

Minutes of:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	11 January 2022
Present:	Councillor R Bernstein (in the Chair) Councillors C Birchmore, N Boroda, G McGill, K Peel, L Smith and D Vernon
Also in attendance:	Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillors Rydeheard, N Jones and Harris Chief Superintendent, Chris Hill Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive Kate Waterhouse, Chief Information Officer
Public Attendance:	There were three members of the public present at the meeting.
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor L Dean, Councillor U Farooq, Councillor M Powell and Councillor C Walsh

OSC.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence are listed above.

OSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McGill declared an interest as his brother is a Detective Chief Inspector in Derbyshire police and is a treasurer of Topping Fold Tenants and Residents Association.

Councillor Vernon declared an interest as he is a retired Police Inspector.

Councillor Bernstein declared an interest due to his previous association with the Police and Crime Commissioners Office.

OSC.3 MINUTES

It was agreed:

1. The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th November 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

OSC.4 MATTERS ARISING

(A) It was reported that the supplementary question submitted at the last meeting by Councillor Rydeheard regarding the apprenticeship scheme has now been answered by Councillor Quinn via email on the 24th November 2021.

(B) Active travel options for Radcliffe is on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Forward Planner to be brought to a future meeting

(C) Councillor Birchmore has received a response to her question regarding the locations of a bed every night and homeless units.

OSC.5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions from members of the public were received in advance of the meeting:

Question 1: I was a witness to gangs of youths on Monday 03rd January 22 around the Rock area again, and on the Tram Station platforms Wednesday 5/1/22 openly rolling and smoking with the obvious cannabis smell.

I've also taken my dog for a walk around Burrs Park in Elton towards dusk this last 10 days where NO2 cannisters have been left in the car parking areas, again witnessing scooter riders and car occupants smoking cannabis.

Can you assure us that Bury retains a balance of active police based on the number of residents within the borough to ensure crime remains from what the plan says is low? Andrew Luxton

Councillor Gold advised that following the appointment of Stephen Watson as the Chief Constable for Greater Manchester, GMP have been undertaking a review of neighbourhood policing as part of their new Police and Crime Plan. Locally this is being led by our new Superintendent, Chris Hill, who is working with the Council to understand local need. This has included public consultation events and engagement through our Community Hubs. We will continue to review feedback from residents alongside crime statistics to make sure we keep all of our neighbourhoods safe.

Chris Hill, Superintendent advised one of the many priorities is anti-social behaviour and a means of tackling this is named Operation Saturn. Work is undertaken with relevant partners including TfGM, Councillors and the local Community. This Operation will continue in the Borough of Bury. In relation to drugs incidents, there have been an increase in the number of seizures of drugs which is a result of serious organised crime officers undertaking warrants and stop and searches by officers. Resources are currently being checked to ensure resources are reflective of the income in demand for each area within Bury.

The second question was submitted by Mr Berry who did not attend the meeting. In his absence Councillor Bernstein, Chair read out the question on his behalf.

Question 2: In 2016 it was very easy to Google and find detailed crime statistics in the 3 Radcliffe Wards I found detection and prosecutions rates were very low.

I can no longer find these detailed crime statistics. Can Bury council commit to ensuring that detailed crime statistics are easily and readily available online?

One major concern of mine is that under reporting by victims, is a major issue. How do they think this could improve to get more people to report crimes?

In response Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities advised that following the implementation of a new Police computer system the data that was used to inform the national crime statistics is not felt to be sufficiently reliable for publishing. Crimes were still being investigated but how they were recorded meant that the data was unreliable. Crime recording is the Police's responsibility, and we know that they are working hard to address the issues with the system so that accurate data can once again be made available.

With regards to under-reporting. This is a key issue that we're looking to address through the new Community Safety Plan. During our recent consultation we heard from residents that they often weren't confident in reporting crimes. Therefore, in the new Plan we have developed a new priority 'creating and maintaining safe spaces' which specifically looks to address this issue with the following stated aims:

- 'Ensure that residents show a greater willingness to report crimes to Police and other services and think about how we celebrate our law-abiding Bury residents'
- 'Create a mechanism, through the community hubs, for residents to provide ongoing feedback and intelligence about Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour'

Chris Hill added that there is significant importance in local people providing information that informs where resources must be placed. Examples of this in practice is demonstrated by weekly meetings and placing resources in areas of immediate concern.

Councillor Bernstein, Chair of the Committee opened to questions from other members of the public who had not submitted their question in advance of the meeting.

Question 3: As a resident of Moorside Bury I regularly see lots of fly tipping, speeding and cannisters can be found. Can I ask what the Council is doing about these issues. Jill Budgen

In response Councillor Gold advised that street cleaning and fly tipping does not fall under his portfolio. He did advise fining of people fly tipping has been targeted and more people are caught. However, speeding does fall in his remit, and this is addressed within the Community Safety Plan. Councillor Gold advised Moorside Councillors can assist with the fly tipping matters in the area and the information of those Councillors can be found on the Council Website.

Chris Hill added that the Road Policing Officers are to be increased across Bury with a focus on hot spot areas to look at weight restrictions of vehicles, speeding and the use of uninsured vehicles.

OSC.6 MEMBER QUESTIONS

The following question from a member was received in advance of the meeting:

Question one: One of the biggest concerns in my ward is drug misuse, and residents often report sightings of silver laughing gas canisters or miniature plastic drug packets in their immediate vicinity.

On page 7 of the draft community safety plan, it reads 'There is some data to suggest that drug related offences are higher than other areas which requires further analysis'. When will this analysis be completed, and when can we expect the results to be circulated?

Councillor Rydeheard

Councillor Gold advised the experience residents in your ward raise is replicated in many areas across the borough and supported with the borough-level data, which is why 'Drug-related offending' is identified as a specific priority within the Community Safety Plan. The extract you reference on Page 7 refers to the fact that drug-related offending is higher in Bury than in other GM Local Authorities and an early priority for the delivery plan will be to analyse this data more thoroughly to understand the underlying causes and ways to address them.

A thematic group is being established to lead on this priority, jointly chaired by Public Health and Greater Manchester Police, to consider this question and decide how we're going to address it. The Community Safety Plan is a 3-year plan, but we will be happy to report back to Scrutiny on progress against the stated objectives as required.

Councillor Rydeheard asked a supplementary question:

The data will be analysed, and thematic group chaired by GMP and Public Health, will there be Local Authority representation and Community group representation on the group?

In response Councillor Gold advised this is detailed in the Community Safety Plan and the Council will have representation on this group. However, there is currently no Tenant and Resident Association's on this but will be considered going forward.

OSC.7 MEETING THEME - CRIME AND DISORDER

Councillor Bernstein formally welcomed Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities, Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive, Chris Hill Chief Superintendent and Kate Waterhouse, Chief Information Officer to the meeting.

Councillor Gold introduced the item, the Community Safety Partnership Annual Report and the Community Safety Plan.

Chris Hall, Chief Superintendent introduced his role and his priorities for Policing in the Borough of Bury. These priorities consisted of the right resources in the correct places and when a resident is the unfortunate victim of crime that they receive an excellent service from the Police. He showcased the 'plan on a page' document which is the Police roadmap to recovery across Greater Manchester.

Councillor Boroda questioned the Council's perspective on why Community Safety should be a priority for the Council. In response Councillor Gold advised the Council adds value through organisation of the groups, the intelligence from Councillors and the local community, Neighbourhood Teams, Sixtown Housing, and the Hubs.

Councillor Birchmore stated that following engagement with local residents it is believed there is a significant amount of under reporting of crime due to a lack of belief in law enforcement. As Radcliffe has no police station and only a limited police presence. Councillor Birchmore asked for reassurances that the problems in some parts of Radcliffe have been recognised and plans are being put in place to address the issues.

In response Councillor Gold, advised the list was not exhaustive and resident feedback from the consultation has been used to inform the priorities. Again, the under-reporting issue was reported in the consultation and has been used to inform the police of the hotspots.

Chris Hill, Superintendent advised each town in the Borough of Bury including the Inspector for Radcliffe, Inspector Wright, produces a report on the hot-spots, repeat locations and the local team for Radcliffe are well sighted on local issues. Councillor Birchmore added that a drop-in centre for Radcliffe instead of a Radcliffe Police Station has been well received by local residents.

Councillor Vernon questioned how the resent Ofsted report findings had impacted policing. In response Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised he is sighted and aware of the findings in the report. Joint working takes place to discuss issues where there is a recognised risk to a child. All concerns are communicated to the Local Authority and this ensures there is no delay in reporting. Superintendent Chris Hill provided a detailed update report on the improvements made so far and planned for going forward.

Questions took place regarding the statement within the Community Safety Plan of 'Bury being safer' and how this is measured. It was concluded that an update will come to a future meeting in the new municipal year to provide comparative data which demonstrates if this is the case.

The Committee discussed the incident which happened in Bury recently and what is taking place to reduce the likelihood of such an incident occurring again. In response Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised work is required to improve reporting from the Taxi Driver Community and build confidence with individuals to report any antisocial behaviour.

Chris Hill Chief Superintendent advised the Committee that the Chief Constable asked all Chief Superintendent's to visit each area and find a venue to speak to all local Councillors. The Committee were advised that this will be arranged soon along with a visit to each local authority to include mass police presence.

Further themes of discussion were around the following topics:

- Drug dealing
- Speeding

- Lack of reporting; this is due to many issues, but Councillors and the local community are asked to report any issues so that they can provide targeted interventions.
- Domestic Violence and incidents
- Response times of Greater Manchester Police; this response time has now reduced to an average speed of 16 second for 999 calls and the average response to 111 calls is 2 minutes.
- Officers out in local areas; the numbers of officers is to be increased and local work is taking place to target areas of high demand.

It was agreed:

1. For the Cabinet Member for Communities to speak to officers about creating a Council system for monitoring the reporting of finding drug paraphernalia.
2. That the Cabinet Member for Communities provides performance data which supports the monitoring of the Community Safety Plan at a future update to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2022.
3. That the March 2022 meeting should focus on response, recovery and resiliency in relation to the Pandemic
4. To thank Chief Superintendent Chris Hill, Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities, Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive and Kate Waterhouse, Chief Information Officer for their update and time.

OSC.8 NEIGHBOURHOOD PITCH

Councillor Gold Cabinet Member for Communities introduced the item 'Neighbourhood Pitch'. Following the establishment of the Neighbourhood Hubs, the work is now place based which has been well received. Each locality has been able to make their own decisions on how the pitch was delivered to their area to improve resident engagement.

There was £340,000 worth of grants applied for the time regarding the recovery theme and the 'Lets Do It' Strategy. It was stated that that the increased amount of £5000 compared to £2000 previously generated more interest and made the Pitch more competitive.

Prior to the submission of applications, the hub managers engaged with community groups in need of support and the Voluntary Community and Faith Alliance held a 'meet the funder' event to support prospective applicants. When grants were received, they were validated to ensure qualifying criteria was met then a voting exercise on One Community took place.

Questions were invited from members of the Committee.

Councillor Smith questioned what can be done to build businesses up and support their longevity.

In response Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive, advised funds for each area has been set equally which is not replicable of the demand. This has been done intentionally to work and build up groups in areas where there is currently a limited amount.

Cllr McGill reported that prior to the pandemic the Pitch events opened opportunities for collaboration. He asked if there was feedback from organisations that attended the last Pitch on this.

Kate Waterhouse, Chief Information Officer advised the Committee that the Community Hubs have looked at the feedback received. Following the last event there has been evidence of collaboration in new bids including some joint bids from organisations that have decided to work together.

Discussions on the end of project evaluation took place. In response Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive advised that recent focus has been on getting the money out to the eligible groups. Following this the focus will be agreeing the outcome measures of success with the bidders and then reflecting on each of the projects to see the effect this has since been made.

Discussions took place regarding the auditing of the scheme. It was confirmed that reviews take place by the Strategic Partnership Team on receipt of application including eligibility and proposed spend. Checks will be random spot checks of around 10% of the total projects to ensure compliance.

Jacqui Dennis, Monitoring Officer advised the terms of the grant funding will be in their application and the terms and conditions of their contract. These conditions will allow the Council to claw back funding if the agreement is deviated from.

It was agreed:

1. Cabinet Member for Communities to share information on the Health Improvement Fund outside the meeting;
2. that the Cabinet Member for Communities provides an update on outcomes from bidders of the 'Pitch' event at a future Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
3. Councillor Gold, Lynne Ridsdale and Kate Waterhouse be thanked for their attendance and update.

OSC.9 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR R BERNSTEIN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 9.30 pm)

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