

CORPORATE AND EXTERNAL ISSUES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEETING, 8th DECEMBER, 2022

Present – Councillors Silvester (Chairman), Heslop (Vice-Chairman), Abdullah (as deputy for Councillor Brady), Atcha (as deputy for Councillor Jiva), Cowen, Mistry, A. Patel (as deputy for Councillor Rimmer), S. Patel, Peel, Mrs. Thomas, Veevers, Walsh, Weatherby and Wright.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Cox	Executive Cabinet Member Leader Portfolio
Councillor Dean	Executive Cabinet for Stronger Communities
Miss. S. Johnson	Chief Executive
Mr. P. Rimmer	Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Ms. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Chief Superintendent Stephanie Parker	Greater Manchester Police
Mr. R. Martinez	Head of Community Safety
Mrs. V. Ridge	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Brady, Hornby, Jiva and Rimmer.

Councillor Silvester in the Chair

23. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24th October, 2022 were submitted.

Further to minute 14 of the previous meeting, the Chairman advised that he had sent a letter to Chris Green MP regarding the costs associated with the setting up of a public meeting a

copy of which had been circulated to members. A response had also been received back from Chris Green MP which had been circulated to members.

With regards to the response from Chris Green MP, a query was raised in relation to his comment that the Council chose to hold the public meeting which was not what members were led to believe at previous meetings when they had been told that Chris Green MP had requested the meeting.

A further question was raised in relation to how the motion which had been agreed at the previous meeting had been communicated to the 3 MPs and officers of the Council.

Concern was also raised regarding the cost of the room hire which was £695 and members requested the Chief Executive to advise Chief Officers that, in future, if they were asked to hold public meetings then consideration should be given to the cost of the hire of the venue.

Resolved – (i) That the minutes of the previous meeting be noted.

(ii) That the motion approved at the previous meeting be conveyed to the 3 MPs and officers of the Council.

(iii) That the Chief Executive be requested to advise Chief Officers that, in future, when looking at venues for public meetings consideration should be given to the cost of the hire of the venue.

24. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/2023

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which detailed the proposed work programme for 2022/2023.

Resolved – That the Work Programme for 2022/2023 be noted.

25. POLICING OPERATIONS IN EACH WARD OF THE BOROUGH

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Chief Superintendent Stephanie Parker, Greater Manchester Police, gave a presentation which outlined the policing operations which were currently being undertaken in various wards within the Borough.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas, viz:-

- North of the Borough
 - Little Lever – issues associated with anti-social behaviour around the Dovebank Estate and public facilities;
 - Operation Camenca which related to off road bikes; and
 - Recent increase in commercial burglary and burglary dwellings in the Bromley Cross/Egerton area.
- South of the Borough
 - Begging in the Town Centre was a continuous problem;
 - Anti-social behaviour associated with the Bus Interchange; and
 - Issues associated with the Traveller's site.
- West of the Borough
 - Anti-social behaviour at the Middlebrook Retail Park (Operation Bauble);
 - Bolton Wanderers Football Club regarding the fixtures over the next month; and
 - Issues with youth violence in Westhoughton.

In relation to each of the issues identified above Chief Superintendent Parker also outlined the measures which were being taken to address the problems.

Members were also informed of other initiatives which were taking place district wide and were as follows:-

- Operation Portman – speeding operation;
- Operation Overspill – night time economy in the Town Centre.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments/observations, viz:-

- How did the Police distinguish between beggars and genuine homeless people in the Town Centre;
- Reference was made to the Pound off the Street initiative which was introduced in 2019 but had not progressed;
- The increasing number of youths congregating outside the Bolton News; and
- How could the Council, as a Licensing Authority, help and assist the police with improving the early morning economy in the Town Centre.

Resolved – That Chief Superintendent Stephanie Parker be thanked for her informative and detailed presentation and the position be noted.

26. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - UDPATE

Mr. R. Martinez, Head of Community Safety, gave a presentation to members which provided an update in relation to the work being undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership.

Information was provided in relation to the following areas, viz:-

- The priorities for the Partnership for 2022-2025 which were around keeping people safe; reducing harm and offending; and strengthening communities and places;
- The Summer Violence Engagement Programme;
- Preventing Serious Youth Violence;
- The Domestic Abuse theme;
- Violence against Women and Girls and night-time Economy Safety;
- The 16 days of activism against gendered based violence/white ribbon campaign;
- Safeguarding against radicalisation: PREVENT which was a statutory function;
- Responding to begging; and
- Future developments.

Following the presentation, members made the following observations/comments:-

- The involvement of schools in the white ribbon campaign;
- What were the reasons why The Hope for Change campaign was not being fully developed and what public relations plans were in place to improve this; and
- What progress had been made with regards to the establishment of a Women's Forum.

Resolved – (i) That Mr. R. Martinez be thanked for his informative and detailed presentation and the position be noted.

(ii) That information regarding the Hope for Change campaign and any potential barriers towards it's success be circulated to members of this Scrutiny Committee.

27. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUNDING/COST OF LIVING UPDATE

Mr. P. Rimmer, Assistant Director Revenues and Benefits and Customer Services gave a presentation which outlined Bolton's Response to the increases in cost of living.

Information was provided in relation to the following:-

- Representatives on the Cost of Living Strategic Group;
- Representatives on the Cost of Living Operational Group;
- Key themes/workstreams;
- The support provided from the Household Support Fund Round 2 between April – September, 2022;
- The Household Support Fund Round 3 guidance;
- Examples of support which had been provided;
- The proposals agreed by Cabinet;
- The cost of living events which were held in November, 2022;
- The cost of living micro site on the Council's

website;

- The publicity campaign;
- The Warm Spaces initiative; and
- The progress which had been made.

Members were reminded that as part of the Household Support Fund Round 3 Bolton had been awarded £2.780 million and this covered the period 1st October, 2022 to 31st March, 2023.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments/observations:-

- In terms of Warm Spaces, where there any glaring gaps within the Borough especially in deprived areas which members needed to be aware;
- With regards to the recent cost of living events held in November at Bolton Town Hall did the Council know where the 200 residents who attended lived in the Borough;
- The offer needed to enhanced and include in community centres a social element such as reading materials, biscuits etc; and
- The criteria being used for Warm Spaces was quite challenging for small community groups who did not tick all the boxes and therefore there was a need to consider more flexibility to accommodate such groups.

Resolved – (i) That Mr. Rimmer be thanked for his informative and detailed presentation and the position be noted.

(ii) That information in relation to the location of Warm Spaces in the Borough be circulated to members of this Scrutiny Committee.

28. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- (a) Cabinet held on 24th October, 2022;

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- (b) The Executive Cabinet Member Leaders Portfolio held on 15th November, 2022; and
- (c) The Executive Cabinet Member Stronger Communities Portfolio held on 15th November, 2022.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 7.15 p.m.)

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NOTES