

SCRUTINY PANEL B

Meeting held in on Thursday, 15th October, 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Christian Chapman in the Chair;

Councillors Ciaran Brown, Melanie Darrington,
Dale Grounds, Trevor Locke, Phil Rostance and
David Walters.

Officers Present: Lynn Cain, Theresa Hodgkinson, Mike Joy and
Shane Wright.

SB.4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests

No declarations of interest were made.

SB.5 Minutes

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 23 July 2020, be received
and approved as a correct record.

SB.6 Scrutiny Review - Community Protection Service

The Service Manager, Scrutiny and Democratic Services introduced the report and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members were reminded that they had been working on the Community Protection Service review since January 2020 (over the course of three Panel meetings) and had examined the origins of the service, the Community Protection Team's current working practices, the ongoing difficulties officers faced undertaking the role and their ongoing priorities for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour within Ashfield.

The Panel had also spoken to the Council's Service Manager for Community Safety and two Community Protection Officers at a previous meeting to garner their perspective on how they undertake their duties and manage the day to day requirements of the role. Members had also been interested in how the Community Protection Team worked in partnership with the Police through the Integrated Hub based at the Council offices. Comments had also been sought from the Police Chief Inspector, Mark Dixon, regarding the partnership working currently taking place.

During the nine months since the start of the review, the Council had taken on board the interim comments and suggestions emerging from the Panel and had taken the opportunity as a result of certain job positions becoming vacant, to review the service and restructure the team accordingly. The restructure

has also been influenced by the recommendations from the recent Council Peer Challenge undertaken earlier in the year, to reshape the service.

The Panel were therefore being asked to take stock of the current position and recognise how well the review has progressed since the start of the year. It was acknowledged that the new Community Protection Team, once fully staffed (recruitment was still ongoing), would need time to establish itself prior to any further consideration by the Panel regarding its future direction and effectiveness as a service.

It was therefore suggested that Members consider the submission of a set of interim recommendations to Cabinet to acknowledge the current position and to enable work to commence on embedding the new Community Protection Team into the Council's establishment.

Director of Place and Communities - Restructure and Current Position

The Director of Place and Communities firstly thanked the Panel for their contributions towards the facilitation of a new Community Protection Team as part of the review process.

Community Protection Service Restructure

Having acknowledged that the previous Service Manager, Community Safety role had been mostly office based, it had been agreed that the post would be split into two new Team Leader positions which would ensure both officers would have increased flexibility to be out on the District leading their teams as required.

The first Team Leader, Craig Day, had been recruited and he was due to start the role on 7 November 2020. The second Team Leader post was currently going through the recruitment process and would be finalised within the next two weeks.

Following a successful open day for the recruitment of Community Protection Officers, three officers had been appointed and were due to begin training with the Police imminently. It was remarked upon that having received an offer from the Chief Inspector to undertake the necessary training of the new Community Protection Officers, it was testament to the ongoing success of partnership working by partners through the Integrated Hub.

During the restructure it had become apparent that there was synergy between the roles of the Council's Place and Wellbeing Team and the Community Protection Service and with that in mind, a revised Service Manager, Place and Wellbeing position had been established with responsibility for Place and Regeneration, Health and Wellbeing, Leisure and Community Safety. The closing date for recruitment applications was 25 October 2020.

Case Recording by Officers

In response to the Panel's request that the Council should invest in mobile, hand-held technology to enable CPO's to digitally input reports and data in situ (rather than having to return to the main office) had been taken on board and this service upgrade had been embedded in the second phase of the Council's digital transformation programme for progression.

Visible Presence in the Community

The Panel had previously noted that 'visible presence in the community' was a priority for the CPO role and wished to see this factored into their daily duties. The Council were in agreement that this presence was important but it would be for the new Team Leaders to designate the most effective patrol routes for officers in response to ongoing demands on the service.

Public Perception

Members had identified the importance of ascertaining and managing public perception of the Community Protection Service, as a key discretionary service. It was agreed that this could be achieved through undertaking a public consultation exercise involving residents and businesses in Ashfield but again, the new structure would need time to establish itself before any meaningful data could be captured.

Enforcement: Fixed Penalty Notices

The Leader and the Deputy Leader (and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety) had recently been considering options for optimising enforcement via the issue of fixed penalty notices (FPNs). A neighbouring authority had recently outsourced the function as part of a pilot initiative and the outside organisation undertaking the work were due to present options to the Council's Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) in the next few weeks.

Police: Operation Reacher Team

A new Operation Reacher Team had recently moved into the Integrated Hub at the Council offices as part of a county-wide expansion of the scheme marking a significant investment in proactive policing by Nottinghamshire Police since its inception in April 2018.

The Reacher Team were working with communities and in disadvantaged areas with a range of diversionary activities in conjunction with the CPOs.

Police Risk Management Meetings

The Director of Place and Communities advised the Panel that she had been in attendance at the fortnightly Police Risk Management meetings and it had been affirming to see key partners working so well together, focussing on key problem families within the District that required additional support and management.

To conclude the Director of Place and Communities thanked the Panel and Scrutiny officers for their facilitation of the review and reiterated the importance of the scrutiny process and how it continues to compliment the work undertaken by the Corporate Leadership Team and its Directors.

At this point in the proceedings, the Panel were then shown on screen a draft set of seven interim recommendations for submission to Cabinet and the Chairman took the Panel through each recommendation in turn, inviting any comments or amendments to the text as required.

RESOLVED that

- a) the update in relation to progression of the Community Protection Service review, as presented, be received and noted;

- b) the Community Protection Service review remain on the 2020/21 Scrutiny Workplan and be held in abeyance pending integration of the new Community Protection Team into the Council's establishment and a progress report back to the Panel in due course;
- c) the following interim recommendations be presented to the December 2020 meeting of the Cabinet for consideration:
1. The Panel note the importance of and endorse the ongoing restructure and recruitment exercise within Community Safety, ensuring the Community Protection Service is fully resourced.
 2. Full consideration is given to the equipment needs of Community Protection Officers to ensure that the on-street presence and back office support maximises efficiency in both reporting and monitoring casework
 3. the Community Protection Service focuses on four core priorities of:
 - Providing a visible presence
 - Dealing with anti-social behaviour issues
 - Working collaboratively with key partners
 - Ensuring public safety in Ashfieldwhilst maintaining a flexible approach to holistic issues.
 4. A consultation exercise is undertaken to further understand public expectations and perceptions of the Community Protection Service, ensuring value for money is delivered.
 5. Delegate the power to the Director of Place and Communities to ensure all options are explored regarding the use of powers accredited to Community Protection Officers.
 6. The Community Protection Service continue to expand on partnership working with the Police and other key partners to ensure a more integrated approach to community safety in the District
 7. Following the review and restructure of Community Safety, the Community Protection Service topic be referred back to scrutiny as appropriate in 2021.

The meeting closed at 8.24 pm

Chairman.