

NEWARK AND SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of **Homes & Communities Committee** held in the Civic Suite, Castle House, Great North Road, Newark, Notts NG24 1BY on Monday, 5 November 2018 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT: Councillor B Laughton (Chairman)
Councillor T Wendels (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Mrs B Brooks, Councillor Mrs C Brooks, Councillor Mrs I Brown, Councillor M Buttery, Councillor Mrs S Michael, Councillor N Mison, Councillor N Mitchell, Councillor Mrs P Rainbow, Councillor Mrs S Saddington and Councillor Mrs S Soar

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: None – All Members of the Committee present.

27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS AND AS TO THE PARTY WHIP

NOTED that no Member or Officer declared any interest pursuant to any statutory requirement in any matter discussed or voted upon at the meeting.

28 DECLARATION OF ANY INTENTION TO RECORD THE MEETING

NOTED that there would be an audio recording of the meeting undertaken by the Council.

29 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED (unanimously) that the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 GYPSY & TRAVELLER UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Director – Safety which sought to update Members on the issues that had arisen over the past year in respect of unauthorised encampments throughout the district. The report also sought Members' consideration and approval of the proposed Policy for dealing with unauthorised Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) encampments.

The report provided Members with information relating to the long established GRT community in the district and the work undertaken in the past in calculating the pitch requirements with the production of a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment. It was also reported that there had been 10 unauthorised encampments over the previous 12 months and that the costs incurred to deal with these had been in the region of £10,000. The costs included legal fees and bailiff's costs but excluded clean-up costs and Council Officer time and resource in responding to the issues.

Paragraph 3 of the report provided Members with information as to what the Policy would enable the Council to do when dealing with unauthorised encampments and what powers would be available to them for such action.

In considering the report Members expressed their support for the proposed Policy and welcomed the powers that were available to the Council to deal with unauthorised encampments.

It was noted that the most recent event at the Newark Sports & Fitness Centre appeared to have involved travellers from Ireland. Members noted the recent changes to legislation in Ireland whereby travellers' vehicles could be seized if they were situated in an unauthorised encampment and queried whether such a change was being considered by the UK Government. Members also queried whether the Council would continue to support private landowners with relevant information on what action to take should the travellers occupy their land.

In response, the Director – Safety advised that the vehicles involved at the recent encampment had Irish number plates and that they had stated that they were travelling for the summer period. She also confirmed that she was not aware that the UK Government were proposing to align legislation with that of the Irish Government. In relation to advice given to private landowners, the Director – Safety confirmed that this would continue.

Members agreed that it would be useful if the UK Government adopted the same legislation as that of the Irish Government as it would likely reduce the amount of unauthorised encampments which occurred in the district.

AGREED (unanimously) that the Policy on Unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller Encampments be approved and adopted.

31 CHIEF INSPECTOR ANDY ROOKE - UPDATE ON COMMUNITY SAFETY AND POLICING IN THE NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT

The Committee received a verbal presentation from Chief Inspector Andrew Rooke of the Nottinghamshire Police Authority in relation to Community Safety and Policing in the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Division. CI Rooke spoke to Members about a number of matters as follows.

He advised that there had been a significant increase in the number of reported incidents during the summer period peaking at 1200 in a 24 hour period, noting that the usual figure was in the region of 750. This increase in incidents had now abated and levels had returned to a more usual number.

Until April 2018 there had been a regional collaboration of Police Authorities to deal with certain crimes and incidents although this had ceased in April 2018. In relation to staffing levels within the force, CI Rooke stated that the demographic of Officers was that of younger individuals who were still being trained or who had recently completed their training. There were few unfilled vacancies, which was to be welcomed, but the officers in post needed to be progressed through the force in order to gain the necessary skills and experience. CI Rooke also stated that the force continued to be required to implement further changes and deliver savings which could have an impact on service delivery.

In relation to management, CI Rook advised that there was a new County Commander and a newly appointment Inspector for Newark. The previous Inspector, Louise Clarke had been promoted and replaced by Inspector Heather Sutton. There was also a dedicated CID Team in Newark which was very welcome, positive news together with a newly appointed locally based Intelligence Officer.

Specifically to Newark & Sherwood, CI Rooke advised that there had been a 10.5% increase in the number of crimes committed and this equated to approximately 500 additional cases to the previous year. He stated that the increase was a reflection of county; regional; and national issues.

CI Rooke advised that incidents of anti-social behaviour were down but that low level public disorder crime had increased. However, this could be attributed to the fact that Police Authorities had been required to amend the way in which crime statistics were recorded. He noted that in relation to burglaries there had been an increase from the same time last year. Domestic burglaries were up by 50 with commercial burglaries being up by 75.

Members were advised that CI Rooke and his Officers undertook a daily review of reported incidents to assess whether there were any emerging trends. There was also a fortnightly review of all reported incidents to identify any themes and whether additional resources were required to target specific areas of concern.

CI Rooke updated Members on local issues advising that some 6/8 weeks ago there had been a specific increase in crime in Newark Town Centre and that this was thought to be driven by drug related crime. The figures reported were not in line with the rest of the county and therefore Operation Bough had been launched to combat the increase. This constituted both overt and covert operations in a proactive approach. Crime in the town centre had increased by 30% in comparison to the same time last year and plans were being activated to tackle this.

Members were advised that there had been an increase in cyclical crime e.g. travelling criminals who came into the district specifically to target the theft of high class vehicles and burglaries of affluent properties. The Police Authority now had a specific burglary team who could deploy resources rapidly and there was good intelligence on the perpetrators.

CI Rooke advised Members that there had been an increase in the use of County Lines explaining that this was when criminals targeted individuals who were easily manipulated or vulnerable into acting on their behalf. It was often the case that criminals selected areas perceived to be easy targets and used the individuals to carry out the crimes on their behalf.

The Chairman invited Members to put questions to CI Rooke and advised that, if possible, he would like him to attend Committee on a more regular basis.

A Member of the Committee advised that the villages on the Farndon side of the River Trent had little contact with their assigned PCSO and that if an incident was reported they were often given a crime number with no subsequent contact as to whether an investigation had taken place. CI Rooke advised that an assessment of the reported

incident would be undertaken and that if the victim was thought to be vulnerable they would receive an enhanced response, dependent upon the crime. He added that in some cases there would be no direct contact with a Police Officer and that the incident could be reported directly to HQ. Again, he reiterated that this would be dependent upon the incident.

In noting that the Police Authority was facing a difficult time a Member queried whether it was possible to have a breakdown of the crime figures. CI Rooke advised that the information would be available on the Police Authority's website.

A Member stated that the PCSO assigned in Southwell had an excellent relationship with the Town Council and residents but that if an incident occurred and he was required to review CCTV he had to make the journey to the Force HQ at Sherwood Lodge. The Business Manager – Community Safety, who was in attendance at the meeting, advised that there was a viewing suite available at Newark Police Station. Members agreed that the installation and use of CCTV cameras acted as a deterrent. A Member of the Committee queried whether it was possible that the Police could assist in having the CCTV camera reinstalled on the Winthorpe Estate, as since its removal there had been an increase in incidents. CI Rooke advised that they could provide evidence as to the number of reported incidents but that it was the responsibility of the local authority to determine their location.

In noting the aforementioned gap in skills and experience a Member queried whether suitable Officers could be drafted in to fill the gap. CI Rooke advised that the Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood Division were no worse off than any other area and that if a crime was committed then the appropriate resource would be assigned.

In concluding the debate the Chairman thanked CI Rooke for attending the meeting and reiterated his previous invitation to attend more frequently and that he would invite all Members of the Council to a future meeting to take part. He also stated that he would like to extend an invitation to the newly appointed Inspector for Newark, Heather Sutton to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

AGREED (unanimously) that Chief Inspector Rooke be thanked for his attendance and the information he presented be noted.

32 SCRUTINY OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Community Safety in relation to the work undertaken by the Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership and which sought to offer Members the opportunity to scrutinise the performance of the partnership.

The report set out the background to the establishment of the partnership the organisations who came together to form it. Paragraph 3 of the report provided the Committee with statistical information as to the partnership's performance and some of the work it was involved with.

AGREED (unanimously) that the report and performance of the Bassetlaw, Newark & Sherwood Community Safety Partnership be noted.

33 NEWARK & SHERWOOD DISTRICT COUNCIL - ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Community Safety which provided Members with the conclusions of the review of the Council’s existing Anti-Social Behaviour Policy 2015-2018.

It was reported that the previous Policy had dealt with changes brought about by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 which had introduced a process of simplification of existing legal powers. The proposed changes to the Policy had reduced the size of the document by removing the previous appendices which had contained detailed legal information that could now be obtained via the Council’s website. The content of the Policy remained relatively unchanged with some minor areas where some wording had been refreshed where appropriate. Paragraph 3 stated that the core message remained unchanged and was aligned to that of the Home Office guidance that accompanied the legislation.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) that the adoption of the updated Anti-Social Behaviour Policy by the District Council for the period 2018-2021 be approved.

34 HEALTH & SAFETY UPDATE

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Community Safety in relation to the corporate health and safety compliance performance within the first six months of 2018. The report also provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise the work that had been undertaken.

The report set out the Council’s Corporate Health & Safety responsibilities of various posts within the organisation and noted how the decision making of elected Members affected how health and safety was managed. The report also provided Members with information about accidents; violent incidents; significant incidents; and significant works undertaken throughout the first six months of the year.

In considering the report Members queried whether there was any signage in the reception area to indicate that violence towards staff would not be tolerated, suggesting that if there was no such sign this should be rectified.

Members queried whether the reported incidents in Castle House were directed at Council employees or partner organisations and how frequently the figures were produced. The Chairman requested that a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee in January 2019 detailing any further incidents reported in order that the Committee could consider whether any trends were developing and what, if any, measures could be taken to reduce the amount of incidents.

AGREED (unanimously) that:

- (a) the report be noted;

- (b) the actions taken to deal with health and safety issues that had arisen across the Council's activities over the past 6 months of the financial year 2018/2019 be considered; and
- (c) a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Committee in January 2019 providing the number and nature of reported incidents.

35 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Strategic Housing in relation to the progress being made with the 5 year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) development programme and the proposal to develop an extra care scheme in Boughton.

The report set out that the provision of new affordable housing was a strategic priority for the Council, with the need to develop a mixed provision of affordable homes to meet the requirements of younger people, families with young children and older people across the district's urban and rural communities. Paragraph 3 of the report set out the site progression and budgetary position of phase one of the development programme together with details of phase two being reported in paragraph 3.13. Information in relation to the proposed extra care facility at Boughton was provided together with details of the proposed nomination rights; affordable rent levels; and management of the facility.

The Business Manager – Strategic Housing reported that a grant bid had been submitted to Homes England for the proposed extra care facility at Boughton and that it should be known within 4/6 weeks whether that had been successful. He confirmed that the work being undertaken to develop the project was ongoing and on target and that pre-planning discussions were being held.

AGREED (unanimously) that the progress being made with the Council's five year Housing Revenue Account Development Programme and the proposed Extra Care Scheme in Boughton be noted.

36 PERFORMANCE MONITORING: NEWARK AND SHERWOOD HOMES

The Committee considered the report presented by the Business Manager – Strategic Housing in relation to the performance of the operations of Newark and Sherwood Homes (NSH) in accordance with the Management Agreement and Annual Delivery Plan.

The report set out the background to the formulation of the Management Agreement with NSH and the determination and scrutiny of the key performance indicators. Appendix A to the report was an overview of NSH performance for the 2017/2018 financial year with Appendix B providing an analysis and commentary of any performance where targets had not been met. Appendix C provided the STAR Survey which covered tenants' and residents' satisfaction for a number of areas with the final Appendix D providing the Tenants' Panel Report and Work Plan.

In considering the report Members noted that the STAR Survey results (Survey of Tenants and Residents) reported at Appendix C were all under target. The Business Manager acknowledged that the results showed a downward trend but that the Company continued to work above a benchmark figure.

It was noted that the Newark and Sherwood Homes Delivery Plan would be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

AGREED (by 11 votes for with 1 abstention) that the strategic performance information supplied in relation to the activities of Newark and Sherwood Homes be noted.

37 FORWARD PLAN

AGREED (unanimously) that the Forward Plan be noted.

38 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That, under section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 7 of part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Meeting closed at 7.34 pm.

Chairman