

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 6 September 2022

Present: Councillor D Vernon (in the Chair)
Councillors R Bernstein, C Birchmore, A Arif, N Bayley, K Peel,
T Pilkington and M Walsh

Also in attendance: Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Core)
Paul Lakin, Executive Director of Place
Kate Waterhouse, Joint Chief Information Officer
Sarah Porru, Assistant Director of Regeneration Delivery
Chris Woodhouse, Strategic Partnerships Manager
Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor N Boroda, Councillor D Green and Councillor
N Jones

OSC.1 APOLOGIES

Apologies are noted above.

OSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

OSC.3 MINUTES

It was agreed:

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2022 be approved.

OSC.4 MATTERS ARISING

Councillor Vernon, Chair, advised the committee that as the last meeting took place virtually ratification of decisions made at the meeting on the 19th July 2022 be required.

It was put forward by Councillor Vernon and seconded by Councillor Bernstein and agreed unanimously that the actions be ratified.

OSC.5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

OSC.6 MEMBER QUESTION TIME (Pages 7 - 8)

One question was asked in advance of the meeting by Councillor Lancaster and is appended to the minutes.

OSC.7 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN

Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities provided an overview of the report. In January 2022, Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report outlining the development of a new Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Plan for Bury. It was agreed that an update report to outline progress against the Plan would be presented to the Committee six months into delivery.

In addition, Chief Superintendent Chris Hill provided an overview in respect of Greater Manchester Police and locally in the Borough of Bury. Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised the progressive steps have been taken towards the establishment coming out of special measures.

Councillor Vernon then opened to questions from Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members sought assurances on how Greater Manchester Police will continue to progress when released from special measures. In response Chris Hill, Chief Superintendent GMP advised that more work is needed on repeat demand and using a multi partnership approach to target areas of repeat hotspots.

Councillor Vernon questioned the priorities within the Plan which relate to drug related offending, domestic abuse, community cohesion, anti-social behaviour and reducing offending. It was asked, where does child protection fit, particularly as we have seen in neighbouring areas, Child Sexual Exploitation and what has been put in place to reduce any recurrences. In response Councillor Gold advised a co-ordinated approach is needed to help and protect children and adults at risk through collaborative working across organisations and agencies. In Bury, partner agencies have created all age safeguarding arrangements Chris Hill, GMP provided reassurance to the Committee that a multi-agency approach is taken.

Members sought assurances on how the increased use of buying and selling of Nitrous Oxide will be targeted. In response Councillor Gold advised Bury Council and partners have done community events to raise awareness of the dangers of Nitrous Oxide and influence the public's behaviour. As the cannisters are legal products with a legitimate use it prevents any ban on them being sold. The licensing and regulation teams have visited shops where they have been made aware Nitrous Oxide cannisters are sold to advise on the dangers and to encourage them not to sell to individuals where they feel there is a risk of them being misused. Further promotion of the dangers of such cannisters will be cascaded through schools and colleges as part of the start of a new school year.

In response to questions from Councillor Pilkington regarding hate crime Councillor Gold informed the committee that figures for hate crime have been down over the last two quarters and more detailed figures will be circulated following the meeting.

A discussion took place regarding the water safety and if work can be done to change the message from no open water to safe open water swimming. In response Kate Waterhouse, Joint Chief Information Officer advised that for Spring/Summer 2023 officers will be looking at incorporating a proposal for safer outdoor swimming.

Councillor Peel asked questions regarding increasing neighbourhood patrols. Chief Superintendent Hill responded by stating relationships are key to progress for Bury and the Police Force, Bury Council, Ward Members, and residents working together have resulted in

some proactive work taking place regarding road safety. There is a neighbourhood review currently taking place which ensure there is an increase in the number of officers and visibility and a reduction in demand.

Councillor Birchmore asked two questions relating to housing services and it was agreed that a response will be prepared through the Housing portfolio.

Questions took place regarding reducing the number of senior police officers. In response Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised the purpose of the 'plan on a page' document is to ensure consistency across the Borough.

Discussions took place in relation to the effectiveness of the plan. In response Councillor Gold advised the plan is for three years and acknowledges that community safety is not any one agencies responsibility and needs a multi-disciplinary response. Members were offered an open invite to upcoming community safety partnership meetings.

Discussions took place regarding the night-time economy in Bury and the initiatives that support Bury being a safe and enjoyable place in the evening. The 'best bar none' initiative was further discussed, and Chief Superintendent Chris Hill advised it endures safety measures are in place in support people having a safe and enjoyable night and thanked street pastors for all their work.

Information regarding the Anti-social Behaviour Officer took place; he is on a fixed term contract and is an initial point of contact for anti-social behaviour casework. He will be taking statements and interviewing which will free up time for caseworkers who need to attend court.

It was agreed:

1. The Committee thanked Chief Superintendent Chris Hill, Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities and officers for their attendance and update.
2. Operation 'Lioness' to be circulated to members of the Committee
3. The holiday activities fund figures to be provided once received.

OSC.8 BURY TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION

Councillor O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth provided an overview of the Bury Town Centre Regeneration report. In the update Committee Members were advised Bury does provide a good offer for retail and is third best out of Greater Manchester and assured that Bury does not want to be complacent and that the regeneration should be a physical and people approach to regeneration that focuses on the future.

Councillor Bernstein, echoed confidence and ambition in the plan but sought assurances on capacity to deliver including the flexibility of the plan. In response Councillor O'Brien advised that whilst it is a big piece of work and will take time to be complete, the Council does have the resources needed to deliver along with the ability to be flexible and adaptable.

Councillor Peel raised points surrounding capacity for events and links to the Culture Strategy. Councillor O'Brien highlighted the flexi-hall which adds another layer of capacity to host events and attractions in addition to the offer already from the Met Theatre and additional hotel capacity.

Councillor Peel also highlighted the importance of residents having access to affordable credit, with an example being bringing Manchester Credit Union to Bury. In response Councillor O'Brien advised the Department for Work and Pensions has a Job Centre in the Mill Gate and

there is scope to expand this into better access to health, education, and skills to use spaces commercially and adaptably.

Councillor Birchmore sought assurances regarding the offer to new businesses and start-ups along with the SME offer. In response to the questions raised Councillor O'Brien advised the Economic Development Strategy has shown we have some of the best micro-business growth and most people are employed in the Borough within the Health or Retail sectors. The 'Invest in Bury Service' engages with businesses and the Made in Bury Service that provides support to businesses along with Greater Manchester support. In summary Councillor O'Brien advised there is a dedicated team that works with our partners to support businesses in the Borough. In addition, discussions took place regarding technology skills and age gaps in the profession. It was agreed that STEM and digital subjects are in demand and whilst the centre in Bury will be focused on health it will also take a digital approach.

Councillor Vernon questioned the numbers contained in report regarding housing. In response Councillor O'Brien informed members he will circulate these following the meeting but outlined the following:

Site	Number of homes
Q-Park	120
Townside (Pyramid Park)	175
Townfields Close	35
Humphrey House	40
Police station	50
Castle leisure complex	200
Site of former Paradise Mill, Parsons Lane / John St, Bury (Note: Council own reversionary freehold only, privately controlled)	30
Millgate	400
Corner Walmersley Road / Moorgate, Bury (partly Council owned)	30
Clerke St	30
The Castle surface car park, Bolton St	40
Belle Vue Terrace car park	26

Councillor Walsh sought assurances on the Mill Gate shopping centre and asked how much is owned by Bury council and will this be retained. In response Councillor O'Brien advised exact specifics are hard to comment on but confirmed the Council will retain their stake in the Mill Gate.

Councillor Birchmore highlighted the numbers on Metrolink users have now dropped significantly and questioned how this will impact bury town centre. Discussions took place and it was confirmed it is unlikely to be a detriment to Bury Town Centre and the reduction is typically from less commuters.

It was agreed:

1. Councillor O'Brien be thanked for his update.

OSC.9 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR D VERNON
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.40 pm)

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Question:

Please could the Chief Superintendent advise what action is being taken in respect of the obvious drug dealing and drug taking on the six-town housing estate on Coronation Road. We have many vulnerable elderly residents who are feeling intimidated in their own homes. Residents have requested more police patrols of the area, to tackle antisocial behaviour and the drug issues on the estate.

Answer:

I would like to thank Cllr Lancaster for raising these community concerns. There has been a twin track policing approach to addressing this issue, namely covert and overt. My neighbourhood team in Radcliffe have executed warrants in the locality over recent weeks under the Misuse of Drugs Act. They are working with our intelligence teams on developing further enforcement opportunities. In addition, our Challenger team have worked on tackling organised crime groups that supply drugs into the area.

The neighbourhood team are planning a dedicated policing operation and will be able to discuss this with you when you meet later this week.

My ask is for more community intelligence to be provided. This can be done directly with our neighbourhood officers or anonymously through the charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 or through online reporting.

Supplementary Question:

Do the Police have a Crime Prevention Officer that can provide the Council and SixTown Housing with guidance and advice on security measures to the elderly residents on the estate. It would be helpful if they could attend a walk about with the Council on the estate to assess all doors on the estate which are owned by the Council to look at replacing the doors to composite doors. Composite doors keep the property safer, more secure, and thermally efficient.

Answer:

We do provide that reassurance and work with housing providers, including SixTown Housing and local neighbourhood teams. The local neighbourhood officer and PCSO would be happy to offer any reassurance regarding snap locks and composite doors.

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