

Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Wednesday, 21st April, 2021.

Present:- Councillors Hulme (Chair), Ajaib, Begum, Matloob, Minhas, S Parmar and Sabah

Residents Panel Board:- Trevor Pollard

Also present under Rule 30:- Councillors Dhaliwal, Gahir, Nazir, Pantelic and D Parmar

PART 1

62. Declarations of Interest

None received.

63. Minutes of the last meeting held on 25th February 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2021 be approved as a correct record.

64. Member Questions

None received.

65. Safer Slough Partnership Update

The Group Manager, Community Safety, Housing Regulation and Enforcement outlined details of the progress of the Safer Slough Partnership (SSP) in relation to the delivery of work aligned to the partnership 20/21 priorities. The SSP was co-chaired by the Chief Executive of Slough Borough Council and the Local Policing Area (LPA) Commander for Thames Valley Police and supported by representatives from multi-agency statutory and community partners.

In addressing the Panel, Gavin Wong, Local Police Area Commander explained that the impact of the global pandemic meant that 20/21 had been a year of challenge and change. Recorded crime levels had fallen and risen in line with the lockdowns and easing of lockdowns from April 2020 to February 2021. It was explained that the pandemic had influenced and changed the behaviour of victims and perpetrators of crime and SSP had had to adapt quickly to the ever changing crime picture and threat assessment throughout the year.

The new operating model for the SSP and priorities for 20/21 were highlighted. However, as result of Covid-19 pandemic, work was focused on the priorities relating to Domestic Violence and Re-Offending and Substance Misuse.

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Data indicated a steep national increase in domestic abuse (DA) incidences, as a result of Covid-19 lockdown measures. The SSP recognised the critical need to intervene at an early stage, and put into place measures to support victims of DA which included:

- Domestic Abuse Covid-19 Response Group - A weekly DA Covid-19 Response Group was initiated on 7th April 2020 to provide a multi-agency co-ordinated response to DA during the pandemic. SBC and partner call centre handlers were provided with a DA script.
- Domestic Abuse and the Business Community: Training offered to all hairdressing salons and barbers, both within Slough, and in neighbouring areas.
- Domestic Abuse Awareness Raising Campaign: Public space and digital communications campaign aimed at raising awareness of support available; campaign materials made available to all partners. Increased reporting of DA incidents to the police during lockdown may in part be attributed to this online digital communications piece.

A number of comments were made and points raised in the ensuing discussion, including by Members in attendance under Rule 30 and were summarised as:

- Priorities were based on data but no quantifiable data to measure them against. It was explained that whilst collection of data and use of it in a meaningful manner remained a challenge, the priorities that had been identified were relevant to the needs of the communities of the town and the challenges they faced.
- Referring specifically to the crime rates for Slough in comparison to other Berkshire local authorities, it was explained that the borough was more akin to London boroughs and challenges in the town were unique. Partnership working was key to continue working towards addressing the challenges presented.
- Although figures relating to modern slavery had increased this could be attributed to improved reporting following a recent campaign to raise awareness of this type of crime. It was noted that a Modern Slavery Exploitation Group had also been established.
- Councillor Pantelic, in her role as Chair of the Slough Wellbeing Board (SWB), welcomed the recent Jubilee River Campaign, which highlighted the dangers of swimming in rivers. The importance of improved cross partnership work between SWB, SSP and the Safeguarding Board to ensure no duplicity of work was discussed and it was agreed that the matter would be raised with the Chief Executive.
- The key role councillors had in maintaining a dialogue between their local communities and the police was emphasised. Members were informed that neighbourhood teams were being reviewed in order to build consistency and greater active local policing within communities.
- In response to the need for a strategy for a Safer Slough Town Centre the Committee were informed that this was a priority for the neighbourhood team.

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- Clarification was sought regarding the SSP Project Boards and allocation of resources. It was explained that board membership was varied and that they were responsible for reporting to the Police and Crime Commissioner as to how funds had been used to ensure value for money was being obtained.

The Chair thanked Mr Wong for attending the meeting and the Committee agreed a vote of thanks to all frontline police officers for carrying out their duties during the pandemic, often during challenging circumstances.

Resolved – That details of the report be noted.

66. **Update on Waste Management Facilities - Household Waste & Recycling Centre Services**

The Executive Director Customer and Community provided the Panel with an overview of the services provided at, and the performance of, the Chalvey Household Waste and Recycling Centre (Chalvey HWRC). Use of the site was free to residents. Although the recycling percentage rates in 2020 had improved to 35%, it was explained that the ability to recycle was dependent on the availability of “markets” for recycled products.

It was confirmed that there were no current plans to introduce charges for non household waste and should were to be a change to this policy in the future, charges were likely to be in line with the pricing schedule introduced by Bucks County Council at its Burnham HWRC; details of which were set out in the report. A Member asked whether there had been an increase in fly-tipping in the Borough or an increase in the non-chargeable waste coming to Chalvey HWRC as a direct result of Bucks County Council’s decision to reduce opening hours at its Burnham HWRC site from April 2019. Panel Members were informed that there had been no significant impact on non-chargeable waste coming to the Chalvey HWRC site or an increase in this type of fly-tipping in Slough.

The Chair stated that 25% of residents did not have a car and asked whether there were any plans to implement pedestrian access to the site. The Executive Director informed Panel Members that health and safety concerns of implementing such measures would need to be explored further.

Resolved – That details of the report be noted.

67. **Members' Attendance Record 2020/21**

Resolved – That the details of the Members’ Attendance Record be noted.

68. **Date of Next Meeting - 28th June 2021**

The date of the next meeting was noted as 28th June 2021.

Chair

(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.24 pm)