

**CORPORATE AND EXTERNAL ISSUES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 11th APRIL, 2022

Present – Councillors Silvester (Chairman), Veevers (Vice-Chairman), Haworth (as deputy for Councillor Mistry), Jiva, Peel, Radcliffe, Rimmer, Walsh, Weatherby, Wright and Zaman.

Also in Attendance

Councillor Cox	Leader of the Council
Ms. S. Johnson	Deputy Chief Executive
Mr. L. Fallows	Assistant Director HR
Mr. P. Rimmer	Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Ms. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Ms. E. Brook	Assistant Director Strategy and Partnerships
Superintendent Parker	Greater Manchester Police
Ms. L. McKechnie	Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Bolton CVS
Mr. P. Mason	Chairperson, Bolton CVS
Mrs. V. Ridge	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Connor, Cowen, Dean, Hornby, McMulkin and Mistry.

Councillor Silvester in the Chair

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10th February, 2022 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be signed as a correct record.

37. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2021/2022

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which detailed the work programme for 2021/2022.

Resolved – That the Work Programme for 2021/2022 be noted.

38. POLICING - UPDATE

Superintendent Steph Parker, District Superintendent Bolton Police, provided members with an update on the progress being made by the Police in Bolton.

In terms of the operational objectives members were advised that these were as follows:-

- Protecting the Vulnerable People - this centred around Hate Crime; Domestic Abuse; Child Sexual Exploitation; Child Criminal Exploitation and Violence against Women and Girls;
- Counter the threat of Organised Crime – this looked at Drug Supply and Serious Violent Crime;
- Tackling acquisitive crime – this was a partnership based approach for problem solving and it also aimed to improve outcomes for victims of Neighbourhood Crime and provide stronger, dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Teams; and
- Improving confidence in the Greater Manchester Police – improve response times and improve outcomes, better community connections.

Information in relation to the above objectives and the progress and outcomes were provided at the meeting.

Members were also provided with updates on the following, viz:-

- The reopening of Bolton Custody Suite;
- 3,488 arrests made last year;

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- New graded response policy been introduced;
- Better call handling – average of 4 mins for 101 calls and 20 secs for 999 calls;
- Uplift of student officers due to receive in the region of 59 students and the end of the year;
- Operation Portman - speeding campaign relaunched;
- Operation Rattlesnake – response to serious acquisitive crime;
- Off road bikes massive issue at the moment – launched a campaign today;
- Operation Clamp – response to targeting of taxi drivers;
- Operation Overspill – new response to night time economy;

In summary, members were advised that there were currently approximately 20 different operations ongoing at the moment in Bolton a lot of which were covert. Outcomes have improved and it is now a more proactive police force. Neighbourhood teams were now being reintroduced and were problem solving in their areas and finally there was a plan in place which should result in a difference to the policing in Bolton during the next twelve months.

Members in their discussions made the following comments/observations:-

- Response and solution to drug dealing in neighbourhoods;
- In relation to youth crime the public perception was that the police were being let down by the CPS/court system therefore what interface do the police have with the CPS/court system and how can this be improved;
- Biggest impact on the public is what they see on the streets i.e. street begging and the steps being taken to reassure the public on low level crime;
- Are we still advising the public who have some intelligence to contact crime stoppers;
- The need to increase the visibility of police officers on the streets and within communities;

- Bolton has the highest arrest rate was this a positive or negative position;
- Concern regarding the length of time it takes the police to respond to victims of crime;
- As part of a public consultation exercise a couple of the priorities for the public were speeding and anti-social behaviour, however, these had not been identified as priorities and was this due to a lack of resources and funding;
- Off road bikes in the past were publicly crushed and was effective;
- Mobile cop shops in the past were dropped into neighbourhoods and were very popular and effective;
- In relation to street beggars and aggressive begging whilst the majority of these were not homeless they were vulnerable people and there was a major issue to be tackled in relation to organised crime and gangs;
- Resourcing of Neighbourhood Policing Teams;
- There was no police attendance at Horwich Police Station during the night would this change in the future; and
- Attacks on taxi vehicles is it just taxi drivers being attacked and if so what were the contributing factors and was there a racial pattern in those attacks.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted and that Superintendent Steph Parker be thanked for the very informative presentation.

39. BOLTON CVS AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR - UPDATE

Ms. L. McKechnie, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Bolton CVS, gave a presentation to members which gave an update on the work being undertaken by Bolton CVS in terms of where we've been; where we are; and where we're going.

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

- The change in leadership;
- There were 1,672 VCSE groups in Bolton;
- 11% identified as social enterprises;

- 11,322 people were employed in Bolton non-profit organisations;
- 58,259 volunteers giving;
- 211,233 hours per week;
- £119.4m was the income of the VCSE sector;
- Bolton's Fund which had twelve rounds of funding in 2021-2022 the total value of which was £918,266.72;
- Developing the Grants and Investments Team;
- Bolton's Fund Co-Design Group;
- Establishing the Economic and Social Value Team;
- The Integrated Care Partnership Proposal;
- Greater Manchester VCSE Accord; and
- Exploring a VCSE Digital Development Fund with BWitC and Lightful

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

- Concerns regarding the new policy for area working and the stipulation that 50% of the area working budget had to be matched funded in terms of volunteer hours.
- The geographical gaps and subject area gaps within the Borough and need for a mapping exercise to be undertaken to show the gaps in provision and subject area and then provide more investment to allow building more capacity into the voluntary sector;
- Would have liked further information on the operation of the CVS and its finances in depth and in particular on how success was measured; how applications were evaluated and assessed; how did you get feedback from community groups who had received funding; and how do you measure the success of investment;
- There were a huge number of volunteers in Bolton, however, was there any evidence to indicate where there were possible gaps in the lack of volunteers in particular areas within the Borough; and
- Reference to the 11% increase in social enterprise and how much of this was Community Interest Companies and if notable do you link in with Business Bolton.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted and thanks be conveyed to officers for the presentation.

40. HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

Mr. P. Rimmer, Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services gave a presentation which updated members on the progress made with regards to the Household Support Fund.

Members were reminded that the Household Support Fund was announced by the Department for Works and Pension in October, 2021 and final guidance was issued on 5th November, 2021. Bolton had been awarded £2,780 million and spend had to be committed by 31st March, 2022.

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

- Details of the guidance which was received;
- The approach Bolton had taken;
- The outcomes in relation to free school meal support;
- The outcomes in relation to the local welfare provision;
- Bolton's Fund Community Groups;
- Bolton's Fund Outcomes;
- Money skills;
- Care and Repair Service; and
- The Household Support Fund for 2022/2023.

In terms of the Household Support Fund for 2022/2023, members were advised that draft guidance had been released on 1st April, 2022 and the final guidance was expected after 11th April, 2022. Bolton would receive a grant award of £2,780m for the period 1st April to 30th September, 2022 and a third of this must be awarded to pensioners and a third must be awarded to families with children.

Members in their discussions made the following comments/observations:-

- The list of household items highlighted the financial support for some good things, however, with the new

allocation would the Council be able to provide financial support for items which could bring down heating bills;

- Not enough pensioners apply for pension credit which they were entitled to therefore would there be scope as part of the household support fund to assist pensioners in claiming what they were entitled to;
- Thanks to officers for the robust approach taken when administering with the fund; and
- Comparisons and discussions with other Greater Manchester Authorities taking place on how to administer the second Household Support Fund.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted and thanks be conveyed to the officer team for all their hard work.

41. WORKFORCE DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Mr. L. Fallows, Assistant Director HR, gave a presentation to members which outlined the workforce data reporting requirements.

Members were advised that in 2015 the Local Government Transparency Code was updated and placed extra reporting responsibilities on local government. It also outlined the minimum requirements for local authorities to publish open data for re-use and in a timely fashion.

It was stated that the Code was issued to meet the Government's desire to place more power into citizens' hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision making process and help shape public services. Furthermore, transparency was the foundation of local accountability and the key that gave people the tools and information they needed to enable them to play a bigger role in society.

Information was also provided in relation to the following:-

- The required data sets;

- An organisation chart covering staff in the top three levels of the organisation;
- Information on Trade Union facility time;
- Senior salaries;
- Pay multiples; and
- Where the information could be found.

In conclusion, members were also advised that from April, 2017, all organisations that employed over 250 employees were required by law to report annually on their gender pay gap under The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017.

Resolved – That the presentation be noted and thanks to Mr. L. Fallows for his presentation.

42. GREATER MANCHESTER PENSION FUND - UPDATE

The Chairman advised members that, as requested at the last meeting, he had written to the Greater Manchester Pension Fund and a response from the Greater Manchester Pension Fund had been received this morning and circulated to members which he summarised at the meeting.

Members expressed their disappointment in the response received and the fact that representatives were not prepared to attend a meeting of this Committee.

Resolved – That the position be noted.

43. MEMBERS BUSINESS

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

- (a) The Cabinet held on 7th March, 2022;
- (b) The Executive Cabinet Member Leader's Portfolio held on 8th February and 8th March, 2022; and
- (c) The Executive Cabinet Member Stronger Communities Portfolio held on 8th February and 8th March, 2022.

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

44. VOTE OF THANKS

Members of the Committee conveyed their thanks to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the way in which they had conducted the meetings throughout the Municipal Year.

(The meeting started at 6.00 p.m. and finished at 8.00 p.m.)