

CLIMATE CHANGE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee of the Bolsover District Council held in the Council Chamber, The Arc, Clowne on Tuesday 7th March 2023 at 10:00 hours.

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Nick Clarke in the Chair

Councillors Anne Clarke, David Dixon, Evonne Parkin and Jen Wilson.

Officers: Victoria Dawson (Assistant Director of Housing Management & Enforcement), Deborah Whallett (Housing Enforcement Manager), Matt Liddy (Community Safety & Enforcement Manager), Jess Clayton (Leader's Executive & Partnership Strategy Manager), Ellie Bircumshaw (Anti-Social Behaviour Officer), Sharon Ryan (Domestic Violence Officer/IDVA) and Joanne Wilson (Scrutiny & Elections Officer).

Officers in attendance observing were Caroline Bowen (Assistant Community Safety Officer) and Louise Parsons (Anti-Social Behaviour Case Worker).

CLI51-22/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Dexter Bullock.

CLI52-22/23 URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer briefed Members on the outcome of the Executive meeting on 6th March. As this was the last meeting of the current Committee prior to the election this was the last opportunity to feedback that all recommendations from the Review of Council's Approach to Carbon Reduction had been approved.

CLI53-22/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

CLI54-22/23 MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 31ST JANUARY 2023

Moved by Councillor Evonne Parkin and seconded by Councillor Jen Wilson
RESOLVED that the Minutes of a Climate Change & Communities Scrutiny Committee held on 31st January 2023 be approved as a correct record.

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CLI55-22/23 LIST OF KEY DECISIONS AND ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Committee considered the List of Key Decisions and items to be considered in private document.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Nick Clarke
RESOLVED that the List of Key Decisions and items to be considered in private document be noted.

CLI56-22/23 CLIMATE CHANGE & COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Committee considered their work programme for 2022/23. The Chair noted that this was the last meeting of the municipal year and thanked Members for their commitment to the work of the Committee.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Nick Clarke
RESOLVED that the Work Programme 2022/23 be approved and noted.

CLI57-22/23 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICY ON FIREWORKS - POST-SCRUTINY MONITORING (FINAL REPORT)

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer reported back to Committee on progress against the recommendations. To date 3 out of 4 recommendations had been achieved and 1 had not been progressed following extensive officer investigation. Negotiation of additional powers for the Enforcement Team required a partnership approach and approval of such powers was out of the Council's control. Options to develop this and secure additional powers had been investigated extensively, however, this was not something the Council could deliver on at present.

A Member queried whether the option to develop a Community Accreditation Scheme would come forward in the future. The Assistant Director noted that this would be dependent on the volume and type of incidents that occur in the future, which would then warrant the need to secure such additional powers.

Following the last update, the Portfolio Holder had received a response from the government. The response received acknowledged that there was already a range of legislation in place and guidance on the considerate use of fireworks. The government was currently monitoring the impact of additional legislative changes introduced by the Scottish government pending any further review for England. There were currently no plans to change the law and the government continued to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including animal welfare organisations such as the RSPCA, to listen to and understand their views.

Moved by Councillor Jen Wilson and seconded by Councillor Anne Clarke
RESOLVED that (1) the progress against the review recommendations be noted,

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(2) any exceptions to delivery and additional action required by the service be acknowledged,

(3) the report and its findings, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Council's Constitution be made public.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

CLI58-22/23

REVIEW OF VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANT ALLOCATIONS - POST-SCRUTINY MONITORING (INTERIM REPORT)

Further to the report provided by officers in January, the Leader's Executive & Partnership team provided an additional update on certain aspects of implementing the recommendations.

The Leader's Executive & Partnership Strategy Manager explained to Members that there would be careful management of the implementation of the new approach due to the length of time the current grants had been allocated for. It was acknowledged that since completing the review some of the delivery timescales for the recommendations had to be extended to ensure that the voluntary and community sector could be fully engaged in the process. Furthermore, the team faced unexpected additional pressure from supporting the completion of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) bid.

The officer noted that the team had engaged with the sector in partnership with BCVS. The consultation had looked at a wide variety of current issues including the role of the sector, Integrated Care System funding and current service commissioning. One of the key messages received from the sector was that using a commissioning approach rather than direct grants while useful for those designing local services, was not always an easy process for smaller organisations to engage with as local providers.

A Member noted that a commissioning approach had felt like the best option when assessing a new way forward and hoped the revised approach implemented would be a better system to identify outcomes for investment.

The officer noted that the purchase of the Loop system would be a huge support in monitoring the delivery of future investments and partnership delivery with the voluntary and community sector.

A Member questioned what the new grant allocation scheme would look like. Another Member questioned how the Council would monitor new service level agreements and how the decision would be made on the value of future grants in comparison to the current values allocated.

The officer noted that consultation feedback from the sector was clearly showing the impact of inflation on the value of the grants received. The sector was currently only able to deliver around 70 – 80% of the outcomes expected, as grants were not keeping pace with the costs associated with service delivery. The team was currently taking this into account as part of developing the revised allocation process.

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A Member questioned if this work could be completed in time to meet deadlines for the next budget setting process. The Scrutiny & Elections Officer noted that this would likely mean that only 5 months-worth of monitoring data would be available of the 2023/24 financial year. The officer agreed that a shorter monitoring period would be possible to ensure that revised allocations could be determined for the next budget setting period.

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer reiterated that the purpose of recommendation 7 was to consider the areas of service demand as part of the development of a new allocations process, alongside the monitoring data to determine revised SLAs and future grant allocations.

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Councillor Anne Clarke
RESOLVED that (1) the progress against the review recommendations be noted,

(2) the exceptions to delivery and additional action required by the service be acknowledged,

(3) the report and findings be made public, in accordance with Part 4.5.17(4) of the Council's Constitution,

(4) officers continue to implement the recommendations and submit a final report in six months' time highlighting any exceptions to delivery.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

CLI59-22/23 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE BOLSOVER COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Scrutiny & Elections Officer advised Members of a change to the planned issues to be addressed under this item. Due to a recent major incident, the Fire & Rescue Service could no longer be in attendance and the update from the Deliberate Fires Group would be rearranged to a future date.

Overview of Bolsover CSP, achievements, and future priorities

The annual review began with an update on the Partnership Plan, recent achievements, and future priorities. The Housing Enforcement Manager briefed Members on the current draft Partnership Plan and explained that there had been an unexpected delay in receiving data from DCC which was impacting completion of the new plan.

A Member queried how well the Partnership was currently working as they were aware of how hard it was to get key personnel to commit to attendance/action. The officer noted that it was an ever-increasing issue, particular with the Probation Service who had been subject to repeated change at a national and local level. The officer did feel however, that Bolsover was one of the better attended Partnerships. It was also noted that the regular staff changes within the Police and Fire Services made it increasingly hard to maintain working relationships. One option to ensure improved engagement from Probation could be online meetings. While the Council currently used Zoom,

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other partners used Microsoft Teams due to security restrictions and it was hoped the move to Microsoft 365 would mean that online meetings could be used moving forward to ensure attendance/engagement.

Proposed Priorities for 2023-2026 included:

- Reducing and Managing ASB & Criminal Damage
- Reducing Domestic Abuse, Violent Crime and Sexual Offences
- Prevent & Protect Duty (Counter Terrorism)
- Reducing and Preventing Acquisitive Crime (Vehicle Crime)
- Reducing Alcohol and Substance Misuse
- Reducing Risk of Child Exploitation
- One Cross Cutting Theme: Building and Cohesive Communities.

The partnership was supported by a PCC Grant of £25,000 to help deliver small scale projects on youth diversion, crime prevention, safeguarding, and emerging risk and threat.

Public consultation had taken place on the draft plan and the top 5 issues identified were not a surprise to officers, but it did show that littering was no less of a priority as ASB:

- Anti-Social Behaviour 62%
- Drug Use 55%
- Burglary Dwelling 48%
- Littering 48%
- Vehicle Related Crime 45%

A Member asked if these priority areas were reflected in current crime figures. The officer noted that ASB rates had in fact reduced and this was shown in a report to be considered under exempt business. It was potentially more the fear of ASB rather than actual crimes that was fuelling the public response.

Members noted that shoplifting was a huge issue within their localities and was surprised that this didn't show up in the public response. The officer noted that maybe this wasn't something that residents feared and as such didn't rank as a priority for action.

The Housing Enforcement Manager briefed Members on recent achievements including:

Diversions activities

- Extreme Wheels – this includes the outreach provision which originally commenced during lockdown
- Football projects during evening/weekends, supported by Shirebrook Town Council
- Support to the development of the Community Rail Partnership Programme reducing crime and ASB along the Robin Hood Line.

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Crime prevention

- Safe & Secure Scheme – demand for the service was growing constantly
- Cycle security and safety devices
- Wildlife CCTV cameras to address rural crime and envrio-crime
- Bespoke CCTV for domestic abuse cases

Members were also briefed on Contest, the UK's Strategy for Counter Terrorism. New legislation was expected shortly. There were four Strands to the Contest Strategy known as the 4P's:

- Prevent – Stop People becoming Terrorists
- Pursue – Stop terrorist Attacks
- Protect – Strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack (New Duty Coming Soon – Martyn's Law)
- Prepare – To mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack

Martyn's Law was a new duty under the Protect strand:

- A requirement that spaces and places to which the public have access engage with counter-terrorism advice and training
- A requirement for those places to conduct vulnerability assessments of their operating places and spaces
- A requirement for those places to mitigate the risks created by the vulnerabilities
- A requirement for those places to have a counter-terrorism plan
- A requirement for local authorities to plan for the threat of terrorism

There were two separate levels of assessment depending on whether the event/space held between 100-700 people or 800+ and an inspectorate was planned to manage compliance with the policy and risk assessment requirements in relation to the duty.

Enforcement Rangers and ASB team

Members were then briefed by the Community Safety and Enforcement Manager on progress by the team. Members were reminded that the CAN Rangers were now called Community Enforcement Rangers and had a much closer working relationship with enforcement officers across other service areas of the Council. It was noted that an approximate breakdown of their workload was:

- 30% Housing enforcement
- 27% ASB and Patrols
- 14% Environmental enforcement such as fly-tipping and noise nuisance at private properties
- 24% Other
- 5% Delivery of the Safe & Secure Scheme

A Member queried what type of work fell within the 'Other' category. The officer confirmed it was mostly attendance at partnership meetings, parish councils, assisting the Out Of Hours warden service (37 instances across the year) and support to falls incidents.

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The team had recently supported Operation Sceptre which had focussed on knife crime and completely local area sweeps based on intelligence provided. The team now had access to metal detectors to assist with this work and it had proved a useful engagement opportunity.

While out on patrol officers had apprehended a wanted person in the Creswell area and completed a number of ASB patrols in Whitwell using camera enforcement vehicles during a spate of vehicle and property damage. As mentioned previously the team had been able to purchase mobile CCTV units which could be deployed as required, which acted as a good deterrent and had resulted in capturing evidence

Members were updated on current statistics for tools and powers used under legislation, with Community protection Warnings widely used. The District currently had 4 PSPOs in place – 1 District-wide in relation to dog ownership and 3 linked to community safety issues which had just been extended for a further 3 years (Shirebrook, Langwith Junction and Langwith Whaley Thorns).

The officer briefed Members on the 'triangle of protection' and explained how in theory there should be limited number of warnings (CPW) that progress to requiring a Community Protection Notice (CPN). The offence of breaching a CPN carried higher weight and a CPN could only be contested in a magistrate's court.

A number of Members mentioned the issue of dirt bikes on local trails. Officers advised that the Police were introducing an off-road bike team which they hoped the area would benefit from.

Officers noted that a large amount of ASB cases were linked to adults rather than young people. Often an Anti-social Behaviour Contract (ABC) was used with young people which were usually successful. The Council had been recognised by the Youth Offending Team for its use of ABCs to tackle issues and identifying those in need of support and intervention at an early stage, helping to reduce further offending.

Members raised specific queries in relation to Bolsover town centre and were informed that there had been a huge reduction in calls related to ASB. Officers noted that issues that had arisen before and during the pandemic had now ceased as that specific group of people were no longer an issue. A variety of powers had been used included serving notice on council tenants to remove the offenders from the area. The work by Extreme Wheels and the local youth club had been a massive help in providing diversionary activities for Bolsover children.

CLI60-21/22

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

Moved by Councillor Nick Clarke and seconded by Councillor David Dixon
RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting during the discussion of the following items of business to avoid the disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

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CLI61-22/23

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE BOLSOVER COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - EXEMPT REPORTS

Members considered the remainder of the Partnership updates in exempt business due to the sensitivity of the information discussed.

Domestic Abuse Service

The Domestic Violence Officer/IDVA provided a presentation to Members in relation to the Domestic Abuse Service. This covered:

- how the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) worked,
- an update on the range of partners the service worked with,
- the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic,
- a comparison of recent statistics and the demand on the service.

Case Study example

Members were then presented with a case study example of how the different elements of the community safety team work together. The case study gave an example of partnership working between the domestic abuse service and the ASB team, and how both parts of the service work closely with the local police teams.

Performance report

Finally, the Members were presented with the performance data report covering the last 12 months. A Member queried whether Bolsover had a clear comparator Council by which to judge performance. Officers confirmed that they regularly compared performance against other Derbyshire authorities to gauge the quality-of-service delivery.

Moved by Councillor David Dixon and seconded by Councillor Jen Wilson

RESOLVED that (1) the reports outlining currently delivery be noted.

(2) A representative from the Deliberate Fires Group be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee post the May election to update Members as originally planned.

(Scrutiny & Elections Officer)

The formal part of the meeting concluded at 11:55 hours.