



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING : Monday, 26th February 2018

PRESENT : Cllrs. Coole (Chair), Ryall (Vice-Chair), Finnegan (Spokesperson), Pearsall, Lewis, Wilson, Dee, Hampson, Hawthorne, Melvin, Smith, Patel, Taylor, D. Brown and Stephens

Others in Attendance

Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhood
Corporate Director (Partnership Working)
Community Wellbeing Manager
Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner
Superintendent – Neighbourhood Policing
Chief Inspector – Neighbourhood Policing
Democratic and Electoral Services Team Leader

APOLOGIES : Cllrs. Hilton and Pullen

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

32.1 Councillor Ryall declared an interest by virtue of being married to a police officer.

33. DECLARATION OF PARTY WHIPPING

33.1 There were no declarations of party whipping.

34. MINUTES

34.1 The minutes of the meetings that took place on 17th and 29th January 2018 were approved and signed by the Chair.

35. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

35.1 There were no public questions.

36. PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS (15 MINUTES)

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36.1 There were no petitions or deputations.

37. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME AND COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

37.1 The Committee considered the Work Programme and the Council Forward Plan. The Chair advised that the report of the Local Government Peer Challenge would be considered at the next Committee meeting.

37.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the Work Programme and the Council Forward Plan.

38. UPDATE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY WORK

38.1 The Chair welcomed the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, the Superintendent of Neighbourhood Policing and the Chief Inspector of Neighbourhood Policing to the meeting.

38.2 The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner outlined the work of Safer Gloucestershire and that it had come out of previous devolution proposals. He stated that the aim was to bring together key actors to achieve joint action on crime in the county and City. He advised that this fitted in with other partnerships and was a good example of combining health and wellbeing work with community safety.

38.3 In the context of budgetary constraint, the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner stated the both prevention and intervention should not (and did not need to be) neglected. He outlined that violent crime could be considered a public health issue and that it was important to talk sensitively about the subject.

38.4 The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner advised that Gloucestershire was particularly effective at prevention work and that, while other police forces were scaling back neighbourhood policing, Gloucestershire had successfully protected this area and that neighbourhood policing had been revitalised despite less funding.

38.5 The Corporate Director (Partnership Working) outlined the work of the team at the City Council and highlighted a number of key areas. She highlighted that a particular focus for the year was the Social Impact Bond (SIB) which provided bespoke support for vulnerable women with very complex needs. She described it as a need to create a social movement on Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence. The Corporate Director further stated that the community safety work undertaken by the Council and partners was a good example of breaking silos.

38.6 Councillor Stephens queried how Members and the public would know that such measures were working. By way of example, he noted that knife crime was on the increase. The Corporate Director advised that she and her team were examining the introduction of outcome based measures and that the

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Community Wellbeing Manager was in the process of putting the strategy together.

- 38.7 Councillor Watkins (Cabinet Member for Communities and Neighbourhoods) stated that it was difficult to decide how much to evaluate and analyse in that one could see what had changed but not necessarily why.
- 38.8 With regard to prevention work related to Child Sexual Exploitation, Councillor Hawthorne queried whether there was data on how many taxi drivers had raised this as a risk. He further queried whether these individuals were expected to report safeguarding issues themselves. The Corporate Director advised that the licensing team would have this information and that drivers raised concerns themselves. She stated that it would be positive to conduct some refresher training and to examine whether there have been referrals.
- 38.9 Councillor Patel stated that this work showed this was a caring authority and that it was positive to see a good level of collaborative working. He shared his view that the work being done around drugs was positive and that it was not always easy to quantify success.
- 38.10 Councillor Melvin expressed concern about the growth of food poverty and that individuals could only use a foodbank three times within a six month period. She further raised the matter of inadequate street lighting and that this made people feel unsafe.
- 38.11 Councillor D. Brown queried where the BID featured in this work and if it did feature, was there more that could be done. In relation to this he noted that a Domestic Violence charity had voted against BID and now had an annual fee. The Corporate Director advised that the BID was working well with Project Solace.
- 38.12 In response to query regarding whether there was funding available for 'body-cams', Councillor Watkins advised that body-cams had been funded for Matson and were supported by PCSOs. The Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner further advised that that the increase in the Council Tax precept would provide body cams for each officer.
- 38.13 With regard to the Chair's asking what work was being done across a number of organisations regarding domestic violence, the Corporate Director informed the Committee that the SIB was in place for a group of vulnerable women who, for example, could not maintain tenancies, were involved in crime and so on. She advised that agencies were working with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the Police and Crime Commissioner and others.
- 38.14 The Superintendent for Neighbourhood Policing outlined the injunction that was imposed on a particular gang in Gloucester and provided an overview of police powers in this area. He stated, for example, that there was a minimum sentencing for the possession of a knife. He informed the Committee of some of the particular features of gang activity including the fact that, often

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members of the same family were involved and that often a boyfriend or girlfriend was also involved in some capacity.

- 38.15 The Superintendent advised that injunctions typically encompassed requirements such as a direction of non-association with specified individuals, the need to register any mobile devices and the imposition of curfews. He stated that, when an incident had taken place, officers would check that those subject to the injunction were at their place of residence. He further advised that the injunctions had been achieved through serious partnership working.
- 38.16 The Vice-Chair queried whether the police had good relationships with the communities they served. The Superintendent stated that BME representation was comparatively low in the police and that he sought a support network to encourage more BME people to join. The Chief Inspector of Neighbourhood Policing stated that it was important that officers engage with their communities. By way of example, he stated that safeguarding provision around the All Nations Community Centre had been improved with advice given on SIA security, knife arches and quality lighting.
- 38.17 In response to a query from Councillor Finnegan on whether the prevalence of knife crime had changed over the last fifty years, the Superintendent informed the Committee that Gloucestershire was one of the safest parts of the UK but that knife crime had increased by 35%. He stated that this increase was due to better detection and recording of crime. He further advised, in response to query from Councillor Melvin, that recruitment was national but that Gloucestershire Police were keen to recruit locally.
- 38.18 Councillor Stephens stated that, in his experience, it had historically been difficult to gain a real perspective on knife crime. He stated that it was one thing to say that Gloucestershire is a safe place to live but Gloucester was different. He suggested that one message to communicate to the public was that if individuals were not involved in knife crime, they were significantly less likely to be a victim of knife crime.
- 38.20 Both the Superintendent and Chief Inspector explained that officers possessing body cams did change behaviour and that all officers were now equipped with tasers. The Chief Inspector advised that the team that had developed the injunctions in Gloucester were ahead of others around early intervention.
- 38.21 Councillor Brown stated that he understood that Hucclecote was one of the safest areas in Gloucester and queried if there had been any sign that acid attacks had increased in the City. The Superintendent advised that officers were prepared for such attacks and cited the fact that every police vehicle was equipped with acid kits but he stated that there was no indication that acid attacks had increased.
- 38.22 In response to a query from Councillor Smith as to whether all the gangs known to the police were local or was the City targeted from the outside, the Superintendent stated that some do come from outside the area. The Chief

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Inspector further reiterated the importance of community policing and the gathering of intelligence from the community.

39. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

39.1 26th March 2018 at 6.30pm in the Civic Suite, North Warehouse.

Time of commencement: 6.30 pm hours

Time of conclusion: 8.15 pm hours

Chair