

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Wednesday, 5 July 2017.

PRESENT

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)
Cllr B Saunders (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs P Downing
Ms A M W Graham

Cllrs Cllr M Liddiard
R Morris

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs D Bowater
J Kane
K C Matthews

Substitutes: Cllrs P Hollick

Members in Attendance: Cllrs R D Berry
A D Brown
Mrs C F Chapman MBE
I Dalgarno
Mrs A L Dodwell
K Ferguson
F Firth
Cllr P N Hollick

Vice-Chairman of Development Management Committee
Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration
Chairman of the Council Executive Member for Community Services
Deputy Executive Member for Social Care and Housing
Chairman of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Officers in Attendance: Ms M Higton – ASB and Statutory Nuisance Coordinator
Mrs J Keyte – Head of Community Safety
Mrs R Preen – Scrutiny Policy Adviser

Others in Attendance Mrs G Deans (Parent Governor)

Mrs E Rowlands (Parent Governor)
Assistant Chief Constable Jackie Sebire Bedfordshire Police
Acting Chief Inspector Jim Goldsmith Bedfordshire Police

Mark Cooper

Chief Executive, Office
of the Bedfordshire
Police and Crime
Commissioner

SCOSC/17/12 Members' Interests

None.

SCOSC/17/13 Chairman's Announcements and Communications

None.

SCOSC/17/14 Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 May 2017 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/17/15 Petitions

None.

SCOSC/17/16 Questions, Statements or Deputations

None.

SCOSC/17/17 Call-In

None.

SCOSC/17/18 Requested Items

None.

SCOSC/17/19 Executive Members Updates

None.

SCOSC/17/20 Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) PEEL Report

The Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) introduced the report, advised on the current position of Bedfordshire police and highlighted improvement measures around victim safety, particularly those in relation to children and vulnerable people. There had been an increase in domestic violence convictions and victim satisfaction with the service and a sharp rise in hate crime, emergency calls and officer redeployment to Manchester and London due to recent national events, creating additional pressures on policing levels within Bedfordshire. Figures quoted in the report in relation to community policing numbers were not as low as they appeared as previous calculations hadn't

included investigatory CID officers, with the Chief Constable committed to increasing those numbers before the end of 2018.

A return to a community policing model would increase public engagement and police presence at community and cohesion events and despite the current low numbers, the boost to the front line initiative was a priority for the Police and Crime Commissioner, facilitating the return to work of officers currently on sick and long term leave. There was a recognised need to address the root cause of speeding in the region, reducing offences and establishing long term solutions.

In light of the report and update Members discussed the following in summary:-

- That improvements and outcomes were the joint responsibility of the Local Authority, the police, Town and Parish Councils and other strategic partners, including the three local Community Safety Partnership (CSP) teams, acknowledging the different challenges each area of Bedfordshire brought.
- Whether the re-introduction of community policing would be implemented in time in order to effect an improved HMIC inspection.
- That there was a need to populate the community police hubs and concentrate resource in the most appropriate places, enabling the reporting of crime in the absence of traditional 'front desks'.
- Concerns regarding the long term viability of Bedfordshire police as a standalone force and the benefits of working cohesively with neighbouring forces.
- A lack of confidence within the rural community in the police and that areas assigned to officers were too large leading to ineffectual outcomes.
- A need to improve public communication in order to mitigate widespread public dissatisfaction with Bedfordshire police and reinstate officer attendance at Town and Parish Council meetings.
- Confirmation that a recruitment freeze had been lifted but there was a need for clarity around demand led areas which was proving a challenge for management, with concerns that open vacancies increased pressures on an already under resourced force.
- The need to identify challenges and training needs in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the most vulnerable at the earliest possible stage in order to mitigate long term escalations in cost, victim impact and resource.
- Given a recent national report in relation to stalking offences and poor offender profiling, concerns that processes locally didn't go far enough to support improvements.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. That the updated HMIC report be scrutinised at a future meeting.**

- 2. That improvements be made to support effective communication with the public, ensuring partnership working with all blue light emergency services.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and concluded at 11.50 a.m.)