



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on 18th March 2021

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

4th February 2021 at 2:00pm

Present:

Councillor Silvester (in the Chair)

Councillors Beasant, Nichols, Goodwin, Pettigrew, K Swinburn, Watson and Woodward.

Officers in attendance:

- Helen Isaacs (Assistant Chief Executive)
- Simon Jones (Assistant Director Law, Governance and Assets (Monitoring Officer))
- Carolina Borgstrom (Assistant Director Environment)
- Spencer Hunt (Assistant Director of Safer and Partnerships)
- Zoe Campbell (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Chris Dunn (Deputy Head of Operations – Environment)
- Paul Caswell (Head of Youth Offending and Community Safety Services)
- Jo Robinson (Assistant Director Policy, Strategy and Resources)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Ron Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)
- Councillor Stewart Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport)
- Shereen Salameh (Office for National Statistics)
- Mr Westcott (Lead Petitioner)

SPC.49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence from this meeting

SPC.50 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Silvester declared a personal interest in item SPC.57, as he was employed by Foresight who were contracted by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to support the local roll out of the Census 2021.

SPC.51 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the special meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 26th November 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

SPC.52 QUESTION TIME

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

SPC.53 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.54 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 tracking report update be noted.

SPC.55 PETITION APPEAL - ANTI THEFT MOTORCYCLE GATE (PEOPLES PARK)

The panel considered an appeal against the decision taken by the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Transport regarding a petition to install an anti-theft motorcycle gate in People's Park, Grimsby.

Mr Westcott explained that the suggested anti-theft motorcycle gate would be positioned close to People's Park in a walkway used by children on their way to school, but also serving Grimsby College and other people using the park. He felt that the one motorcycle gate would stop entry to the park because it was an entry point for nuisance bikes from east to west of the town. It would force them onto the roads and make it easier for the police to track offenders. He confirmed that residents were working with the 'Enough is Enough' group and also Operation Yellowfin run by the police, which was now using DNA spray and drones to track offenders back to their home addresses.

Councillor Swinburn confirmed that he took the decision based on advice from officers. Mr Caswell suggested a design out crime process for the parks with a community partnership approach using CCTV, a catch and convict scheme and Operation Yellowfin to stop anti-social behaviour.

Members confirmed that this issue had been addressed by the forum for Park ward through wider consultation with the community and in partnership with the police and others, although work had stopped due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members welcomed the suggested borough-wide approach and felt that it would prevent the problem from being diverted to other areas of the town. Concerns were raised about access for cyclists and disability access if an anti-motorcycle theft gate was installed as it was important that people were not denied access to the park.

Councillor Shepherd explained that through the actions of Operation Yellowfin, working with different agencies and with the business community to, for example, stop the buying of fuel for the motorbikes and reporting suspicious bike activity, this had enabled the police to seize motorbikes and, as a result, had started to bring success.

Councillor Watson proposed that there be a review of motorcycle nuisance prevention across the borough. This was agreed by the panel.

RECOMMENDED TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT – That a review of motorcycle nuisance prevention borough wide be undertaken.

SPC.56 COVID-19: EMERGENCY DECISIONS

The panel considered a report from the Chief Legal and Monitoring Officer providing an update on emergency decisions taken within the emergency governance framework in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED – That the emergency decisions taken within the emergency framework be noted.

SPC.57 CENSUS 2021

The panel received a presentation on the census being launched in March 2021. Ms Salameh explained why the census was important to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) because they used census data in the calculation of local government funding through the current formula grant system. Local authorities used census data when planning school places, recreational park facilities, transport, and emergency planning. Community groups, special interest groups and charities used census statistics to give weight to their funding applications. The statistics produced by the census provided credible, factual, recognised data to use for grant applications and other purposes.

She confirmed to the panel that census day this year is Sunday 21st March 2021. For the first time this was a digital-first census, but paper copies would be available for those who needed one. There was a focus on engaging with everyone, including under-represented and hard to

reach groups and help would be available for people who need support to take part online.

Ms Salameh asked the panel for their local knowledge and expertise in supporting the census in their area to help ensure census information continued to improve, protect and save lives. She particularly asked for them to provide key contacts from their network who could support invitations to any meetings they were running, sharing materials on social media and offers to display materials digital or hard copies.

Members were concerned about those residents who were unable to access digital copies. Ms Salameh reassured members that any residents who were unable to access a digital copy would be able to request a paper copy. She explained that several wards within North East Lincolnshire had been highlighted as areas that would receive paper copies first.

Members queried when residents would be informed about the census. Ms Salameh confirmed that there was a national campaign starting out over the next few weeks in the media. From 23rd February all households would receive a post card explaining about the census and to look out for the census pack from the 3rd March onwards. She explained that they liked to engage with local groups but that was difficult with covid-19 lockdown restrictions but officers were trying to find alternative forms of communication through the use of social media, and for groups of people who were not digitally able they were doing leaflet drops.

The panel thanked Ms Salameh for her informative presentation.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

SPC.58 COMMUNITY RECYCLING CENTRE AND BRING SITES

The panel received a briefing note on the review of supplementary recycling provisions around community recycling centres and bring sites. Mr Dunn explained that a review of the bring sites in 2019 showed a decrease in use and this continued into 2020. Local changes had taken place since the last review, such as further reduction in bring site use, no excess waste for 2020, an increase in kerbside recycling of 19% in 2019 and bulky waste collections were successfully introduced offering more alternatives for waste disposal.

Mr Dunn confirmed that the next steps would be a full options appraisal planned for March 2021, once the impact from the planned change in the recycling collection schedule could be fully assessed. The final report was expected to go before Cabinet in summer 2021, with further opportunity for input from this panel as part of this process. Implementation of any changes was expected from September 2021.

Members were concerned that if the frequency of recycling changed, more people could rely on the bring sites. Mr Dunn explained that before

the next phase of the recycling scheme, there would be a letter sent to all households and a social media campaign on how to compact waste and use the current bins more effectively. There was also an option for residents to buy additional bins if required and encourage them to use the community recycling centres.

Members referred to residents who used recycling boxes because they did not have room for the bins and may rely on the bring sites for disposal of any additional recycling. Mr Dunn confirmed that officers were looking at alternative options which included community mini sites for particular properties where bin storage was an issue. He reassured members that residents had the option to buy additional boxes if required.

There were several streets, particularly in the East Marsh ward, that members highlighted were a concern over the number of bins being left out on the streets, which was a hazard and unsightly. Mr Dunn explained there was a doorstep campaign planned to educate residents about the storage of bins, however, this was restricted by Covid. Officers were looking at ways to combat bins on the street and looking at other options in certain areas.

RESOLVED – That the briefing paper be noted.

SPC.59 YOUTH CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The panel received a report from the Community Safety and Youth Offending Service on the performance data for quarter three 2020-2021, which included youth crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Mr Caswell explained in his presentation that overall crime had remained consistent over the previous year and there was a decrease in the rate of domestic abuse incidents in the last quarter which was positive, but reflected seasonal trends and was comparable with the same quarter the previous year.

During Quarter 3 of 2020/21, the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) had seen a decrease in the number of cases and repeat cases when compared to the previous quarter. North East Lincolnshire was showing the lowest levels of youth related ASB across the Humber region in quarter three of 2021.

Members queried if the figures were skewed by Covid. Mr Caswell confirmed that officers had worked with the police and magistrates over concerns about the backlog of cases waiting to be heard but they were reassured that this had not been impacted. He explained that it was usually the same cohort of young people already in the justice system that were reoffending by committing new offences and not staying at home. During the lockdowns, most families were keeping their children safe and adhering to social distancing. This had resulted in fewer young people committing crime and ending up in juvenile court and

subsequently ending up in the youth offending service. He highlighted that it was those young people who were involved in county lines criminal exploitation who were in the reoffending cohort and that GRAFT (exploitation trained staff) and youth workers were out there working with these offenders.

Members were concerned that the format of the report kept changing and that it was hard to keep track of progress. Mr Caswell took this on board and explained that it depended on where the data came from, for example, either from the police or from the community safety teams.

Members raised concern around nationally reported increased incidents of domestic abuse as a result of Covid-19 lockdown restrictions and queried if there had been a significant increase in cases locally. Mr Hunt confirmed that there had not been a significant increase in incidents locally. He explained that partner agencies were meeting more regularly to address and monitor the concerns of hidden harm and had undertaken a wide range of communications to encourage victims to come forward as early as possible. He also highlighted that a revised domestic abuse strategy was being finalised which included investment to support children who had witnessed domestic abuse in the home.

Referring to the MARAC meetings, members asked if the higher level of repeat victims was of concern. Mr Hunt confirmed that MARAC meetings were now taking place weekly as opposed to monthly, in response to Covid -19, and as a result it was expected that repeat victimisation figures would increase as cases were being heard more frequently. Mr Hunt explained that more frequent meetings meant that the risk could be managed more effectively with support and interventions provided more quickly, which the panel welcomed.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPC.60 COVID-19 RECOVERY PLAN

The panel received a verbal update on the COVID-19 recovery plan. Ms Isaacs explained that infection rates were coming down, testing centres had been set up locally with good capacity and that the vaccine programme was going well.

In terms of economic recovery, there was support to ensure that local businesses received the appropriate grants. Work continued with the community, especially with the clinically extremely vulnerable, in which the council were in regular contact to support their needs and provide assistance. Adult social care had seen a difficult time leading up to Christmas and Ms Isaacs was pleased to report that there were less cases of Covid-19 in care homes at present.

Ms Isaacs explained that children and family services had seen a high level of attendance throughout the pandemic and the council had managed those children effectively where needed.

Organisational recovery and financial resilience were key areas of focus for the council. Ms Isaacs explained that scrutiny of the budget had started and that this would include commissioning plans that reflected the work that needed to continue recovery from the impacts of Covid. The council was waiting for further government announcements about the exit out of lockdown and this would shape the organisational recovery.

Members queried if there were extreme cases of isolation amongst elderly residents and what work was being done to counter this. Ms Isaacs explained that the Council had written to residents and made calls to all those people who were extremely vulnerable, asking if they needed help. They were referred to Centre 4 and Friendship at Home, if required, to establish links with the residents to ensure they were supported.

Members felt the Council needed to promote digital inclusion. Members explained that if residents had access to a support network online it would improve their mental health and they would be less reliant on services. Ms Isaacs confirmed that digital inclusion was included in the commissioning plans and she offered to come back to a future panel meeting with more detailed plans, including how councillors could encourage people to engage digitally.

RESOLVED – That an update on digital inclusion be provided at a future meeting of this panel.

SPC.61 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

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

SPC.62 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 4.03 p.m.