the Borough Design Guide – to review the provision of parking spaces for new housing developments?
- What were the plans for upgrading parking ticket machines and meters and enhancing digital options?
- What were the future plans for electric charging facilities across the Borough?
- What was the process for ensuring compliance with the Council’s Equality duties, for example in relation to the provision of disabled parking spaces?

RESOLVED That:

- 1) Pauline Jorgensen, Clare Lawrence, Matt Gould and Martin Heath be thanked for attending the meeting to discuss the development of the new Parking Management Plan;
- 2) the Chairman write to all Members seeking feedback and suggestions relating to local parking issues and priorities, the feedback to be submitted by 14 April 2019;

- 3) Officers use the Member feedback to inform and scope the new Parking Management Plan;
- 4) the Committee receive a further update report once the scoping exercise is completed;
- 5) the Committee scrutinise the draft Parking Management Plan before its submission to the Executive.

61. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The Committee considered a report, set out at Agenda pages 45 to 49, which gave details of potential items for inclusion in its work programme for 2019/20.

The report stated that robust work programming was essential for the delivery of effective Scrutiny as it helped to focus on key issues of local concern. Appended to the report was a list of potential items for inclusion in the Committee's 2019/20 work programme.

Members noted that the Committee had already agreed to carry out a review of the development of the Council's 2020/21 Budget and the associated budget setting process.

In the ensuing discussion Members suggested that the following items be included in the Committee's work programme for 2019/20:

- Implementation of the new food waste collection;
- Borough Design Guide;
- Update from the fire and rescue and police services;
- WBC Bus Strategy.

It was confirmed that the final 2019/20 Scrutiny work programmes would be agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 20 March 2019.

The Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their contribution to the work of the Committee over the past year.

RESOLVED That:

- 1) the draft Committee work programme for 2019/20 be noted;
- 2) the additional items agreed at the meeting be added to the proposed work programme.