

**BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**

**HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS O&S COMMITTEE –  
PUBLIC MEETING**

**1400 hours on Thursday 15 December 2022**

**Committee Room 6, Council House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BB**

**Action Notes**

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**Present:**

Councillor Mohammed Idrees (Chair)

Councillors: Kerry Brewer, Marje Bridle, Ray Goodwin and Roger Harmer

**Also Present:**

Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and Chair, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership

Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer, Vice-Chair, Birmingham Community Safety Partnership

Waqar Ahmed, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Resilience

Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement

Pam Powis, Senior Service Manager, Community Safety Team

Jayne Bowles, Scrutiny Officer

Amelia Murray, Overview and Scrutiny Manager

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**1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST**

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6\\_5dnVnYlw](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw)) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

## 2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Saqib Khan, Lauren Rainbow and Ken Wood.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

## 4. ACTION NOTES AND ACTION TRACKER

(See documents No 1, No 2 and No 3)

### RESOLVED:

- That the action notes of the meetings held on 10 November 2022 and 29 November 2022 were agreed;
- That the action tracker was noted.

## 5. CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND EQUALITIES – PRIORITIES 2022/23

(See document No 4)

Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities, attended to present his priorities for 2022/23 as they relate to the remit of this committee.

Councillor Cotton highlighted that his is a wide-ranging portfolio, reporting into this committee and two others, with the areas relevant to this committee being Community Safety and Bereavement Services.

The following officers were also in attendance: Sajeela Naseer, Director of Regulation and Enforcement, Waqar Ahmed, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Resilience, and Pam Powis, Senior Service Manager, Community Safety Team.

Councillor Cotton also introduced Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer, the Vice-Chair of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership (BCSP) who was in attendance for this report and the BCSP annual report.

The following key points were highlighted:

- **Community Safety** - There are a range of priorities and these are two-fold – firstly, to ensure the right response and support is available when community safety incidents occur and secondly, to focus on prevention and stopping problems in the first place;
- The preventative approach underpins several of the priority areas;
- **Bereavement Services and Register Office** – it is important to ensure services are responsive and respectful to the city's diverse communities and Councillor Cotton stated that he wished to put on record his thanks to members of the Muslim Burial Council who have been working with the

Council to improve the service provided to the Muslim communities in the city;

- There is also a network of Friends groups, for instance the Friends of Cemeteries, who have been doing some great work as well, which will be drawn on when starting to develop the medium to long term strategy for Bereavement Services;
- Members were told real progress is being made with improvements to the service, including burials, looking at a new site for the mortuary, and working directly with Customer Services and IT to map the customer journey to move into the future operating model.

During the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the main points included:

- **Modern Slavery** – in response to a query about which types or areas of work were most prone to modern slavery, Members were told the biggest percentage is criminal activity, eg stealing and shoplifting, next is people being coerced into homes to be domestic servants, and then sexual and labour. Officers undertook to provide a more accurate percentage breakdown for what this currently looks like in Birmingham;
- **Local Partnership Delivery Groups (LPDGs)** – in terms of getting value out of these meetings, consideration needs to be given to the area covered. It was pointed out that the bigger the area the less relevant the agenda items will be to individuals, although if the area was smaller less people would attend, and a balance is needed;
- This is being looked at as part of the wider governance of the Community Safety Partnership and what the LPDG model looks like and it was recognised that there is a need to ensure maximum opportunity for elected members to engage, which is not necessarily the case with the current model;
- It was acknowledged that scale is the biggest issue. There are 6 LPDGs – one for the city centre and 5 others each covering 2 constituencies;
- Locally, there are probably different expectations which can lead to certain services attending some and not others;
- There is a need to re-focus on community safety matters and there might be consultation with councillors and others about possibly changing the name to Local Community Safety Partnerships, which would help to explain to people what they are there for;
- With regard to tapping into local issues and raising those without deflecting away from the clear role that a local community safety partnership would want to be examining, this is where the relationship between Police teams and local councillors comes into play and the appointment of neighbourhood co-ordinators and locality based teams shows the way forward in terms of how to raise and problem-solve local issues;
- The geography is challenging with the Council, Police, adult social care, housing providers and housing colleagues, etc, covering different areas;
- There is, however, something in terms of what is probably going to be a refresh of the policing model under the new Chief Constable that provides an opportunity for review;

- There are currently discussions taking place with Housing colleagues on how to get to a single integrated Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) offer in terms of prevention, eg where gathering evidence for Public Space Protection Orders and problem-solving with partners around complex ASB issues;
- In future localisation conversations there should be more detail about what is being done in Community Safety and it has been identified that additional capacity is needed beyond LPDG managers, as they don't necessarily go out and do the intervention and enforcement. Having a presence on the ground is key so communities feel there is someone they can speak to about community safety issues;
- The local partnerships should, when resources are finalised, have access to their own street intervention officers deployed as and where required, who will be engaged with local sergeants and Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinators;
- Three intervention officers have been recruited who are due to start in January and they will be deployed where there are a lot of ASB related issues, which will provide a three to four month pilot and the impact and effectiveness of that can be reported back to this Committee if required;
- Consultation and engagement are a big priority and also a statutory responsibility and this is not just about being reactive, it is about how local councillors and communities can also be involved in prevention;
- **Register Office** – in response to a query regarding the current waiting time for birth registrations, Members were told that the requirement is for births to be registered within 42 days and for anyone applying now the next available appointment was 23<sup>rd</sup> February;
- Members were concerned that this might cause difficulties for some people due to not being able to claim child benefit until the birth is registered, however it was pointed out that extra diaries are opened weekly to increase capacity to bring appointments forward if urgently needed and the situation will be kept under review;
- **Cemeteries** – with regard to space at cemeteries filling up more quickly than anticipated, extension projects are in train at a number of cemeteries to deal with increased demand;
- **Mortuary Provision** – Finding a new site and building a new, modern mortuary fit for diverse communities will be a very extensive piece of work. This is currently in the project planning stage and could take two to three years.

**RESOLVED:** -

- That with regard to the areas of work most prone to Modern Slavery, a percentage breakdown to be provided to Members;
- That the report was noted.

## 6. BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

(See document No 5)

Councillor John Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities and Chair of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer, Vice-Chair of the Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, Waqar Ahmed, Assistant Director, Community Safety and Resilience, and Pam Powis, Senior Service Manager, Community Safety Team, were in attendance for this item.

Councillor Cotton introduced the report and stated that it is very much a partnership endeavour, with the Police, Fire Service, Health, Voluntary Sector, etc. and Chief Superintendent Mat Shaer is now the Vice-Chair, having taken over from Steve Graham.

The key points in the report were highlighted and during the discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the main points included:

- **Supported Housing (Exempt Accommodation)** – Reference was made to the Bill going through Parliament which will hopefully lead to an improvement in legislation and a more functional exempt structure. It was pointed out that when properly regulated the providers who survive ought to be important partners, supporting some of the most vulnerable people in society and there is a need to think about how that happens;
- **Re-deployable CCTV Cameras** – It was confirmed that there are currently 11 re-deployable CCTV cameras available and the intention is to grow that but there is a need to make sure the process for deploying cameras is correct;
- There are certain legislative processes that have to be followed, however concerns were raised that the process is too lengthy and needs to be reviewed;
- One specific example was given of a response to a request for a camera which had indicated the process would take two to three months and the Cabinet Member and officers undertook to look into that and what it means for the wider policy;
- The Community Safety Team has been working closely with the Assistant Director of Street Scene and his team regarding fly-tipping cameras and although the legislation for these is different they are trying to make sure all requests are dealt with in a single process and are keen to look at where cameras can be used for ASB and fly-tipping;
- Given the number of questions around re-deployable CCTV cameras, it was agreed that a further report on the current process and its timescales would be brought to the January committee meeting, when the Assistant Director of Street Scene will be reporting back on the Reducing Fly-tipping inquiry recommendation regarding the use of fly-tipping cameras;
- It was queried whether there are data sharing arrangements in place if someone has CCTV cameras the Council can have access to, but it was pointed out that there is some complexity in the purpose of the camera going in in the first place and in line with the surveillance commissioner code there have to be very specific reasons and this cannot be extended without further consultation;

- There is a data sharing agreement in place with the Police;
- **Locality Working** – In response to a question about locality working and how this will work, Members were told that the Neighbourhood Action Co-ordinators (NACs) have been brought in to resolve the issues and problems around lack of neighbourhood tasking;
- It was confirmed that as part of the pilot, three new community safety officers will be assigned to those areas, working closely with the NACs;
- The Police have been working closely with the Cabinet Member and officers to push this agenda forward;
- **Gang Crime** – The main factor behind gang crime is drugs and reference was made to modern slavery referrals and county lines;
- There are dedicated criminal organised gang teams and enforcement action is taken on a daily basis;
- **Serious Violence Duty** – This comes into effect in January 2023 and one of the key activities will be the Offensive Weapon Homicide Review pilot which will be delivered in Birmingham and Coventry;
- This will be starting in February 2023 for a period of 18 months and, similar to the domestic homicide reviews, will look at incidents where someone has died where a weapon has been used.

**RESOLVED:**

- That a further report on re-deployable CCTV cameras, to include the current process and its timescales, would be brought to Committee in January;
- That the report was noted.

**7. WORK PROGRAMME**

(See document No 6)

A request was made for the February City Housing Performance Report to include the number of Ombudsman decisions against the Council, the amounts paid and comment from Housing Officers on what the cause is.

**RESOLVED:**

That the work programme was noted.

**8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Noted.

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

None.

**10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS**

**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.

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The meeting ended at 1521 hours.