

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 18 FEBRUARY 2016

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY,
18 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 1400 HOURS IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, COUNCIL
HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM**

PRESENT:-

Councillor Iqbal in the Chair;

Councillors Atwal, Cartwright, Harmer, Hartley, Jenkins, O'Reilly and Spence.

ALSO PRESENT:-

Mashuq Ally	- Assistant Director, Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion
Marcus Beale	- Assistant Chief Constable
Gary Ladbrooke	- Integrated Services Head
Councillor J Jones	- Erdington District Chair
Councillor J Alden	- Edgbaston District Chair
Councillor A Underwood	- Sutton District Chair apols
Councillor S Anderson	- Yardley District Chair
Councillor P Griffiths	- Northfield District Chair
Councillor S Booton	- Northfield District Vice-Chair
Rose Kiely	- Group Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Amanda Simcox	- Scrutiny Research and Policy Officer
Marie Reynolds	- Committee Services

NOTICE OF RECORDING

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It was noted that the meeting was being webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.birminghamnewsroom.com) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs. The whole of the meeting would be filmed except where there were confidential or exempt items.

APOLOGIES

- 76 Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors Lines, Mackey, Pears, Williams and Underwood for their inability to attend the meeting.
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MINUTES

- 77 The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2016, having been circulated to Members, were confirmed and signed as a correct record.
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BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

At this juncture the Chairman highlighted to members that it was the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership that was being discussed today and not West Midlands Police.

Marcus Beale, Assistant Chief Constable provided a brief background of the partnership which had recently commissioned a review at looking at improvements. He highlighted that a great deal of internal naval gazing had taken place which included looking around business processes, performance management, how priorities were set and money tracked. He stated that the partnership had signed off a whole set of new business processes that clarified roles and responsibilities as a partnership and how each were held to accountability, adding that he believed the partnership was in good shape to step forward.

He referred to HMIC in terms of the report that had been published today, and particularly around neighbourhood policing and the contribution to the comprehensive spending review, which was more generous to policing than was expected, adding that even with the financial cuts neighbourhood policing would remain and would continue to be a core part of policing. He highlighted that over the last 5 years there had been a general reduction of staff and through the review, a refocusing on the force. He confirmed that there would be less police community support officers in 5 years' time however they were not accelerating reduction but closely focusing on what the tasks local neighbourhood officers were undertaking. He provided examples of the excellent work undertaken by the beat officers through sport and engaging with offenders and confirmed that at the moment they were looking at the tasks that they should be doing.

Following comments from the Chairman and members, Marcus Beale referred to the mechanisms that had been used over 5 years for continuous improvement in reshaping the local policing, and the fact that they would try to be in a position to relocate the policing resources, where the greatest need was and were mindfully aware of areas of expansion across the city. He stated that they had applied this also to domestic violence and other serious crimes as part of the refresh, and would definitely ensure that there was a framework rationale that supported why some areas were policed more than others.

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Marcus Beale stated that they try to create simple structures that were appropriate and at the same time whether investigatory or response teams, provide leadership in an efficient way, and try and maintain that balance reiterating that neighbourhood policing was absolutely part of the plans, and stated that if they could align the neighbourhood policing to the political boundaries it would make life easier. With regard to quad and mini-motos, he agreed that it was a multi-agency response requirement and with a local information sharing loop in place this allowed the police to take the appropriate intervention, adding that he believed it was an area that the Police and Birmingham City Council could work together on.

Marcus Beale referred to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) which was an external body which checked that the police were operating as it should, and highlighted that they were concerned about the police forces beginning to combine neighbourhood teams with response teams with local investigations rather than having dedicated local beat officers, which he confirmed there was no intention of merging the teams. He stated that today there were the same number of beat officers as in 2010, and overall, there was the need to provide a balance in dealing with specialist areas as well as neighbourhood policing within the resources provided.

With regard to the Chairman's comment relating to boy racers and associated frightening issues, Marcus Beale confirmed that there was joint activity across the force in tackling this area. He referred to the multi-agency response around this area of work, highlighting that it was very much on the radar, and in order that the issue did not become displaced elsewhere, there was some quite heavy co-ordination taking place in preventing this.

At this juncture Mr Mashuq Ally, Assistant Director, Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion presented the following Birmingham Community Safety Partnership report and subsequently highlighted the salient points:-

(See document No. 1)

In response to comments and questions from the Chairman and members, Marcus Beale stated that the total recorded crime projection to date illustrated that there was a 5% increase compared to the previous year. He stated that within the overall violent crime category, there had been a substantial increase in domestic violence adding that it was massively unreported and not to be alarmed by the data, and likewise there had been an increase in sexual offences, which were often historical reports highlighting that it was a substantial issue for people to come forward to report this. He reported that there were several slightly more worries regarding serious gun crime whereby 3 people had lost their lives, he stated that there had been a substantial step up in prioritising around policing this issue and that a bespoke operation had been put into place as a result of this. He confirmed that some headway had been made with the recovery of firearms and added that within next year's priorities this would be one of the core priorities. He stated that burglaries had reduced however vehicle crime had increased and subsequently highlighted the obvious

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measures people should take in helping to prevent this from happening.

In response to an enquiry from the Chairman, Mashuq Ally confirmed that they could not provide the information at this time relating to the outcomes of the initiatives that had been supported until after the end of March.

In a further response to an enquiry from the Chairman regarding the community safety partnership, Mashuq Ally stated that the report contained a great deal of information regarding the contribution made by the Local Delivery Groups (LDG's) within the various quadrants. He highlighted that it was the work they were carrying out against the themes that had made an overall difference to the quality of life for many people in the city. He stated that the work Marcus Beale had highlighted in terms of reviewing the route and branch of the work and structure of the community partnership, would make it much smarter in responding to issues and priorities within the city and obviously with the Future Council Programme, and the transformation going on with West Midlands Police and other partners, it was envisaged more work would be delivered on the ground than from the centre, and that a number of district chairs were already engaged with community plans and within those community plans, there would be their priorities to do with crime and disorder and how they choose to deliver that on the ground would be up to them, with the assistance of the partnership.

He stated that his overall impression with the changes being made structurally, and with the transformation going on that hopefully, there would be more engagement with communities in working with them, to find solutions to those priorities that may be set for the next coming years. He highlighted that the difficulty for the next financial year was the 25% reduction which would impact on resource implication.

Following further comments from members the following responses were recorded.

Mashuq Ally stated that they were working very closely with the children safeguarding board, and the adult safeguarding board, and highlighted that part of the new working relationships that they would be having strategically with the safeguarding boards, was to ensure that both children and adults were safe guarded in relation to this. He added that a major part of the work was the need to engage with the perpetrators, as well as the victims, and whilst a considerable amount of work pertaining to victims had been undertaken, there needed to be the investment of more resources around the perpetrators.

Marcus Beale referred to domestic abuse and highlighted that attitudes had transformed over the past 50 years and although it was still massively under-reported to the police, women were the bulk that were hurt with the smaller majority of men affected. He stated that the police needed to be in a good position in order to provide a good service which did not always mean more resources. He added that a lot of progress had been made and that they were in a better place than 10 years ago. He referred to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Honour Based Violence which were relatively new however with the recognition of it taking place and coming up with good interventions this would

hopefully be dealt with more rapidly.

Marcus Beale highlighted that West Midlands Police had found more efficiencies in lots of arenas than what there were years ago. He referred to the control rooms that worked more efficiently and to the 2 new custody facilities that would be opening which would be operating much more efficiently in processing more people arrested, at a far less cost. He added that the focus was in finding new ways of doing things more efficiently and to approach with ambition to continue to improve.

Mashuq Ally welcomed all points made by elected members and specifically referred to the importance highlighted by Councillor Hartley the multi-agency approach in resolving a great number of issues. He stated that there was the need to recognise that Birmingham was a global city and had a huge footfall whereby people were coming in from all parts of the world, and with the new railway station and greater connectivity all were aware of the greater population coming into the city over the weeks and weekends.

He stated that when looking at the statistics for crime and disorder, there was not the room for complacency and that there was always the need to do better however, when compared with other cities, the city was doing a lot better in terms of crime reduction. He started that there was the need to remember that there were going to be occasions when in recent gun crime issues although believed had managed to control, had returned, and that was also a contributing factor that the global city was dynamic with high levels of mobility going on and with the open borders the ongoing on new issues arising. He concluded by stating that the statistics he had seen in trying to manage crime and disorder in a partnership way was being done very well due to a city of this size.

The Chairman thanked Marcus Beale and Mashuq Ally for their presentation and expressed his appreciation for the crime figures being the lowest compared to other cities.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

78

RESOLVED:-

That the information and comments be noted.

NEIGHBOURHOOD CHALLENGE INQUIRY

Mashuq Ally, Assistant Director, Equalities, Community Safety and Cohesion presented the following report:-

(See document No. 2)

At this juncture the Chairman welcomed all of the district chairs, adding that some written submissions had been received and several were still to be received.

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Karen McCarthy, Executive Member for Local Services Selly Oak, reported that the Neighbourhood Challenge was new to districts this year and that it was a way to focus on areas of concern in districts. She stated that each district had chosen different subjects and had tackled it in different ways.

She stated that Selly Oak had decided to look at Regeneration that was taking place within the district and how people from Brandwood and Billesley in particular were able to access those opportunities. She referred to the meetings they had held with representatives from DWP, Adult Education as well as the city's own regeneration team and the reports on transportation. From the information received, they were beginning to see which areas of the district had choices with transport and which were less fortunate, and also they were looking at information, relating to work placements and work experience and the need for young people to be aware of jobs and the skills that they would need to apply for the jobs.

She stated that they were at the stage where they had had an interim report at their last district committee meeting and anticipated having a final report in March, adding that she believed most districts were working to more or less the same timetable. She stated that those working on jobs and skills related projects, had a clear way of taking forward due to the meetings with Councillor Holbrook's team, looking at what could be done together across the city. She highlighted that alongside the other activities which included the housing panel, the work with young people, and health, there would be an ongoing jobs and skills panel. She further highlighted that they would look together where other districts had similar themes and whether there were common recommendations that they would be looking to pull together next week and also share good experiences. She highlighted that Hall Green had been carrying out good road safety whereby they had a quite a toolkit of resources which they had made freely available to people from other districts, adding that if Selly Oak chose their next neighbourhood challenge on road safety, they would be able to use the toolkit.

She concluded by stating that since working on the neighbourhood challenge district chairs have tended to provide updates at the monthly meetings in order that everybody knew what each other was doing, albeit each challenge was tailored to a particular district. She added that part of the value of the exercise was sharing and seeing what worked where and what could be picked up elsewhere.

The Chairman stated that it was good to know that the district chairs were sharing information.

Councillor Sue Anderson, Executive Member for Local Services Yardley, reported that the Neighbourhood Challenge fitted in with their Neighbourhood and Skills Employment Partnership. She stated that they had decided to look at what the schools were doing in terms of what was the offer for young people within Yardley, and whether it was good enough and how their life chances could be improved. She stated that they had decided to start with schools

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which had involved research, visits to schools and interviewing staff. She highlighted that they had the evidence and particularly where junior schools fitted in with regard to terms of aspirations and awareness of careers which she added that they did do a great deal. She confirmed that one particular school had their own skills show whereby they invited parents. Reference was made to the enterprise weeks that they had whereupon they made and sold products for profit and aspire weeks, whereupon local employers were invited to speak about prospective employment as well practising skills in meeting others. She added that Birmingham Careers Service also had an excellent input.

She confirmed that she had looked at secondary schools, and confirmed that there was a number of job fayres organised by the schools whereby parents were invited except for one school, which she stated would be part of a recommendation that they be invited in future. Reference was made to the various efforts made by the schools relating to careers advice which included; interviews, money management, enterprise days, apprentice style days as well as tutorial time to explore different careers.

She referred to the careers conventions and how informative they were especially about health and the various jobs linked to health. Further reference was made to the visits made by young people to universities and the fact that one school was fortunate in having a full-time dedicated teacher.

Councillor Anderson made reference to the report from Councillor Holbrook's team that was submitted to Cabinet on Monday whereupon one of the comments that had been made that careers advice and education was not as good as it should be. It was noted that in the report, one of the recommendations was that every young person should have access to information relating to advice guidance on academic & vocational pathways to a job and career and that careers advice should be improved, and that we should plan with partners a Birmingham Careers and Job Advice Service which she certainly agreed with. She confirmed that the district report would be completed in March and that part of recommendations would fit in with Councillor Holbrook's report. She added that she would be presenting the evidence found, to Councillor Holbrook and the team stating that she had found good practice but not necessarily good outcomes which was the difficulty. She concluded by stating that she wanted to add the results of the further education and sixth form review, as it was important the way the city looked at the skill shortage and how the shortage could be met as it was acute in Birmingham. She further concluded that the information would be shared with all schools.

The Chairman commented that Councillor Sue Anderson had worked extremely hard and subsequently thanked all of the chairs for their efforts.

Councillor John Alden, Executive Member for Local Services Edgbaston referred to the challenges in Edgbaston and that at present they were looking at the associated parking issues in Edgbaston especially concerning the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He further referred to the cycling revolution and the consideration of introducing cycle lanes down the dual carriageway which would restrict the traffic flow. He stated that although there had been officer

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representation at the last meeting who had not been sufficiently briefed to deal with some of the problems that had arisen, and therefore it was anticipated that at the meeting in March there may be some conclusions to some of the issues that had been highlighted.

Councillor Josh Jones, Executive Member for Local Services Erdington, referred to the methodical process they had adopted to encourage all members across the district to get involved. He stated that there had been several meetings by members which had resulted in the district choosing to look at 'clean and green' in the district and the effects of the wheelie bin roll out. It was agreed that a questionnaire was sent out to community groups, businesses, neighbourhood forums and to the relevant city departments to break down in a concise way the quality and quantity data in order that it was made easy for all to understand.

Following the drawing up of a pro-forma which was shared with members for comments, and then shared with community groups and BCC departments and following two meetings about the neighbourhood challenge which were both evidence gathering, it was now all completed and a report would be submitted to all members on 8 March 2016. Following which they would look at what had been recommended from the evidence gathered which would be submitted to district committee on 28 March 2016. He stated that a tracking schedule similar to what Scrutiny did would be introduced, with recommendations being tracked over the next 12 months to ensure that they were followed, and then when the next Neighbourhood Challenge was agreed, it would be the same process replicated. He added that it was far better to agree one challenge for the year and execute well rather than do more and not perform so well.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Jones for his contribution and subsequently agreed that one Neighbourhood Challenge per year was sufficient.

Councillor Peter Griffiths, Executive Member for Local Services Northfield, referred to the process in Northfield district highlighting that it was a very split district. He confirmed that members of both parties were involved and that Councillor Booton undertook the lead role. He stated that all wards were consulted and it was agreed that housing, anti-social behaviour, 2 NEETS and 3 Community Safety from young people and children's perspective. He referred to the variety of reasons for those areas and the fact that they all ticked certain boxes. It was highlighted that the young people and children gave the opportunity to look into children's services which was a whole range of activities that multi-agency working hopefully flags up. He stated that a draft report had been circulated to partners and stakeholders who had taken part and anticipated feedback within the next fortnight with the expectation to finalise the report at the March meeting.

Councillor Steve Booton, Local Services Northfield, stated that the challenge was about partnership working, and referred to the major housing associations that had taken part, as well as BCC Housing and the Police. He referred to the discussions that had taken place relating to the simplistic issues with looking to improve performance in respect of anti-social behaviour across all tenures by sharing information and working together to use the resources available

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effectively, and to define what actually constituted anti-social behaviour. Reference was made to the encouragement of expressing opinions of where the road blocks were in anti-social behaviour delivery, and the workshop that had taken place, which had been quite successful, with the attendance of 28 people from the housing associations in discussing associated issues which had resulted in a number of recommendations. It was noted that it was expected that the report would be completed by March.

Following comments relating to anti-social behaviour, Councillor Booton referred to housing associations and the cut off points relating to this, and the various remedies in addressing this area, adding that the public expectation for landlords to address anti-social behaviour was somewhat high, and that discussions would be ongoing in workshops relating to this, as well as the reporting of anti-social behaviour incidents.

Councillor McCarthy highlighted that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was now providing some parking resources with the help of local residents providing information. She stated that there were informal routes at the moment to transfer that across to the Midland Met Campus, where there was the added complication of shared borders and therefore there was the need to look at something more formal to ensure experiences were shared. It was noted that Edgbaston and Selly Oak had worked together on similar issues.

Councillor Alden highlighted that when the original plans had come forward not enough attention had been given to local councillors comments in Edgbaston and Harborne. He subsequently highlighted the further expansions proposed and with the building of the private halls of residents for students, the parking issue would continue to be a real serious problem.

Following comments from members, Councillor Anderson reiterated the importance of members reading the report submitted to Cabinet and the fact that if the city did not overcome the skills shortage, this would increase unemployment of young people in Birmingham unless firm action was taken and everyone was working together to find a solution.

Following a request from the Chairman as to whether there should be any additions to the report that would be submitted to City Council, Councillor Jones reiterated that districts should undertake one Neighbourhood Challenge per year and the importance of the outcome which was subsequently agreed by the Chairman.

Gary Ladbrooke highlighted to members the need to recognise the limited staffing resources that were available in order to undertake the work supporting these challenges. He added that it had been a year of learning and that one challenge per district should be undertaken in order that it was executed extremely well and that the learning should be taken across the 10 districts.

Councillor O'Reilly stated that all of the ward councillors could relate to all of the challenges, adding that it was one of the rare opportunities for genuine cross party working. He further stated that a formal tracking mechanism would be

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beneficial in order that the work carried out was not lost, especially where districts tend to change in terms of political leadership and therefore over the years, it would be good to see that all the hard work was tracked through to outcomes.

Councillor McCarthy stated that districts needed to move to formal work programmes in order to be aware at the beginning of the year what the districts were covering not only neighbourhood challenges, but also the housing panel and health and what was going to be achieved. She added that it was important that districts did not try to over reach themselves, and that the majority of the work did not fall to district chairs nor certainly the officers to undertake and that elected members all worked together.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Mashuq Ally and the district chairs for attending and presenting.

Upon further consideration, it was:-

79 **RESOLVED:-**

That the presentations and comments be noted.

80 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The following paper was received:-

(See document No. 3)

The Chairman confirmed the attendance of 2 Cabinet members at the next meeting.

DATES OF MEETINGS

81 It was noted that the Committee meets on the following Thursdays at 1400 hours in the Council House:-

17 March - Committee Room 2 21 April - Committee Room 6

**REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS
RECEIVED (IF ANY)**

82 The Chairman advised that there had been no requests for call in/councillor call for action/petitions received.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

83 No other urgent business was raised.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

84 **RESOLVED:-**

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 15:30 hours.

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CHAIRMAN