

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
10 September 2019**

Present:

Councillor V.J. Leighton (Chairman)
Councillor J. McIlroy (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

C.L. Barratt	N.J. Gething	R.W. Sider BEM
J.H.J. Doerfel	H. Harvey	R.A. Smith-Ainsley
J.T.F. Doran	L. Nichols	
R.D. Dunn	J.R. Sexton	

Apologies: Councillor N.L. Cornes

229/19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 were approved as a correct record subject to the inclusion of ethical investment as one of the topics listed in minute no. 186/19 for possible inclusion in the work programme.

The minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 3 September were approved subject to the inclusion of Shepperton Town and Ashford Common in paragraph 4 of minute 225/19 and deletion of the duplicate listing for Sunbury Common.

It was requested that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting on 3 September were amended to state that some councillors expressed wholesale opposition to any expansion of Heathrow airport, however it was agreed by the majority of the Committee that the minutes accurately reflected the overall general views expressed by members.

230/19 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

231/19 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

No Cabinet decisions had been called in.

232/19 Cabinet Forward Plan

Members were advised that the Committee can call in any decision of Cabinet provided it was not a matter for Council or an urgent item that had already been agreed by the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny.

233/19 Review of Community Safety

The Group Head for Neighbourhood Services presented her review of community safety report for the year April 2018 to March 2019 which looked at key issues and performance for that period.

Councillor Barratt acknowledged the work of the officers and partners of the Spelthorne Safer Stronger Partnership who are working with limited resources to make the borough a safer place and reduce the instances of anti-social behaviour.

Sergeant Grinter, on behalf of Surrey Police, reported that it had been a busy year. The number of unauthorised encampments had made a huge demand on police resources. He also explained some of the factors that should be taken into account when considering the crime rate for Spelthorne, including changes made in the recording of crime and the location of a custody centre in Staines which was fed from Elmbridge and Runnymede area. A significant number of drugs related and violent crime was committed in the custody centre. Sergeant Grinter stressed that the police were always open to any suggestions that may reduce crime. Although the number of violent crimes had increased, the police had been striving to encourage domestic abuse victims to report crimes resulting in a positive outcome.

Mr Munro and Sergeant Grinter responded to a number of questions including the theft of high value cars, the crime statistics, work being done at schools to prevent drug abuse and how councillors can assist residents with anti-social behaviour.

In response to a question about what can be done to combat the use of nitrous oxide canisters, Mr Munro advised that the police were doing their best to disrupt the use of these and he continued to campaign for it to become an offence to use them.

Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner David Munro gave a presentation (attached to these minutes) detailing the role of the PCC, the Police and Crime Plan priorities, the number and structure of police officers in Spelthorne and details of the increase of 104 police officers across Surrey as a result of the precept raised .

Mr Munro believed that real crime was fairly static now, as opposed to recorded crime. An area of focus had been burglaries and he felt that they were now on top of that.

The increase of 20,000 police officers announced by the government would start from next year; once scaled down Surrey's share was likely to be an extra 100 per year for 3 years. There had been no indication of how the increase would be funded.

Members raised concerns about the 101 service and in particular how to improve community engagement. Mr Munro was confident that the 101 service had improved considerably and offered a good service when the call was answered. He advised that the best way to report non-urgent crime was

online but there were other options including Crimestoppers which guaranteed anonymity. Both Mr Munro and Sergeant Grinter expressed willingness to meet councillors to discuss this issue and welcomed suggestions on how to reach out to those who felt disengaged.

Sergeant Grinter also stressed the importance of notifying housing associations as well as the police of anti-social behaviour if it was occurring on their estates as evidence was required to support potential evictions.

Resolved to note the report on the review of community safety.

The Chairman thanked David Munro and Sergeant Grinter for attending the meeting.

234/19 SW Rail update

David Wilby, Regional Development Manager, South Western Railway gave a presentation (attached to these minutes) on progress made with their franchise delivery plan. However, he acknowledged that performance was not as good as they would like and expanded on how they were addressing this.

Members asked questions on a number of issues including the unreliability and lack of trains on some local routes and the shortage of drivers.

In response to a question asking if SWR would support the inclusion of the borough in zone 6, Mr Wilby advised that it would not make good business sense to do so as they made very little money from the Oyster zone, however they would be willing to offer assistance, particularly for the next franchise.

Resolved to note the update and thanked Mr Wilby for attending.

235/19 Corporate Project Management

It was moved and seconded and

Resolved to exclude the Press and Public in order for the Committee to receive a presentation on progress being made with the Council's housing development projects, in view of the likely disclosure of exempt information within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and by the Local Government (Access to information) (Variation) Order 2006; Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The Deputy Chief Executive presented an update on progress with corporate projects.

In response to queries from members he agreed that officers would consider and address any inaccuracies and anomalies in the documentation.

The Property and Development Manager presented an update on the Council's housing development projects and answered questions raised by the Committee members.

Resolved to note the project update report and the confidential presentation on the Council's housing developments.

236/19 Work Programme

The Committee considered the draft Work Programme for 2019 to 2021. Concern was raised that Knowle Green Estates (KGE) was linked with the Housing Strategy on the work programme and that KGE was overdue for scrutiny. The Deputy Chief Executive advised that the two issues were grouped together because of the housing link but would be considered separately and were listed on the work programme for November 2019.

After discussion it was agreed that consideration should be given to bringing forward the Fire service operation review to an earlier date in the work programme in view of closure of the new station recently due to crew availability.

Resolved to approve the work programme subject to the change outlined above.

The Committee agreed to set up the following task groups:

- **Flytipping, abandoned vehicles and litter:**
Councillors Gething, Sexton and C Barratt. Councillor Gibson to be invited to be part of the group
- **Free off-peak parking in Staines upon Thames:**
Councillors Smith-Ainsley and Doerfel. Councillor Saliagopoulos to also be invited to join the group.

Officers will contact the groups in due course to discuss suitable start dates.