



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 17th September 2020

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

23rd July, 2020 at 2:00pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)

Councillors Barber (substitute for Watson), Beasant, Nichol, Pettigrew, Sheridan, K Swinburn and Woodward,

Officers in attendance:

- Anne Campbell (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Helen Isaacs (Director for Communities)
- Simon Jones (Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer)
- Guy Lonsdale (Deputy Section 151 Officer)
- Spencer Hunt (Assistant Director of Safer NEL)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor John Fenty (Portfolio Holder Regeneration, Housing and Skills)
- Councillor Ron Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor Stewart Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Tim Harvey (Humberside Police)
- Katrina Goodhand (Engagement Officer – Safer and Stronger)
- Paul French (Humberside Police)

SPC.6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence from this meeting were received from Councillor Watson.

SPC.7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SPC.8 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the special meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 4th June 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

SPC.9 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

SPC.10 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the published forward plan and members were invited to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

SPC.11 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Director for Communities tracking the recommendations of the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.12 COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL: WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The panel considered its work programme for the ensuing municipal year 2020/21. Members' comments and questions were invited.

In response to a query relating to re-scheduling a report on anti-social behaviour (ASB) scheduled for 26 November 2020, Mr Hunt advised that this item related to a review of the current ASB strategy. He would consult with his team and advise if this item could be moved forward in the work programme.

Regarding a number of representations from members about damage to parks and play equipment, ASB, alleyways, graffiti, noise nuisance and matters related to substance misuse. It was proposed by Councillor Sheridan, seconded by Councillor Beasant and upon a show of hands carried that, these issues be added to the work programme.

The panel agreed that a briefing note relating to all the issues raised should be circulated within four weeks. This would allow the panel to determine any future reporting. Mr Hunt committed to address the specified issues within the ASB strategy report where appropriate. Other items would be considered separately. In the meantime, the ASB Manager would contact ward councillors to discuss matters directly. The Chair confirmed that where possible, items would be brought forward or a special meeting would be called should the need arise.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be agreed
- (2) That damage to parks and play equipment, ASB, alleyways, graffiti, noise nuisance and matters related to substance misuse be added to the work programme.
- (3) That the panel received a briefing note relating to all the issues raised should be circulated within four weeks of this meeting.

SPC.13 PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO REVIEW)

The panel considered a report from the Deputy Chief Executive on the public space protection order review.

Mr Hunt gave an overview of the review and explained that in 2014 the Council implemented across seven wards, public drinking zone orders. He confirmed there was a requirement to review them every three years. The Council were now at the consultation stage to decide whether or not to continue with the orders. He confirmed that the wards currently covered were East Marsh, West Marsh, Park, Heneage, Sidney Sussex, Croft Baker and South. The order gave the Police, PSCO or authorised person the powers to ask someone to cease drinking in a designated area where anti-social behaviour was being or likely to be committed. Mr Hunt felt it was important to note that whilst it was not an offence to drink alcohol the Police did have the powers to control consumption when they reasonably felt that a person was or had been consuming alcohol on breach of a prohibition. It is only when some failed to comply that individuals details would be taken and a fixed penalty notice (FPN) be served because a crime had been committed.

So far, the Council had not issued any PSPO's because when approached by a designated officer, people were compliant. Local Government Association research also indicated that other local authorities reported that in most cases a warning was sufficient negating the need for a FPN to be issued. Mr Hunt asked the panel to note that there was no formal requirement or facility for the Police to record any positive interventions within PSPO areas. In cases where alcohol related issues occurred, Police also had other powers at their disposal which they could use and that the PSPO acted as an additional deterrent. Mr Hunt confirmed that statistically where the Police had complaints of public alcohol drinking, 81% were in the seven wards and he felt it reinforced that the Council had the right wards in relation to these orders. Out of these wards there had been a 24% increase in alcohol related reports over the past year.

Mr Hunt confirmed that consultation had been carried out with Humberside Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Ward Councillors in those seven wards, the MP Lia Nici who were in support of the extension. Officers were unable to consult the licensed premises due to them being closed because of COVID-19 however feedback from the previous consultation in 2017 indicated that licensees were in support of the extension. Mr Hunt asked the panel to note that officers were in the process of carrying out an online public consultation. Going forward Mr

Hunt thought it would be useful to capture positive interventions when the Police had approached people and they complied. There was an opportunity to provide Police refresher training and awareness raising in the community of the PSPO orders and why they were in place.

Members were concerned around the education of peoples understanding of the PSPO's and what it actually meant for people and welcomed publicity in the press about what the PSPO's were and what happened if, as a member of the public you did not comply. Mr Hunt agreed with members that there were opportunities to publicise, especially the successes.

Members queried if there was no recording of any interventions, how did officers evaluate the effectiveness of the PSPO because we did not know the impact they were having. Mr Hunt confirmed this was the challenge the Council were facing however the Police find it a very useful tool to use appropriately as an early intervention in problem areas and stopping issues escalating further down the line. Mr Harvey confirmed that the Police supported the PSPO's and used it as a tool to go through the 4 'E's which was engage, encourage people to do the right thing, educate people before and if enforcement was required.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted

SPC.14 COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

The panel received a report from the Leader of the Council on the COVID-19 recovery plan that went to Cabinet on the 15th July 2020 and it was agreed it would be referred to the Communities Scrutiny panel for further scrutiny.

Ms Isaacs' explained the plan was broken down into several themes and it was an iterative document that was constantly evolving and changing. The plan initially focused on response and recovery. She explained the report set out the background to the outbreak, how we sought to respond and stabilise things in the first instance and set out the Councils approach to recovery for the eight key areas. Ms Isaacs highlighted that across adult social care a lot of time and effort had gone into supporting and protecting some of our most vulnerable residents including the homeless and rough sleepers. Children, families and schools had been affected and were supported with the impact of the closure of schools and the partial reopening and associated safeguarding issues. The environment in terms of maintaining key services including refuse collection. Ms Isaacs confirmed in the plan there was the Council recovery and making sure the working environment for all our staff and ensuring their wellbeing. Financial resilience and sustainability being a major priority within the plan going forward.

Members raised concern over the financial implications and asked for clarity over the £9.6m was 7% of what we expected and what would it cost us from loss of revenue and the implementation of other interventions and

services. Members appreciated that other councils were going through the same thing and wondered what we as a council were doing to lobby central government to cover the shortfall in lost revenue and income. Ms Isaacs confirmed that her understanding was that there was more money coming into the council and a financial impact assessment was being worked on and being reported through Cabinet and Full Council in the near future. She confirmed it was an evolving picture due to the cost of responding to COVID-19 and the loss of income from fees and charges which the councils were lobbying for separately. There was some indication that further support to local government may be forthcoming.

The issue of children's mental health was raised in terms of funding going on past initial lock down and the concerns this would have long term effects on their health and extra funding would be required to provide these services now and in the future.

Members welcomed the plan felt that as Councillors they needed to be making sure that everything was on track and long term monitoring took place. Ms Isaacs gave the panel reassurance that the officer recovery group met regularly and considered progress against the actions in the plan and flagged and highlighted any areas that were going off target or were problematic. Ms Isaacs explained that the Communities Scrutiny panels role was to have an overview of the plan, make sure it was on track and moving in the right direction.

Ms Isaacs explained the cross-cutting themes with other panels in the plan and asked members how they wanted to take the scrutiny of the plan going forward. The Chair proposed to receive quarterly updates and where they felt there were cross cutting issues with other scrutiny panels that they could be referred on by this panel. It was seconded by Councillor Beasant and the motion was agreed unanimously by the panel.

Members queried if there was a way of recording which voluntary and community section organisations had applied for Covid-19 funding. This would give the panel a collective understanding of the funding that had been brought into the area as a result of Covid-19. Ms Isaacs confirmed that she would speak to the voluntary and community sector and ask them for the information and if they would be willing to share to give the panel a partial picture.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the report be noted
- (2) That members received quarterly progress updates on the actions within the COVID-19 recovery plan.
- (3) That the panel refers any items that specifically relate to another scrutiny panel be referred for consideration.
- (4) That the panel received a briefing note on the funding received by the voluntary and community sector, subject to necessary permissions.

SPC.15 COVID-19: EMERGENCY GOVERNANCE AND DECISIONS

The panel received a Covid-19 Emergency, Governance and Decisions report from the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer.

Mr Jones explained this report was supplementary following on from the last panel meeting. Part of the emergency decision making process that was adopted to address the Covid-19 emergencies was agreed to refer all the emergency decisions to the panel. He confirmed that there were three further decisions around digressionary business rate grants, public open spaces and bus grants made since the last panel meeting. Due to the restarting of committee meetings Mr Jones explained that this decision making process would only be used by exception. He highlighted the new regulations' that were introduced to give the local authority the power to stem the spread of Covid-19 in terms of the local lockdown powers. The recommendations were that the emergency framework be modified and used to report any lock down measures. He confirmed that any matters of urgency would go via Chair of the panel, the Leader, and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources. The decision maker was the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Public Health. The Secretary of State would need to be informed of any lock down measures and neighbouring local authorities.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.16 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN REPORT

The panel received a report from the Director of Resources and Governance providing key information regarding the Council's provisional financial outturn for 2019/20.

Members noted that this report was considered by cabinet at its meeting on 10th June 2020 and referred to all scrutiny panels.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.17 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the portfolio holder at this meeting.

SPC.18 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from members of this panel to call in decisions of recent cabinet and portfolio holder meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 3.20 p.m.