

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting held on Thursday, 15th September, 2022 at the Council Offices, Farnborough at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr M.D. Smith (Chairman)
Cllr Mrs. D.B. Bedford (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr K. Dibble (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr A. Adeola
Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr L. Jeffers
Cllr Prabesh KC
Cllr Marina Munro
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr S. Trussler

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Mara Makunura.

11. HER LATE MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

As a mark of respect for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, the meeting started with a minute's silence.

12. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st July, 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

13. COMMUNITY SAFETY AND POLICING

The Committee welcomed Chief Inspector (CI) Emma Hart (Hampshire Police) and James Knight (Service Manager – Place Protection), who were in attendance to provide an update on policing and community safety matters in the Borough.

(1) Policing –

Chief Inspector Hart, who joined the meeting online, gave an introduction to her career and her initial thoughts after moving to Rushmoor. Despite a motivated and proactive team being in place, CI Hart had identified a lack of experience within the team, due to staff retention issues. It was noted that the team currently consisted of one Inspector, two Sergeants, 24 Police Constables (PC) and 12 Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's). It was advised that a recruitment campaign, being held in November across the Borough, would aim to encourage local people to join the force or become Special Constables/volunteers. It was noted that Hampshire was one of the

highest performing forces but one of the lowest funded. National, match and external funding were being sought to address funding issues.

The Committee noted the key policing matters in the area, which included burglary, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and high harm, drug related harm and youth on youth violence. It was noted that a High Harm Team would be launched on 3rd October, 2022 in Rushmoor and Hart, to focus on ASB and high harm issues across the area.

CI Hart reported on crime data and it was noted that crime rates in Rushmoor were in line with the rest of the country. District priorities were identified, these included drug related harm, Asian Gold breaks and violence against women and girls. It was advised that patrol plans were key to addressing these issues.

On the issue of priority deployment, it was noted that the police had to focus resource where it was considered most needed, would achieve positive outcomes and where swift justice could be achieved. Measures taken to offset the demand on deployment included:

- Operation Mothra – this operation involved having a police presence in an area for 15 minutes or more for a period of time - outcomes had shown a reduction in crime in the following weeks in those areas
- Early intervention and partnership working – key to providing support and help to those that needed it, including the issue of Community Protection Notices (CPN's)

CI Hart reported on 999 versus 101 calls. It was noted that there had been unprecedented demand on 101 and it was often a long wait to report a non-emergency crime. Alternative contact streams were available for non-emergency reporting, these included contact through the internet and via a QR code, but it was recognised that not everyone had access to these contact streams. It was also noted that the police monitored call data relating to the 101 number and continued to work towards improving the service. Consideration was being given to alternative digital access routes to allow people to pick and choose how they contacted the police. Data on the 101 non-emergency number would be provided at a future meeting.

In response to a query regarding youth on youth violence and drug taking, it was noted that gang exploitation of vulnerable young people was more prevalent now than ever before. It was noted that Hart had had some success with a criminal exploitation package, which had allowed information to be shared and interventions to take place with vulnerable young people and their families – it was hoped that this scheme could be utilised in Rushmoor in the future. In addition, cross border intelligence sharing was also key to tackling youth and drug related crime. Other contributing factors included the removal of youth services by the County Council.

The Chairman thanked Chief Inspector Hart for her presentation.

(2) Community Safety –

Mr Knight provided an overview of the service, which covered Community Safety, Licensing and Community Patrol Officers (CPO's). The three areas came together to create and maintain a safe, clean and inviting Borough that residents could be proud of, by providing a visible Council presence to residents, businesses and visitors, engaging at every opportunity, educating and encouraging compliance where appropriate and enforcing if necessary. The Team had been given two overarching priorities, these were to:

- maintain the aesthetic value of the Borough and improve feelings of safety in public, private and virtual space, and;
- improve visibility and evidence outcomes of the Team's work

The Committee were advised of the work of the Safer North Hampshire Community Safety Partnership. The Partnership had recently signed off on its most recent Strategic Assessment (a copy of which would be shared with the Committee) which aimed to improve feelings of safety and health outcomes and tackle issues such as serious violence, domestic abuse and ASB. The Partnership ensured strong links between the various agencies involved.

An update was then provided on the work of the Community Safety team, this included:

- **Current Focus** – It was noted that during the pandemic there had been a significant increase in neighbour issues and disputes, and this had continued into 2022. Complaints often focussed on noise issues and/or cannabis, and in particular took place in housing association properties. The Team linked closely with local Housing Associations to tackle these issues and ensured appropriate support.

An ongoing issue in Hawley Woods with vehicle related antisocial behaviour had led to a positive partnership approach with the MOD, Fire, Hart Council and the Police. This had led to positive press and sharing of useful intelligence.

- **PSPO** – A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) had been launched in Aldershot Town Centre on 20th July. Authorised officers had the power to request an individual to stop drinking and to confiscate alcohol, if suspected of ASB, and to issue a fine for public urination/defecation. Since July the CPO's had engaged 20 individuals, all who had complied with any requests. It was noted that there had been a number of repeat offenders. As a result, moving forward, the CPO's would be looking to confiscate any alcohol from these individuals.

Following a walkabout in the town centre in late August, feedback from some businesses had been generally positive. Comments had been made on the increase in officer presence and nuisance individuals being moved on.

- **Closure Order** – In late 2021, the Team had its first successful Closure Order on a property responsible for antisocial behaviour and drugs issues in Aldershot. The impact on neighbours had been significant and feedback had been that the situation had improved significantly. The Team had successfully applied for an extension to the Closure Order following the initial period.
- **Cannabis** – Use of cannabis in residential properties continued to be an issue, with a large number of complaints being made. The Team followed a Cannabis Warning Process in partnership with Hampshire Police, which included a number of warning letters, visits and ultimately use of Community Protection Notices. It was noted that, first warning letters were generally effective and prevented reoccurrence, although a small number of complaints had progressed to the next stage. During 2021-22, 35 warning letters had been sent, 11 of which had been second letters. However, no warnings had progressed to the issue of a Community Protection Notice.

The Committee discussed the report and raised a number of issues, including:

- **Resources** – It was noted that currently there was a vacancy within the Community Safety Team, but the recruitment process had commenced and it was hoped the role would be filled shortly. It was felt that the Team were currently effective in their role and, should more resource be available, the expectation would need to be managed.
- **CCTV** – in response to a query regarding the relocation of the CCTV unit, it was felt that the move would not be disadvantageous, but it would be key to maintain good communication lines.
- **Youth Services** – a discussion was held over the withdrawal of Youth Services by Hampshire County Council and the impacts this had had on youth crime rates. The Committee requested that the Head of Young People’s Services and the County Portfolio Holder responsible for this area be invited to a future meeting of the Committee. This request would be discussed further at the Progress Group.
- **Attendance at Ward Surgeries/Ward Audits** – it was advised that Ward Audits were planned and Ward Members would be welcome to join the officers as the audits were undertaken. Dates would be shared with Members as appropriate. It was also noted that the Team would endeavour to attend ward surgeries and Members were asked to share dates of these with Mr Knight.

The Chairman thanked Mr Knight for his presentation.

14. **WORK PLAN**

The current Work Plan was noted.

It was noted that potential items for the meeting on 20th October, 2022 were Property Services and Park and Playgrounds.

A discussion would be held at the next meeting of the Progress Group in relation to inviting the Head of Children's/Young People's Services at Hampshire County Council to a future meeting.

It was noted that discussions were underway to determine a way forward and suitable date for Farnborough Airport to attend a future meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm.

CLLR M.D. SMITH (CHAIRMAN)
