

Review Committee – 2 March 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **2 March 2021** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J C Burton
Vice-Chairman: Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr C C Cannell
Cllr R R Dray
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Cllr B T Hazlewood
Cllr N J Hookway
Cllr M Hoy
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr R Milne
Cllr Mrs C A Pavelin
Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr P J Shaw
Cllr M G Wilkinson

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs D S Efde, Mrs C E Roe, M J Webb, I H Ward, A L Williams and S E Wootton

OFFICERS PRESENT

L Moss	- Assistant Director, People and Communities
S Greener	- Principal Licensing Officer
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer
L Morris	- Democratic Services Officer
K Smith	- Democratic Services Officer

ALSO PRESENT

Inspector C Calder	- Essex Police
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34 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 5 January 2021 and 2 February 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed in due course by the Chairman.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 7 relating to an update on animal welfare licensing by virtue of working for a national animal charity. Cllr R R Dray declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 8 of the agenda relating to the Key Decisions Document and specifically the item relating to the former Crown Hill public conveniences by virtue of being acquainted with an individual who may wish to lease the premises. Cllr R Milne declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 relating to the Community Safety Partnership by virtue of representing Rayleigh Town Council on the Community Safety Partnership for Rochford and Castle Point.

36 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, People and Communities providing an update on the delivery of the joint Castle Point and Rochford District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities and actions.

During discussion, the following was noted:-

The priority areas for the CSP (3.2) are protecting vulnerable people, violence and anti-social behaviour. The pandemic has had an impact on plans, leading to an underspend of the CSP allocation, totaling £10,073. It was agreed by the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner that monies would be allowed to be rolled over to next year. This was a common theme for all CSPs this year, with RDC officers working with Essex Police to plan the use of this resource.

Inspector Calder provided an update from Essex Police against the CSP's priority areas. Violence increased by 3% year on year to 2020. This measure includes offences of harassment, controlling and coercive behaviour and other domestic violence, with stalking and harassment making up 39% of total reported violence in the area. Police are focusing resources on key areas identified but it was acknowledged that the pandemic has made this difficult, with Police staff also affected by Covid-19. Police analysis has shown that gang related incidents are too sporadic for them to focus on any particular area, but they are working with youth services in Rayleigh and are working to reduce knife crime in the area.

Anti-social behaviour continues to be a priority with active operations occurring throughout the district. Focus for the Police has been on rogue traders, cold callers and fraud offences, as these were identified as a concern for the community. Work is being completed to engage with victims and their families, as well as the community, Neighbourhood Watch and sheltered accommodation providers. An update was provided on the operations currently running in the district. Police are struggling to make headway with nuisance bikes but are trying to tackle this. There are plans to launch initiatives to work with young people when it is possible to do so.

In response to a Member question about external funding, officers reported that bids for additional resources are made whenever possible. Members requested a breakdown of statistics between Castle Point and Rochford so they can better understand their area and it was agreed that these details would be shared with all Members. Members were advised that the 2021-22 strategic assessment, that will inform the priorities of the CSP next year, will include these details and will be made publicly available on the web site once approved by the local strategic partnership (LSP) later in June.

Police advised that they are aware of nuisance bikes in the Clements Hall and Magnolia Road area and have a particular operation aimed at addressing

this. A Member also advised that they have initiated a project with officers and other Members with the intention to do something with local communities around this issue.

In response to a Member question about the use of private security and how they feed back to the Police and CSP, the Inspector explained that private security officers would need to report crime in the same way as members of the public and there is no formal reporting to the CSP direct. It was further noted there was already some liaison between the CSP officer and Parish Councils in relation to use of private security.

Responding to a Member question about officer resource implications due to Covid-19, the Inspector advised that teams have been reallocated when necessary. Inspector Calder also reminded Members that Community Safety Engagement Officers, one for Rochford and one for Castle Point, were now in post.

A Member asked if the problem with nuisance bikes was also at Rayleigh Weir and it was clarified by the Inspector that Rochford and Hockley are the areas that have come to Police attention.

A Member asked if action will be taken post-Covid regarding anti-social behaviour related to drugs in local parks. The Inspector responded by confirming that it is Essex Police's goal to do this, and that they were liaising with youth services to move this work forward.

It was noted that future reports to the Committee would show how the budget underspend would be utilised.

Resolved

That the content of the report be noted. (ADPC)

37 UPDATE ON ANIMAL WELFARE LICENSING

The Committee considered the report from the Assistant Director, People and Communities providing an overview of the Animal Welfare Act 2006, and Animal Welfare (Licensing of Activities Involving Animals) (England) Regulations 2018 (the "Regulations") and the impact of the Regulations on the Licensing Team of Rochford District Council.

Officers had commenced the qualification to become inspectors to cover areas brought about by changes in legislation; it was intended that this training be completed by October 2021.

In response to a Member question regarding the use of licence star ratings (page 7.4, paragraph 4.12 of the report) on the Rochford District Council website, officers advised that it was not recommended by the Pet Industry Federation to publish star ratings until licensees had the opportunity

to complete the initial three-year period required to reduce the risk rating (legislation changed in 2018). This process did not place the Council in breach of any laws or regulations, but it was noted after discussion that this process should change and star ratings should be published on the website with an explanation as to how they were calculated.

A Member enquired about the need to use an external officer for assessments and the Principal Licensing Officer explained this was to assist with the backlog caused by the ongoing pandemic. The objective was to complete assessments so businesses could get back up and running as soon as possible. It was confirmed that this was a one-off arrangement to reduce the backlog, after which the Council's qualified staff would be completing assessments.

In response to a Member question about income, the officer explained this had dropped significantly due to Covid. Most of the licensed activity related to animal home boarding looking after pets when people go on holiday, which had not been taking place. Pre-covid income was £10,058 for the year, and the predicted income from renewals was £2,851, representing a drop of £7000 from the previous year. It was anticipated that the majority of businesses would seek to come back to the Council when guidance changed. Responding to a further Member question, officers explained the process for monitoring new business, referring to paragraph 3.1 D of the report. The aim was to support businesses and provide information and advice about the need to have a licence. The licensing department works with partners and other departments at the Council, such as planning, to identify any new businesses which may require a licence. A Member provided an example of an individual breeding a litter of dogs as a one-off, with the officer responding that if the person made more than £1000 from the sale of the dogs, they would need a licence. This included consulting a vet to ensure the individual complied with regulations. The officer also confirmed the presence of premises in the district with a licence for keeping exotic animals.

A Member identified the presence of licence renewals being out of date according to the Council website. The officer explained that under Covid legislation companies are permitted to continue to trade if their licence needs renewal, or if the licence has expired and they have not applied for renewal. The officer confirmed that the content on the website would be checked for accuracy and star ratings would also be uploaded.

Resolved

That the content of the report be noted. (ADPC)

38 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

7/20 - Crown Hill Public Conveniences

A Member advised that this decision might be called-in to the Review Committee.

10/20 - Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract

A Member expressed concern that the report stated the decision needed to be made to avoid delay, but there was already a delay caused by the extension of the contract, suggesting that it should state 'further' delays. It was noted for this to be discussed with the Assistant Director, Place and Environment, following the meeting.

39 WORK PLAN

In response to a Member question about the lack of progress in respect of documents requested by the Working Group for management of open spaces, it was noted that this would be followed up by officers outside this meeting.

It was noted that a Member asked if the Annual Report could be circulated prior to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.46 pm.

Chairman

Date

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