

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 6 March 2024

Attendance:

Councillors
Brook (Chairperson)

Horrill
Laming
Pett

Reach
Scott
Williams

Other members in attendance:

Councillors: Bolton, Becker, Cutler, Learney, Lee, Tod and Westwood

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

1. **APOLOGIES AND DEPUTY MEMBERS**

Apologies for the meeting were noted as above.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Williams declared a personal and non-pecuniary interest regarding item 6 “Community Safety Partnership Performance Review” as he was nominated by the Council as a deputy member to the Police and Crime Panel.

3. **CHAIRPERSON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements were made.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE 6 FEBRUARY 2024**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 February 2024 be approved and adopted.

5. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Councillor Lee addressed the committee regarding the following agenda items: Community Safety Partnership Review, Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring Report and the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and his contributions were captured within the agenda items below.

Councillor Bolton addressed the committee regarding the agenda item: Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring Report and his contribution was captured within the agenda item below.

6. **COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REVIEW**

Councillor Danny Lee addressed the committee and highlighted the following points.

1. Acknowledged the positive impact of the Community Safety Partnership and its efforts recorded in the performance update report particularly the reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour Reports as indicated in Figure 3 table for Quality of Life.
2. Concern was expressed about the implications of the upcoming shutdown of the current landline telephone system, with a phase for completion by 2025, and its relevance to Winchester community safety. Particularly how residents would report criminal incidents or obtain blue light medical services during power outages in the absence of landlines.
3. He queried the contingency plans for maintaining communication in the event of widespread power outages affecting both landline and mobile phone communications, especially considering the lack of battery backup for many mobile phone towers.
4. Councillor Lee wished to bring these concerns to the attention of the Cabinet and the wider Community Safety Partnership. Her requested reassurances from partners and other agencies that collaborative efforts were underway to develop solutions with clear information and advice for communities to alleviate anxiety, with a focus on promptly supporting the vulnerable and elderly.

These points were responded to by Laura Taylor, Chief Executive.

Councillor Kathleen Becker, Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement introduced the report, ref SC091 which set out proposals for the Community Safety Partnership Performance (CSP) review, ([available here](#)). The introduction included the following points.

1. That the council fulfilled its statutory duty to tackle crime and disorder through dedicated officer roles. It was also acknowledged the vital role of Ward councillors as the community's observers.
2. The council's efforts align with the corporate vision to enhance safety for everyone, whether they live, work, or visit the district.
3. Over the past year, the CSP had seen notable successes, including enhanced enforcement efforts, successful grant applications to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, and increased collaboration with other local CSPs.
4. Addressing anti-social behaviour had been a priority, with the partnership engaging in various activities such as additional patrols, distribution of anti-social behaviour (ASB) flyers, and the implementation of acceptable behaviour contracts. Officers had received a nomination for their efforts in the Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour category at this year's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Awards.
5. The report also detailed the partnership's focus on domestic violence and abuse, stressing an inclusive approach to support all victims.

6. An increase in young people coming to the attention of partner agencies post-pandemic had led to a targeted response from the CSP, including outreach projects, mentoring, and early intervention to mitigate negative community impacts.
7. Efforts were ongoing to gather and compare data with other services to benchmark and enhance CSP performance.

Chief Inspector Korine Bishop also addressed the Committee, and the following points were raised:

1. The introduction of new policing priorities by the Chief Constable, aimed at simplifying focus areas into the relentless pursuit of criminals, prioritizing victims, and ensuring exceptional local policing.
2. There was an emphasis on community engagement for effective policing, particularly the importance of crime reporting to identify patterns and allocate resources appropriately.
3. The overview of crime statistics indicated a decrease in overall crime by 16.1% from the previous year, with shoplifting being an exception due to potential socio-economic factors.
4. Strategic approaches to tackling shoplifting, including Community Behaviour Orders and partnerships with local businesses and the Business Improvement District (BID) Rangers.
5. Detailed information on police resourcing across Winchester, including the expansion of response teams and the introduction of designated named officers for various areas.
6. The "Let's Talk" and the Hants Alert system as new communication initiatives to foster community feedback and priorities were both highlighted, urging the community to report crimes and engage with policing efforts actively.

The committee was asked to acknowledge the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) progress report and to agree any matters of significance to draw to the attention of the Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement or Cabinet generally.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised.

1. Concerns about managing the perception of crime in areas with relatively low crime rates and addressing residents' fears of repercussions when reporting crimes.
2. Clarification on the measures taken to ensure that reporting crimes through channels like Crimestoppers remained anonymous and safe for the public.
3. Discussion on improving the response and reputation of the 101 service, especially in areas experiencing high levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and criminal activity.
4. The coordination and cross-referencing of ASB reports between the council and the police, particularly where it affected housing tenants.

5. Clarification on the best method for councillors to report ASB issues to ensure effective coordination and response.
6. Clarification regarding the handling of the remaining cases from the reported number of new ASB cases, questioning what happened to those not explicitly addressed in the report.
7. Further information was requested regarding the national trends of recorded incidents of ASB and comparisons with the local area's data.
8. Questions regarding the impact of the night-time economy on the number of ASB reports and the relationship with the number of establishments open late at night.
9. Clarification concerning the effectiveness of Operation Helicon in managing disturbances in the High Street during the evening, especially concerning people sleeping in doorways who may exhibit aggressive behaviour.
10. Further information was requested on the approach to low-level but disruptive offences such as speeding and the use of noise-inducing modifications on cars.

These points were responded to by Councillor Kathleen Becker, Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement, Laura Taylor, Chief Executive, Chief Inspector Korine Bishop and Sandra Tuddenham, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Manager accordingly.

RESOLVED:

The committee agreed to ask the Cabinet Member to consider the following:

1. That officers liaise with the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) to discuss concerns regarding power outages and the discontinuation of 3G services, particularly affecting emergency alarm systems.
2. The importance of promoting awareness about the "Hants Alert" and "Let's Talk" initiatives and ensuring this information is shared promptly. That specifically, information on the "Hants Alert" initiative be included in the Democratic Services Update (DSU) and that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) reporting guidance be shared with all Councillors.
3. Officers to clarify regarding the resolution of the 100 ASB cases mentioned in section 11.7 of the report and to update.
4. The committee requested clarification on whether Winchester district crime figures and current trends aligned with national trends.
5. To explore options for extending cover into early evenings for street patrols to prevent anti-social behaviour and crime in those periods.

7. **Q3 FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Chairperson advised that it had, regrettably been necessary to cancel the meeting of the Performance Panel, scheduled for 26 February 2024. Therefore, the Committee would undertake the scrutiny review of the Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring report at this meeting.

Councillor Neil Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance introduced the report, ref CAB 3441 which set out proposals for the Q3 Finance & Performance Monitoring Report, ([available here](#)). The introduction included the following points.

1. He referred to the strategic priorities of the Council, detailed in Appendix 1, and gave an overview of its plans and objectives.
2. A financial update covering both revenue and capital for the general fund and the housing revenue account up to the end of December, as shown in Appendix 3.
3. The latest data against the strategic performance indicators and update on progress of the Council's Tier 1 programmes and projects.
4. New data regarding fly-tipping.

Councillor Danny Lee addressed the committee and highlighted the following points.

1. He appreciated the progress and support during the cost of living crisis but expressed concern over the closure of the Bishop Waltham Citizens Advice Bureau office, particularly for vulnerable and elderly individuals.
2. He noted the district's high uptake for the Hampshire County Council Solar Together initiative and sought clarification regarding the rollout of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and the necessity for more local electric vehicle infrastructure. He suggested a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) to measure this.
3. He sought clarification regarding the differing building retrofit standards and raised questions regarding accredited build standards stipulated for council homes.
4. He suggested the establishment of KPIs to ensure new homes achieved value for money in terms of energy efficiency and environmental impact standards. Additionally, the need for recording and publishing total carbon energy savings for new and retrofitted homes.
5. He proposed further qualitative and quantitative data to inform the delivery of carbon emission reduction targets.
6. He raised specific questions regarding TCE7 and TCE9 in Appendix 4, page 96.
7. He sought clarification regarding the nature emergency target and recommendations for increasing carbon sequestration aligned with nature emergency targets, as shown on pages 118-119.

Councillor Neil Bolton addressed the committee and highlighted the following points.

1. He sought clarification on how carbon credits were generated in the South Downs National Park amidst the felling of trees due to Ash die back.

2. He queried the scheme mentioned on page 59, regarding carbon assessments for businesses, including the number of assessments conducted by the end of 2023 and plans for 2024.
3. On page 60, he sought further information regarding the solution officers had devised for tenants' storage issues post-retrofitting loft insulation and the associated costs.
4. He sought clarification on whether retrofit works were exclusively carried out on void properties, as mentioned on page 60.
5. Re page 71, he sought clarification regarding the costs of constructing six Passivhaus properties and how value for money would be determined for this project.
6. He welcomed the reduction in fly-tipping instances and the effectiveness of prosecutions but felt that residents' experience in rural wards did not reflect these improvements.
7. He suggested the incorporation of additional statistics such as business confidence, economic growth, and consumer spending to provide a fuller picture of Winchester's economic status.
8. Regarding KPIs for the planning service, he recommended a review to ensure they reflect the full planning management process.
9. He made a general point regarding the relevance and measurement of KPIs and suggested a review to ensure they accurately reflected performance and prompted necessary corrective actions.

These points were responded to by Laura Taylor, Chief Executive, Councillor Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Martin Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management, Councillor Neil Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance.

The committee was asked to raise with the Deputy Leader or relevant Cabinet member any issues arising from the information in this report, ref CAB 3441, which was being presented to Cabinet on 14 March 2024 and consider whether there are any items of significance to resolve or to be drawn to the attention of Cabinet.

The committee proceeded to ask questions and debate the report. In summary, the following matters were raised.

1. Questions were raised regarding the effectiveness of electric vehicle charging infrastructure in terraced housing areas and the consideration of rapidly evolving charging technologies.
2. Ensuring loft insulation initiatives are tenant-friendly and exploring alternative storage solutions to address tenant concerns about lost storage space.
3. Standards for new house builds and how these align with net-zero objectives, including cost assessments and outcomes of using specific building standards like Passivhaus.
4. Clarification was sought on strategies to support businesses in rural areas of the district and measures to bolster the rural economy.
5. Discussion on maintaining investment in homes to meet net-zero standards without compromising financial viability.

6. Questions regarding the King George V Pavilion, specifically operational expenditure, and comprehensive project appraisal before commitment.
7. Discussion on the Northern Park and Ride initiative and alternative options for enhancing the transportation infrastructure in the northern part of the district.
8. Clarification was sought on actions being taken to improve the status of the LW5 indicator.
9. Further information was requested regarding the resolution of complaints within the stipulated timeframes, particularly the efforts to address complaints not resolved within 10 working days.
10. Questions were raised regarding potential actions in relation to timelines and delivery speeds relating to strategic projects, in particular the Central Winchester Regeneration (CWR).
11. The overspending of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) was raised, and the available funds to cover the expenditure for such beneficial work.
12. Clarification was sought concerning the governance in managing major projects, specifically whether the council was pushing hard enough for timely delivery while being mindful of the high standards of governance and public law compliance.
13. Further clarification was requested on the progress of the Local Plan including future scrutiny arrangements before its final approval.

These points were responded to by Laura Taylor, Chief Executive, Councillor Kelsie Learney, Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency, Councillor Martin Tod, Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management, Councillor Neil Cutler, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, Councillor Chris Westwood, Cabinet Member for Housing, Simon Hendey, Strategic Director and Liz Keys, Chief Finance Officer & S151 officer accordingly.

RESOLVED:

1. The committee recognized the need for additional training regarding scrutiny and performance monitoring relating to evaluating council performance and outcomes and requested this be made available.
2. The committee agreed to ask the Cabinet Member:
 - a) To consider the issues raised regarding the Citizens Advice Bureau office in Bishops Waltham particularly the impact on service provision to vulnerable residents.
 - b) To confirm the previous commitment to include the fly-tipping cleanup rate as a Key Performance Indicator for future monitoring reports for 2024/5 onwards.
 - c) To consider a review of the current set of KPIs be undertaken, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Officers to ensure they reflect the council's priorities effectively. This review should also consider any suggestions made by Councillors during the meeting.
 - d) That the information/report regarding the Rural Economy referred to in the meeting be shared with the Committee.

- e) To consider separating certain planning application types within the report, for example, Householder Applications.
- f) To consider if the report could more accurately reflect timelines and projections.
- g) To clarify the future workflow for Regulation 19 Local Plan, including member engagement.
- h) That officers follow up and respond regarding the question on Disabled Facilities Grants.
- i) That officers follow up and respond regarding the question concerning actions required relating to KPI reference, LW5.

8. **TO NOTE THE INITIAL DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2024/25**

The Chairperson advised that an agenda item regarding waste and recycling had been planned for this meeting but had now been scheduled for decision in May 2024. As the committee had wanted to scrutinise this item prior to a decision, a new date of 20 May 2024 was proposed for the committee to meet.

The committee reviewed the draft work programme for 2024/25 which showed the pre-programmed items such as budget papers and quarterly performance reports. The Chairperson advised that she undertook regular reviews of forthcoming key decisions with the Chief Executive and would look to adjust the work programme accordingly.

RESOLVED:

That the latest version of the work programme was noted.

9. **TO NOTE THE LATEST FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

Councillor Lee raised with the committee regarding environmental social governance factors and using these factors in investment decisions. He also sought clarification regarding the Forward Plan of Key Decisions, and particularly the routine treasury management decision contained in the forward plan. Councillor Cutler responded to the points raised and it was recommended that these points be raised with the Audit & Governance Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Plan of Key Decisions for the period 1 April 2024 – 30 June 2024 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and concluded at 9.20 pm

Chairperson