

EAST DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held at Knowle, Sidmouth on 3 November 2016

Attendance list at end of document

The meeting started at 6.00pm and ended at 8.42pm

***19 Public speaking**

There was no public speaking at the meeting.

***20 Minutes**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Committee held on the 6 October 2016 were confirmed as a true record.

21 Police and Crime Commissioner

The Chairman welcomed the Police and Crime Commissioner of Devon and Cornwall, Alison Hernandez and Gerry Moore, Anti Social Behaviour & Community Safety Co-Ordinator.

The Commissioner outlined her work on a new Police and Crime Plan for Devon and Cornwall that was recently out for consultation. She highlighted her main principal of keeping people safe based on six key drivers:

- A social conscience – people looking out for each other
- Awareness – police, partners and public know what is important and why
- Access – people know who local police and key service providers are and how to contact them
- Action – police, and partners, working together to protect people and prevent crime and anti-social behaviour – with confidence in the quality of their response
- Support – speedy access to local support services when needed (for victims and perpetrators)
- Results – visible and relatively swift resolution of issues with tangible results

Consultation responses had shown a clear concern for local residents being the lack of contact with the police – issues such as visible policing and how to contact to report crime.

Questions had been previously submitted from some Councillors, supplied on the agenda papers. Responses to those and additional questions covered a number of issues, including:

- Asking councillors to make use of local police surgeries to report issues, as well as encouraging the public to use the 101 service either by telephoning or by email 101@dcpolice.co.uk. The Commissioner was keen to establish a councillor advocate scheme to link local councillors with police officers and other agencies. At present the 101 telephone service was averaging a nine minute wait before the call could be dealt with;
- The consultation on the recent draft plan by the Commissioner had revealed a feeling of disconnect of local communities from the police, and feedback had indicated that the public wished to see more visible policing, both from regular officers and PCSOs. In response to a description of Exmouth at night, the Commissioner expressed an interest to visit the town at night for herself;
- The Commissioner had put planned police station closures on hold, subject to a review in the new year; the consultation had made clear that the public wished to see stations retained; Exmouth Police Station was not currently planned for closure;
- The Commissioner was yet to discuss the workforce mix of police officers and

- PCSOs with the Chief Constable; feedback from the consultation asked for more officers and valued the quality of the PCSOs in the District;
- The Commissioner intended to look at the powers and impact of community speed watches. The Chairman highlighted the difficulties that many local groups have in setting up a community speed watch because of the extent of training and administration required; he asked that she could take this into consideration with a view to making it easier for these volunteers to achieve;
 - The office of the Commissioner would remain at the current staffing level;
 - The concerns over licensing were recognised; the Commissioner was currently working with the Lords Select Committee reviewing the 2003 licensing legislation, in particular the public health objective. She agreed to take the concerns about licensing forward;
 - In response to the recent report by the HMIC on efficiency of the constabulary, an operating model was being progressed with Dorset constabulary and a clear improvement plan was being drawn up with the Chief Constable;
 - Modern slavery was a problem for all areas of the country and the District was no exception – in areas such as hospitality and agriculture. Training was available to councillors on how to recognise and report it. Devon and Cornwall Constabulary were taking the lead, following receipt of funding, to set up the national response to modern slavery; the issue was also recognised by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and a recent workshop had been held in Honiton on the issue;
 - As a result of campaigning by the previous Commissioner, the funding for the constabulary had been recognised as incorrect; with a new Minister in post, the funding formula was under review and out for consultation. There needed to be recognition of the tourism impact on policing for the area, as well as the challenges for rural policing. The Commissioner welcomed any help offered from the Council in lobbying for fairer funding;
 - Savings achieved with the Strategic Alliance with Dorset constabulary only enabled the service to remain at the same level – there was no additional money released from this to apply to obtaining additional officers or PCSOs currently;
 - CCTV was recognised as a valuable tool provided it was kept up to date and monitored; work had begun in Cornwall, which included monitoring by fire officers while on standby. The commissioner could assist in the procurement of equipment and listed a contact for the committee to pursue the issue of Exmouth CCTV;
 - Better support was needed for dealing with individuals with mental health issues that had to be detained; the recent leaked letter from the Chief Constable to a number of health providers about the use of police cells for mentally ill people had the support of the Commissioner; lobbying on this issue would be helpful;
 - Challenges had arisen from the Strategic Alliance with Dorset police, including employment transfer issues and for some, a fear of a loss of identity. At present discussions were taking place on how to better manage the two forces through means of a portfolio share;
 - Online crime was more likely than street crime, and is a priority for the Commissioner in helping to educate both the public and businesses. A web chat service on this issue was currently being tested.

RECOMMENDED that

1. the Leader of the Council lobby, through the National Rural Network of the Local Government Association, for a fairer funding deal from Government for the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary; and additionally lobby the local MPs on the issue;
2. the Council recognise the valued work of the PCSOs and wishes the Police and Crime Commissioner to press to at least continue, and at best to improve, funding for

- PCSOs as a valued part of the life of the District's local communities;
3. that Ward Members, in the spirit of partnership working under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, assist in publicising the ways of reporting crime alongside the publicity work already underway by Devon and Cornwall Constabulary, by contact with their local town and parish councillors and constituents;
 4. wishes the Police and Crime Commissioner to reconsider the planned closures for 2017, as part of the review of police stations;
 5. wishes the Police and Crime Commissioner to work to reduce the administrative burden on local groups setting up community speed watches, to help those groups achieve safer roads in their local community.

RESOLVED that the Police and Crime Commissioner be invited to the Committee in November 2017 to report on progress on her plans.

The Chairman thanked the Commissioner and Gerry Moore for attending, and for responding fully to the questions and issues put by Members.

22 Update from Portfolio Holder for Environment on Recycling and Refuse

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Iain Chubb, Portfolio Holder for Environment; the Service Lead for Streetscene; the Recycling and Waste Contract Manager; and the Strategic Lead Housing and Environment.

The committee had been kept informed of progress on the new contract, and the trial of an improved service, at previous meetings. The update outlined the next steps in bringing about a full roll out of the new level of service across the District. Key service changes were:

- Cardboard, mixed plastics, cartons (including Tetra Pak) and small electrical items will be collected for recycling
- Residents receive an additional reusable sack for plastics, cartons and cans
- Recycling will be collected every week
- Grey waste bins will be collected every three weeks
- No additional waste collections
- Improvements to bulky waste collection service

The communications plan for the introduction of the new service, covering the first phase for Exmouth in February 2017, followed by the rest of the District in July 2017, was highlighted to the committee; staff resource had also been planned to deal with the expected increase in contact from the public as the new service is introduced and fully implemented.

The committee raised concerns and sought clarification on a number of issues, including:

- Flats and houses of multiple occupation had been identified and would be dealt with on a case by case basis, with visits to as many as possible to establish what is practical for residents who may have difficulty in finding storage for the receptacles or in getting items to the kerbside for collection; residential groups were already in contact with the service to help with this task;
- Small electrical devices could be up to a size that can comfortably fit inside the green recycling box, as this was the same size of the compartment on the new vehicles;
- Residents who currently have a large refuse bin, will have their bin size reviewed when the improved recycling scheme is introduced; as residents in the trial found that the larger bin was no longer required in some scenarios;
- "Avoided waste disposal savings", where the County are benefitting from the reduction of land fill waste and could pass on their savings to Districts, were still not confirmed, but work had progressed to the stage of a draft memorandum of

understanding between the County Council and the districts – once this was agreed and in place, the level of savings could be calculated from the nationally reported waste tonnage figures; recycling credits are worked out from an established formula and provide income both from the recycled material sold and the County Council;

- Monitoring will be undertaken throughout the process of roll out – one of the measures being the change in recycling rate. There is a government target of 50% by 2020 and there was confidence that this stepped change would deliver that and more;
- In response to concerns about the collection vehicle fleet, it was confirmed that the vehicles are owned by the Council; and the contract with Suez was sufficiently robust to ensure that those vehicles and the operatives met operating standards legally required. Checks for both vehicles and operatives were in place, with health and safety being a core value of the contractor. Vehicles were also fitted with systems for auto-braking;
- The transit and separation of products was outlined; plastic was generally exported but currently paper waste was reused in the UK.

The Chairman expressed his disappointment in a lack of resolution over the “avoided waste disposal savings”, which still rested with the County Council to complete and no date for completion apparent. He requested that the Committee be kept updated of any progress on this issue.

RESOLVED that the committee recognises the continued hard work by the Streetscene service in the preparation of the implementation, and welcomes the new service; in particular the anticipated increase in recycling rate and the environmental benefit of that increase.

RECOMMENDED that all Ward members are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the new service to help communicate to their wards the changes to come

***23 Raising the profile of the committee - update**

The Democratic Services Officer had produced an information sheet on the work of the committee. Cllr Gardner had made suggestions for amendments, and would liaise outside of the meeting with those amendments.

Distribution of the material would include on the Council’s website and in the weekly publication The Knowledge. Suggestions were made to include a press release on the work of the committee, in particular on the upcoming meeting on the NEW Devon CCG consultation on in-patient beds.

The Chairman reported that a press release on this meeting was already planned; following a suggestion this would now include reference to the forthcoming meeting.

***24 Priority setting and forward plan**

Suggestions made for the forward plan included:

- Request a report from East Devon Citizens Advice Bureau on their work – in relation to the contribution allocated in the revenue account towards their work;
- Scope a review into the recent rental charge increases for sports clubs and how that move to reflect market rates was handled; this may link to the playing pitches strategy but will be scoped to determine if a review of the strategy meets the remit of

the committee;

- Request a report on the improvements (including impact on foot fall and level of income) for the Thelma Hulbert Gallery in light of the investment made by the Council;
- Start the planned work on the review of the process of producing the Local Plan; for example a focus on how the allocation of sites is communicated and evaluated against criteria. The committee were advised that they were due a report from the Service Lead for Planning Strategy and Development Management on aspects of performance monitoring, including the service performance monitor on reviewing the process of the production of the Plan – this aspect will be requested for inclusion in that report;
- Scope a review of the current media protocol with a view to the expectation of communication team involvement at committee meetings.

***25 Council minutes procedure**

The information report on the procedure for minutes being reported to Cabinet and Council was noted.

Attendance list (present for all or part of the meeting):

Scrutiny Members present:

Roger Giles
Alan Dent
Dean Barrow
Colin Brown
Bruce de Saram
Cherry Nicholas
Marcus Hartnell
Cathy Gardner
Douglas Hull
Bill Nash
Val Ranger
Marianne Rixson

Other Members

Iain Chubb
Paul Diviani
Paul Carter
Dawn Manley
Ben Ingham
Peter Faithfull
Geoff Jung
Rob Longhurst
John Dyson
Pauline Stott
Tom Wright

Officers present:

Gerry Moore, Gerry Moore, Anti Social Behaviour & Community Safety Co-Ordinator
John Harding, Office of PCC
John Holding, Strategic Lead Housing and Environment
Andrew Hancock, Service Lead for Streetscene
Gareth Bourton, Recycling and Waste Contract Manager

Giles Salter, Solicitor
Rebecca Heal, Solicitor
Debbie Meakin, Democratic Services Officer

Scrutiny Member apologies:

Simon Grundy
Darryl Nicholas

Other Member apologies:

Andrew Moulding
Phillip Skinner
Mike Allen
Jill Elson

Richard Cohen, Deputy Chief Executive

Chairman Date.....