

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
15 September 2015**

Present:

Councillor A.E. Friday (Chairman)

Councillors:

M.M. Attewell	A.T. Jones	O. Rybinski
R. Chandler	J.G. Kavanagh	B.B. Spoor
K. Flurry	S.C. Mooney	H.R.D. Williams
I.T.E. Harvey	A. Neale	

Apologies: Councillors D. Patel, S.J. Burkmar and S. Capes

231/15 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 July 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

232/15 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

233/15 Call-in of Cabinet decisions

No Cabinet decisions had been called in for review.

234/15 Review of Community Safety

The Community Safety Manager gave an update on Community Safety (CS) issues over the past year.

He reported that the Joint Enforcement Team (JET), piloted in the Borough since December 2014, has had a positive impact and was well received by the general public.

He highlighted the fact that there were no government grants or allocated funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to support the

Community Safety Partnership (CSP), and that funding was reliant on contributions from external partners.

He detailed the performance data for the period April 2014 to March 2015 for the key priorities for the Community Safety Team: house burglary, vehicle crime, criminal damage, theft (shoplifting) and violence against the person (injury).

Overall, reported crime figures were up by 6%, but this was largely due to violence against person crime having increased by 41% or 148 offences. The Community Safety Manager explained that there had been increases in all crime nationally, due to three factors, which had also influenced the increase in Spelthorne's figures for crimes of violence against the person: lack of police resources, different reporting methods and police officers being diverted to deal with 'new' crimes, e.g. child sexual exploitation via the internet. Additionally, he indicated that a lot of violent crime injury was sustained by police officers during the course of their work and this had skewed the figures.

The CSP team were working with police to address violence with injury crime, which had a strong link with domestic abuse, and encouraging both men and women who were victims of such crime to report it.

The current CSP Strategy and Action Plan for Spelthorne Borough were available on the Council's website. The 3 year Strategy was refreshed every year following feedback on the public's priorities given at the PCC Summit.

Resolved to note the report of the Community Safety Manager on the review of community safety 2014-2015.

235/15 Housing Issues

The Committee received a presentation from the Joint Heads of Housing and Independent Living on how the Council is dealing with: homelessness, affordable housing, the winter shelter duty and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).

The officers set out the background to the housing issues for Spelthorne, which were influenced by the fact the Borough is surrounded by 3 London Boroughs, all of which had extensive housing need and problems with homelessness. They explained the issues, mainly financial, which impacted on the ability of people in Surrey to access affordable housing.

They explained in more detail the Council's situation and approach with regards to: homelessness, prevention initiatives, the private rented sector, fraud, access into social housing, affordable housing, Partnership working, winter shelter provision, RSLs and new developments.

Councillor Pinkerton OBE, the portfolio holder for housing, stated that the Council was reviewing all its assets, looking at using them in flexible ways in order to address the need for more housing.

Members of the Committee asked questions relating to preparations for assisting refugees, the problems of under/over occupation of social housing, and the numbers of people currently being placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation.

Resolved to note the report of the Joint Heads of Housing and Independent Living on Housing Issues.

236/15 Corporate Project Management update

The Committee received an update from the Head of Customer Services on progress with the Council's priority projects and the Towards a Sustainable Future (TaSF) programme. She reported that the focus was changing from corporate projects to TaSF projects, with a reduction from 32 in March 2015 to 12 now.

Resolved to note the progress report on:

1. the Towards a Sustainable Future programme and work stream
2. the status of the Corporate Projects dashboard and Spelthorne projects map and
3. the work the Corporate Project Team was undertaking to promote good practice and support project managers.

237/15 Leader's Task Groups - minutes

The Committee received updates on progress with the work of the Leader's Sub-Task Groups for Assets and Regeneration in relation to Riverside car park, Ashford car park and all other assets.

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Gething encouraged members of the Task Groups to drive forward the work of the Towards a Sustainable Future programme through actively supporting and giving their input to those Task Groups.

Resolved to note the work undertaken to date by the Leader's Task Groups.

238/15 Cabinet Forward Plan

The Committee received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Resolved to note the Forward Plan.

239/15 Work Programme

The Chairman reported that he had worked with the vice-chairman and the officers to produce a draft work programme from the topics identified by the Committee at its last meeting.

He added that the Committee should also keep in mind the subject of devolution for inclusion in the current work programme, once the government's response to the Three Counties proposals was known.

Resolved to note the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.