

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
19 September 2017**

Present:

Councillor C.A. Davis (Chairman)
Councillor S.C. Mooney (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

R.O. Barratt	A.E. Friday	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
K. Flurry	A.L. Griffiths	B.B. Spoor

Apologies: Councillors S. Capes, T.J.M. Evans, N. Islam, J.G. Kavanagh and J.R. Sexton

525/17 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2017 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 31 July 2017 were approved as a correct record.

526/17 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

527/17 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

No Cabinet decisions had been called-in.

528/17 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee noted the Cabinet Forward Plan.

529/17 Review of Community Safety

The Community Safety Manager gave an update on Community Safety issues over the past year. He detailed the performance data for the period April 2016 to March 2017 for the key priorities for the Community Safety Team: house burglary, vehicle crime, violence with injury and anti-social behaviour. During the period there was an increase of 8.1% in reported crime. He also highlighted the success of the Joint Enforcement Team (JET) which had dealt with high levels of enforcement issues particularly around fly tipping and abandoned vehicles.

He outlined the Community Safety activities that had been delivered with partner agencies including: Junior and Senior Citizen events, Partnership action days, development of a water safety strategy, launch of a High Impact Complex Drinkers pilot and the acquisition of portable CCTV equipment to address reports of fly tipping and low level antisocial behaviour at any location in the Borough.

The Community Safety Manager gave an update on the Neighbourhood Team which met on a six weekly basis with the Community Safety Team and the

Joint Enforcement Team to discuss incidents of fly tipping and antisocial behaviour amongst other things.

The Surrey Chief Constable had identified Spelthorne as the leading Borough within a new area of partnership working to disrupt serious organised crime. He reported that Surrey Police had carried out a public confidence survey in August 2017, which showed a confidence level in Spelthorne of 94% - a 16.1% increase on the 4th quarter of 2016/17.

Members of the Committee asked questions in relation to the increase in recorded crime and significantly for serious sexual crime; the absence of modern day slavery from the report and the police responsibility for Traveller incursions.

Inspector Sproston of Surrey Police explained the reasons for the rise in reported crime, which were consistent with the picture nationally: that in addition to more reports being made of child sexual exploitation and domestic violence, changes to Home Office accounting rules had meant incidents that would not have been recorded as a crime in the past were now classified as such. This had a major impact on the statistics but would plateau in future years as the new recording method became embedded.

He praised Spelthorne for being ahead of the game in relation to its active investigation of serious organised crime including modern day slavery (MDS); it was the only borough in the Surrey Police force working with partners on an audit of serious organised crime and had been identified as a template for best practice. However, he stressed that community feedback was essential to remedy MDS.

Members thanked the Police for their community based handling of the national security operations over the previous weekend on behalf of affected residents.

David Munro, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, gave an overview of the successes of his first year in office and the challenges he was working to address, as follows:

Done well:

- Support for vulnerable people - great improvements had been made since Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) graded the service inadequate a year ago but it was now 'good', a jump of two steps.
- Response times for the 101 non-emergency number were far quicker than a year ago with the result that the dropout rate was dramatically reduced
- Joint Enforcement Teams (JET) had been a great success
- Community Safety and victim grants – fund increased to £750k. Any projects needing funding on crime or prevention of can be applied for online on the funding hub.
- Volunteers – Drive to help more people to volunteer as Specials, cadets and neighbourhood watch co-ordinators

Need more work but some solid achievement:

- Policing In Your Neighbourhood - Basic model was sound with some real advantages - less money, more officers for serious incidents who are better trained with less specialisation; down side is not so many walking down the high street. Recruited more officers and training underway to bring up to establishment.
- Recorded Crime - had gone up partly due to change in method of reporting but also incidents have increased. Commissioned special piece of work to discover crime by crime what the reasons are for the increase.
- Neighbourhood Watch – been radically reorganised. Now an online system.
- Community engagement - satisfaction confidence rating with Surrey Police was high but not taken for granted.
- Collaboration – achieved better relations with all borough councils.
- Criminal justice system – victims used to be treated badly particularly where serious sexual offences involved. Statistics show this is improving with victims being made top priority and dealt with speedily

Challenges

- Work on retention of experienced police officers - Good at recruiting high grade officers less good at retaining
- Travellers – Excellent work being done on the ground but undertaken an urgent review to be slicker and more forceful within the law to serve communities better. Needs to be a concerted effort to identify transit sites
- ICT - looking for transformation in operational emergency communications
- Funding - 1% pay rise confirmed and the same as a bonus, which has to be found out of the Police budget. It means they are not able to do everything they want to but will do the best they can.

Members acknowledged and applauded the successes and that work was ongoing in other areas.

Resolved to:

1. note the report on Community Safety for 2016-2017 and the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner and
2. thank the police for their handling of the national security operations in Sunbury and Stanwell over the past weekend.

530/17 Anti-Social Behaviour in Staines-upon-Thames Town Centre

Keith McGroary, Community Safety Manager reported there was a 19% increase in reports of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in Staines-upon-Thames town centre in 2016 – 2017 compared to the previous year. This was the first rise in ASB following a downward trend for the past nine years.

He said there were reports that visitors to the town felt intimidated by the presence of large groups of young people from the Traveller community who

were often quite loud and drew attention to themselves. The fear of ASB from this group put people off visiting Staines-upon-Thames on a Sunday.

Although there were occasions when very small numbers of these young people had committed ASB or incidents of petty crime, they were often tarnished with the blame for all such incidents, when in fact local offenders not connected to any specific community group were committing them.

A number of measures had been taken to deal with the problem / perceived problem, including using an intermediary from the Traveller community to help resolve issues and enhance community cohesion, and allocating an additional police resource to patrol the town on a Sunday.

He reported that Surrey Police were introducing a 6 month pilot with a 3 pronged response to address the issues raised concerning ASB on a Sunday around Engagement, Enforcement and Education.

Inspector Sproston commented that Staines town centre had radically improved in the evenings compared to 14 years ago and enjoyed a successful and growing night time economy with many restaurants. He recognised that incidents of ASB had increased in the town centre, predominantly on a Sunday during the daytime and said the police were working to identify the cause of the problem.

He outlined the 3 pronged approach:

Engagement – with businesses: Inspector Sproston had agreed to sit on the board of the Business Improvement District to understand what the issues are and how best to deal with them; with security companies: extra training and devolved powers to enable them to deal with ASB.

Enforcement – already agreed additional resources in the town on Sundays However, he believed that having too many uniformed officers in town would have a negative effect on behaviour. Everyone acting anti-socially in Staines would be treated the same.

Education - Working to change the mind-set of the community and businesses with regards their perception that this is a problem created solely by the Travelling Community, as research did not support this. A Sergeant who was himself a Traveller had agreed to sit on a Traveller forum to get people together and help break down barriers.

He invited the Committee to review the effectiveness of the pilot after six months by which time they hoped to have improved the situation in Staines.

Joanna Hall, Two Rivers Manager and board member of Staines-upon-Thames Business Improvement District (BID) said that the increase in ASB incidents last year were down to one young man, who had now moved away from the area. She acknowledged that the issues with Travellers in the town used to be a problem all day on a Sunday but since taking measures to address the problem had restricted it to later in the afternoon. She reported that none of the newly opened restaurants had employed door staff nor had they found a need to do so.

Ms Hall believed that ASB was generally well controlled and that the presence of police officers in the town on a Sunday had helped. The reality was that compared to 7 years ago, there were no longer incidents every Sunday but the perception remained and this needed to be addressed by way of further community engagement.

She told the Committee that the BID was committed to providing two Town Rangers on Sunday afternoons to act as ambassadors for the town and work in partnership with Surrey Police.

Members of the Committee remained concerned that ASB in Staines town centre on a Sunday had increased over the past ten years and was driving away residents. Councillors believed the residents' fears were not unfounded and identified a gap in enforcement agencies operating on a Sunday to address the problems, as the Joint Enforcement Team only operated from Monday to Friday.

Resolved to:

1. note the report;
2. recommend to Cabinet that the Council give consideration to expansion of the JET team and further integration of the JET team with the police; and
3. establish a Task and Finish group incorporating key partners, to further review the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to anti-social behaviour, improving community engagement and increasing footfall in Staines town centre on Sundays.

531/17 Project Management Update on "The Bugle"

The Group Head for Regeneration and Assets provided an update report on progress with 'The Bugle' project.

Resolved to note the update report on The Bugle project.

532/17 Appointment of Task Group

The Committee was asked to agree to form a Task Group to consider: the regeneration of Staines-upon-Thames, Ashford Town Centre and Zone 6 and including river frontage development in Spelthorne.

The Chairman informed the Committee that a Leader's Task Group for Economic Development existed with the stated purpose: *'To advise the Leader and Cabinet on the views of councillors, local business and other stakeholders about issues pertaining to the main town and local centres in the Borough and how the economy of the Borough might be further fostered by actions over which the Council has control or influence.'*

In order to ensure that the Committee did not duplicate resources, he suggested it would be more productive for the Committee to scrutinise the work being done by the Leader's Task Group, rather than appoint a further Task Group to look at similar issues.

The Chairman proposed that a standing item be placed on the agenda to consider the work of the Leader's Task Group on Economic Development and that the Committee would have an opportunity to question a representative from that Group on the work they were undertaking.

Resolved to include a standing item on the Committee's agenda to consider the work of the Leader's Task Group on Economic Development.

533/17 Work Programme

A member requested that an item be added to the Committee's Work programme looking at the work and operations of the Environment Agency. The Chairman proposed that as other elements of the environment of the River Thames had previously been raised as possible topics for the Committee to look at, that this be added to the Work Programme.

Resolved to note the Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal year, subject to the inclusion of an item on the environment of the River Thames.