

ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 28 March 2017

Present: Councillor P Brightmore (Chair)

Councillors T Jones T Anderson
C Muspratt B Berry
T Usher T Pilgrim
I Williams M Sullivan (In place
A Sykes of J McManus)
B Kenny (In place
of S Foulkes)

45 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

No declarations of Interest were received.

46 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 January 2017 be approved as a correct record.

47 URGENT BUSINESS - REPORT FOLLOWING THE EXPLOSION IN NEW FERRY ON SATURDAY, 25 MARCH 2017

Prior to consideration of the items of business on the agenda, the Chair indicated that Mr Mark Camborne, Head of Community Safety & Transport Services would provide an update in relation to the explosion that had occurred in New Ferry on Saturday 25 March 2017, the effects of which had been devastating to the local community.

Mr Camborne indicated that there had been significant damage to buildings and homes in the surrounding area of New Ferry, with more than 30 people injured, 1 of whom was still critically ill in hospital.

Officers were involved in the immediate response and Mr Camborne paid tribute to the multi-agencies and the local community responses for the help they so kindly provided. Evacuation Centres were deployed and those residents evacuated were provided with clothing, food and wellbeing support

and advice. Housing Options and homelessness teams helped those people needing emergency accommodation.

Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, the Council, Health and Safety Executive and National Grid, were working together to investigate what had happened to prompt such a devastating explosion.

A recovery team led by David Ball had been established to look at the options to move forward. An advice hub for residents had also been established with planned support for those local businesses affected. Colleagues and partners would be continuing work on making the site safe as soon as possible and re-open roads, so that people are able to return to their homes.

The Chair praised the staff and the emergency services who had worked and continued to work on the incident for their hard work and commitment, and for going the extra mile during it, as they tried to alleviate the stress of a dreadful and dangerous situation.

Members echoed the comments of the Chair and gave their thanks to the officers, emergency services, residents and agencies who had worked tirelessly to support people.

In response to a Member, Mr Camborne indicated that officers were awaiting the site to be handed over to them from the Police and would then be able to carry out the necessary inspections to ensure the buildings were safe.

A Member stated that WIRED which was a local charity based in Birkenhead had offered their support in providing advice to those affected in relation to insurance and collecting toiletries etc., in response, Mr Camborne suggested that this information be passed on to the Constituency Manager and his team who was assisting the setting up of a contact centre.

Mr Camborne indicated that officers were using social media, local press and television appeals to try and make contact with those families affected. It was thought that 50% of the properties damaged may not have been insured, but officers would be on hand to assist those affected. In relation to damage affecting Lever Houses, Mr Camborne indicated that he had been in contact with the Port Sunlight Trust to ascertain the damage caused.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Mr Camborne be thanked for his update;**
- (2) all those who had offered support and worked tirelessly to help those affected be thanked for their excellent work and support;**
and

- (3) the Committee's thoughts and well wishes be conveyed to those families and business owners affected by the incident.**

48 **INFORMATION REPORT: LOCAL POLICING ON WIRRAL**

The Committee considered a presentation from Local Policing Superintendent, Ian Hassall on local policing on Wirral.

Superintendent Hassall reported on the current financial position indicating that prior to the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) Announcement, the force were expecting further a reduction to its funding which would reduce the establishment to less than 5000 officers and staff.

He reported that the Community First Project Team was established to help meet the saving requirement and create the best possible operating model for the community.

Post the CSR announcement, It was announced that the budget was to be protected; there would be a 50% uplift in firearms capability; there would be further savings to reinvest into reform; more collaboration with Fire service and other forces; planned changes to the funding formula; inflation and pay awards; a transformational fund and efficiencies and savings be identified for reinvestment elsewhere.

To meet the savings required the force created new business areas to include: Response & Resolution, Local Policing, Investigation, Matrix, LAT's & Secretarial Support, Criminal Justice, Intelligence and Corporate Services (blue light).

In summary he explained what the new business areas meant for Wirral

- Emergency and priority calls would be responded to by police with 999 and 101 calls being answered by Force call handlers
- Investigations – Protecting Vulnerable People Unit & Reactive & Volume Crime teams would manage all Wirral investigations based at Birkenhead Police Station
- Community Policing Team & Targeted Policing Team would be based at Wallasey and team would continue to provide visibility across Wirral and respond to priorities such as serious and organised crime
- A Community Policing Team would be based at Bebington
- Community Police Stations would be based within Communities

Superintendent Hassall outlined some of the benefits and challenges faced whilst operating under the new model.

He highlighted some of the positive feedback received, in particular from North Birkenhead where officers had undertaken work along with other partner agencies.

The new model encouraged smarter working; created stronger relationships with partner agencies and Local Authorities and was of a big benefit to the prevention model.

Superintendent Hassall indicated that officers worked closely with emergency services on all major incidents such as the one in New Ferry and the force would continue to lobby the Government for funds from the Transformational Fund. He reiterated that Officers would always respond to a major incident and if required could call on other police forces resources to assist.

In response to a Members concern that due to the limited resources the good work of the Community Policing would diminish, Superintendent Hassall commented that the Community Policing Team would be there to help solve issues for examples issues arising from Mischief Night and Bonfire Night and PCSO's would take the lead on community issues which was an essential part of community policing. it was hoped that incidents such as the one in New Ferry was a one off incident and therefore officers would not need to be redrafted away from their areas of work to assist. It was the Force's aim for the PCSO's to move away from the areas in which they trained and be in attendance at crime scenes.

In response to Members concerns, he indicated that in relation to human trafficking Wirral was leading on this issue and regularly ran operations in places known as hotspots for trafficking.

Superintendent Hassall reported that the Matrix Team operated from a central department, which included Police horses and dogs but he could request those resources if and when needed. CID was based locally in Birkenhead and there was a road and traffic element of policing based on Wirral. In addition there were nine police vans that could also be utilised with officer support to attend to incident or cause disruption.

In relation to cyber-crime, it was reported that there was a lot of activity; online threats would get investigated at a local level and organised crime would be dealt with by a specialist team or a specialised agency.

Since the launch of the new policing model , Superintendent Hassall indicated that lessons had been learnt in relation to communication, processes were now in place and services would continue to be evaluated and audits undertaken to help respond to those issues that could drive improvement.

RESOLVED:

That Superintendent Hassall is thanked for his update presentation.

49 'ENSURING WIRRAL'S NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE SAFE' STRATEGY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY INTEGRATION PROJECT - PROGRESS UPDATE

Prior to consideration of this item, The Chair indicated that he would be taking both item 4 - 'Ensuring Wirral's Neighbourhoods Are Safe' Strategy and item 5 Community Safety Integration Project - Progress Updates together.

'Ensuring Wirral's Neighbourhoods Are Safe' Strategy and Community Safety Integration Project - Progress Update

Mr Mark Camborne, Head of Community Safety & Transport Services introduced the 'Ensuring Wirral's Neighbourhoods Are Safe' Strategy which set the direction for community safety in Wirral over the next five years and would deliver safer, shared and confident communities.

He outlined the priorities which included building stronger and more confident communities where people felt safe; improved Community Safety by tackling the cause and impact of crime and anti-social behaviour; protect the most vulnerable and deliver greater integration of all partner agencies to achieve a Safer Wirral.

The future plan would include realistic SMART action planning; continued work with communities and third sector partners to address the perception and fear of crime; greater integration with third sector organisations to build on community resilience and the introduction of the new Safer Wirral Partnership Board who would be looking at Pledges 7 and 19.

One of the actions from the Pledge was to seek greater integration of community safety resources across all partners and the Safer Wirral Hub was established. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Chief Constable of Merseyside and the Chief Executive.

Community Safety Integration Project - Progress Update

Superintendent Tracy Hayes who is the Merseyside Police lead on Safer Wirral Hub updated the Committee on the future of the integrated Community Safety Delivery Model.

The Safer Wirral Hub had been established in two phases and the achievements to date were in line with the Council's new operating model and supported the proof of the concept for Wirral taking the lead across the City Region.

She reported that the ASB Teams direct links with Local Policing team had improved greatly and staff were now aligned to the Local Policing Hubs; there was greater information sharing, joint working on Operations such as Operation Bangor, Staysafe and the established Problem Solving Groups; the ASB manager & Community Patrol supervisor attend the weekly Operations Meeting to target resources more effectively, with focus now on the victim, offender and location utilising ASB analysis & call data and action taken quicker on priority cases through the collaborative working.

The Hub also saw the introduction of the ROC Restorative Justice lead.

Superintendent Hayes highlighted the next steps of the project which included; focus on Pledges 7 & 19; Youth Offending Services - aligning referral pathways with Early Help, Family Safety Unit and ASB team; making the Family Safety Unit more client friendly, influence and support early intervention and make more effective use of other resources; greater integration with statutory partners for the IOMU and in relation to the MASH create an integrated front door with referrals to EH supported by the Unit and joint deployments with Local Policing teams; support for vulnerable adults from the 3rd sector; referrals home safety/wellbeing checks from the MRFS and Multi Agency Interventions targeting C.S.E., C.E. Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery.

Mr Ben Ryder from the Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service (MFRS) gave an update on the work MFRS were doing to support the Safer Wirral Hub.

An Arson Advocated had been appointed and would be co-located within the Hub with immediate effect. There were also various monthly campaigns in targeted areas such as arson awareness week, which would be on-going in during the next 12 months, using collated intelligence to tackle hotspots. There were also thematic multi-agency campaigns on domestic violence and community safety.

There was also a lot of youth engagement with Cadets, Princes Trust and a District Prevention Manager had been provided to develop referral pathways between the MFRS and the Hub.

Mr Camborne concluded by highlighting the Hub's 2016/17 performance to date which indicated that Wirral's crime rate was down by 2% on 2016 which was the lowest in Merseyside; anti-social behaviour was down 11% on last year and the domestic abuse MARAC repeat victimisation was below the national average.

There has been a massive reduction in Community Safety funding and multi-agency officers would be looking into the possible ways to address this; looking at best practice and innovations.

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Housing & Community Safety, Councillor George Davies.

Councillor Davies indicated that resources attributed to Community Safety had reduced by 70%; incomes had dropped and officers were having to work longer hours.

Previous SLA's with Magenta Living and some schools had ceased and he commented that the RSL's needed to work with the Council and partner agencies to keep Wirral safe.

In response to a Members questions in relation to the action plan, Mr Camborne indicated that the targets set were not SMART and would be refreshed for the 2017/18 Pledge action Plan. In relation to how people feeling safe which was a concern from the previous Wirral Survey, he explained that measuring success was difficult and that officers were capturing both qualitative and quantitative data to feed into the final business case. The Police were also trying to move away from numerical data reporting and making it more about the narrative.

Tracey Hayes in response to Members indicated that in relation to emerging threats and risks, she attended meetings each morning to ascertain what if anything had happened overnight getting updates from the intelligence team. There was also a weekly multi-agency operations meeting looking at ASB and diverting resources accordingly.

In response to a Members question, Mr Camborne clarified that Wirral's Community Patrol Service worked on a 24/7 basis but had not been intelligence led; officers would now be working towards making this a function.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Mark Camborne, Superintendent Tracy Hayes, Mr Ben Ryder and Councillor George Davies be thanked for their attendance and informative update.

50 **2016/17 QUARTER 3 WIRRAL PLAN PERFORMANCE - ENVIRONMENT THEME**

Mark Smith, Strategic Commissioner, Environment, introduced a report which described performance at Quarter 3 (October to December 2016). A list of key performance highlights was provided in the report.

The Chair commented on the need for the Pledge Sponsors to give some narrative when indicators were 'red' and 'amber' as well as those that were 'green'.

Responding to a comment from a Member on the performance indicators, Mr Smith indicated that officers were aiming to be as transparent as possible and that in relation to the indicators relating to admission episodes for alcohol related conditions and smoking prevalence in adults in Wirral, this had been raised with the Director of Public Health who had indicated that two new strategies would be developed with the view of talking these to Overview and Scrutiny People Committee for pre-decision scrutiny and Cabinet in May 2017 for a decision.

In relation to the operational details of the Kingdom enforcement officers, Mr Smith agreed to feedback to Members with further details.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

51 **FINANCIAL MONITORING 2016/17 QUARTER 3**

Tom Sault, Assistant Director- Finance (S151) introduced a report which set out the projected revenue and capital monitoring position for 2016/17 as at the close of quarter 3 (31 December 2016).

The quarter three revenue forecast was for an overall underspend of £0.4 million for the year (£0.2 million overspend was forecast at quarter 2). People (the former Families and Wellbeing areas) had a significant forecast overspend which had been offset largely by one-off savings within Business Services treasury management.

The quarter three capital report updated the capital programme and reflected significant re-profiling of schemes between years to reduce the 2016/17 capital programme to £30.7 million. Expenditure after the third quarter concluded was £16.4 million.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

52 **POLICY INFORM**

The Chair introduced a report on the September Policy Inform Briefing paper which provided an overview of ongoing and recent national legislation, bills presented to Parliament and emerging policies from March, 2017 and which were relevant to this Committee's remit.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

53 **ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the report of the Chair that updated Members on the current position regarding the Committee's work programme as agreed for the 2016/17 municipal year.

The report informed on the process of developing and managing the scrutiny work programme for the municipal year. Members noted that the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee, in cooperation with the other two Overview & Scrutiny Committees, was responsible for proposing and delivering an annual work programme and that the work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the Wirral Plan pledges which fell within the remit of the Committee.

Members noted that the report provided an update regarding progress made since the last Committee meeting held on 30 November 2016 and that the current work programme was made up of a combination of scrutiny reviews, standing items and requested officer reports, providing the committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

The Chair informed that a task and finish review of the Modern Slavery Act scoping sessions had started and a Task and Finish Group looking at Leisure Provision could run alongside this review if need be.

Proposed by the Chair it was agreed that a dedicated scrutiny session be convened to review service development proposals for the Asset Service Transformation Project. The Chair further asked Members to agree to delegate responsibility to himself and Party Spokespersons to approve and refer a report from the session back to Cabinet for consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and direction of travel for 2016/17 be approved; and**
- (2) a dedicated scrutiny session be convened to review service development proposals for the Asset Service Transformation Project and responsibility be delegated to the Chair and Party Spokespersons to approve and refer the report from the session back to Cabinet for consideration.**