

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA FOR
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Tuesday 15 March 2022 at 7.30pm
Council Chamber - Civic Centre**

The attached documents are due to be considered at the meeting listed above and were unavailable for circulation when the agenda for the meeting was published. The agenda item to which the documents relate is noted below.

3. Minutes (Pages 2 - 4)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2022.

8. Policing and Community Safety Annual Review - Question and Answer with the Police (Pages 5 - 10)

9. Allotments - Update Report (Pages 11 - 12)

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON**

8 February 2022

7.30 - 8.43 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Tony Edwards (Chair)
Councillor David Carter (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Eugenie Harvey
Councillor Matthew Siggers

Officers

Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration
Hannah Criddle, Governance Support Officer
Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support

41. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nick Churchill, Shona Johnson and Gareth Williams.

42. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor David Carter declared a non-pecuniary interest as a site rep for Harlow Allotment Association.

43. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2021 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

44. **MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Carter advised the committee that the Allotment Task and Finish group hadn't met due to changes to officer structure, however, it would arrange to meet before the next Scrutiny Committee meeting on 15 March 2022.

Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support, advised that the report on the review of turnout in local elections was under active consideration by the Returning Officer. Communications planning for May had been adjusted accordingly to also include the postal vote form in Harlow Times.

45. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The questions, together with the answers, are appended to the minutes.

46. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

47. **RESPONSES OF THE CABINET TO REPORTS OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

48. **DELIVERY OF COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING PROGRAMME**

The Committee received an update report on the delivery of the Council house building programme.

Councillor Dan Swords, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, provided progress updates on the 20 recommendations that the Scrutiny Committee made to Cabinet in March 2021. Councillor Swords also confirmed that the programme of schemes would be going to Cabinet in March 2022.

The Committee requested that all Councillors be invited to awareness sessions to ensure that the house building process is understood by all.

The Committee also discussed the objective apolitical approach to be adopted when considering matters at the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee also agreed that it would be useful to invite Councillors Simon Carter and Dan Swords back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee once the programme of schemes had gone to Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- A Noted the progress made on delivering the recommendations of the Scrutiny report on Council house building.

49. **POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REVIEW - AGREEMENT OF QUESTIONS**

The Committee received the list of questions submitted by Councillors and members of the public to ask in the question and answering session to Essex Police on 15 March 2022. The Committee also received a copy of the Essex Police district data for Harlow from December 2021.

Councillor Matthew Saggars noted that there weren't any statistics on cyber crime such as online grooming, cyber bullying and phishing emails. The Committee agreed to add a question on cyber crime. The committee

also noted its concerns on the use of e-scooters and increase in racial hate crimes alongside the overall crime rates and low “solved” rates.

The Committee agreed that the questions under the “high level” section and an additional question on cyber crime would be the focus of the question and answer session with Essex Police. The questions under the sections “police approach to work” and “site specific neighbourhood issues” would be submitted to Essex Police for full written responses to be provided. The Committee agreed that it would also ensure that the answers provided by Essex Police are sent to the members of the public who submitted the questions.

50. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee received a report summarising its work plan.

RESOLVED that the work plan be noted.

51. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

52. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE

Scrutiny Committee Meeting with Police

Agenda

1. **Welcome – 5 min**
2. **Police presentation with focus on current Harlow Policing Issues and Statistics and addressing high level concerns – 25 min**
3. **Questions for Police (starting with questions on domestic violence and sexual harassment – 60 min**
4. **Committee Discussion re way forward – 25 min**
 Completion of Domestic Violence Work
 Possible Future meetings with PCF Commissioner, CS Team and Portfolio Holder, Safer Harlow Partnership
 Recommendations to Cabinet
5. **Allotments Initial Report – 10 min**
6. **AOB**

Questions

To be asked at the meeting

Question	Councillor
Violence against the person (up 10%) sexual offences (up 20%). Domestic Violence (up 15%) High Risk Domestic Violence (up 19.6%) What needs to be done to tackle these issues?	
From your own data it appears you have not solved a single rape case in the past 12 months. What can be done to reassured regarding safety?	
Racial / Religious Aggravated offences and Hate Crime (up 30%) What needs to be done to tackle these issues?	
Solved rates are down in the majority of categories – Why is this and what is being done to address the issues and reassure the public?	
<p>After seeing the statistics on crime in Harlow for 2020 / 2021 at no point are there any details on cyber crime against our resident, I do understand that the crimes may fall under other categories but in the current world we live in it would be good to know what factor the new digital world is playing in crime in Harlow.</p> <p>As Tuesday 8th February was internet safety day and the same day as the meeting I feel it was quite a good time to review this and ask the question as the Council has a big role to play on this as a civic leaders on this as many children get lesson is school but what about other</p>	<p>Cllr Saggers</p>

generations?	
What needs to be done to raise the public profile of the police?	
Antisocial behaviour figures have fallen by a third over the last year/ Have the Police any views why this the case and what more could be done to maintain this downward trend?	
Over the past 50 years it seems that the authority and the regard the police used to have has disappeared. The police take more verbal and physical abuse than was ever thought would be the case and they seem to have little protection from the laws and lawmakers. What are your federations doing about this?	Cllr D Carter

Further questions and comments submitted by the public. As due to time constraints it will not be possible to address these questions specifically at the meeting the Committee would be grateful for a written response to the questions that can be attached to the record of the meeting.

1. Would it be useful to compare Essex and Nottinghamshire Police regarding rape and sexual offence cases? The Essex force has 2.96 officers per 1000 people and in Nottinghamshire it is 2.95.
The PFCC for Nottinghamshire produced a report on 2 November 2021. It says on page 7:
"Between 01/04/2021 and 17/10/2021 the force has achieved 63 Positive Outcomes for Rape (10% recorded crime) and 222 Positive Outcomes for Sexual Offences (11.6% recorded crime)."
How can Essex Police justify zero solved rape cases as was reported by YourHarlow in its article 'Essex Police defend "abysmal" record on solving crimes in Harlow' published 27 January 2022?
Please see the Nottinghamshire report at:
<https://www.nottinghamshire.pcc.police.uk/About-Us/03-Nottinghamshire-Police-Public-Protection-and-Safeguarding-Report.pdf>
2. Will the police in Harlow consider adopting a strategy in full or part known as Project Zeal to reduce shoplifting and its associated violent crime, as implemented by Nottinghamshire Police and outlined in a College of Policing article dated 14 December 2021? its URL being:
<https://www.college.police.uk/article/working-retail-and-security-reduce-shoplifting>
Note: Project Zeal was launched to strengthen the relationship between retail, security and policing by sharing information, using technology to identify prolific offenders and tailoring policing solutions to tackle crime
3. According to stats on the police website (<https://www.police.uk/your-area/essex-police/harlow-east/?tab=Statistics>), for the last year, around 40% of crimes were concluded as "not able to prosecute"

suspect” and around another 20% of crimes were concluded as “unable to identify suspect”. If I’ve understood this correctly, 60% of criminals get off with their crime, this doesn’t include the ones where the Courts find someone not guilty. Why does this look so poor? As potential victims of crime is there more that can be done to prevent it in the first place and/or help ensure a successful prosecution?

4. With the rise in Violence/Racial-Religious/Domestic Abuse cases rising [together with cases being solved down] is it not time to put neighbourhood policing more visually available on a regular daily basis? Not just when police hold surgeries?
5. In my opinion drug taking at underpasses needs tackling. Underpasses are always near a kids park or kids playing field and the smell and sight is detrimental to the area and not something anyone wants their young kids exposed to. Electric Scooters need stopping more, they are silent and deadly and I fear it will not be long before a death occurs in Harlow because of electric scooters. Can you please do more to make the walking paths and cycling paths of this town more welcoming to all and more safe by looking at these issues, thank you.
6. What happened to the much advertised (at the time) Police tactic of having "on the beat" police on bicycles of a few years ago? It was very popular with the public and most people in general. I don't remember the scheme being officially abandoned, it seems to have just fizzled out. Mind you , this was back in the days when we had a properly resourced Police Service , so maybe I have just answered my own question
7. Why is there not a visible police presence around the town
Terminus street & clockhouse areas seems to be going into the dark ages
Friday & Saturday nights the level of anti social behaviour in town centre is bad yet no police about
Surely now with rising levels of crime, 24 hour police station needs to reopen especially in a town of 85000 and growing
Every estate should have a manned police office, the stow, staple & bushfair could really do with it
Police should work with mobile security companies to secure industrial estates & car parks.
Can the police push for banning orders / exclusion orders from town for persistent offenders? I'd like to see more police on foot walking the streets and like old days on push bikes
With rising level of electric scooters, it would be good to see police on them too to combat the dangerous scooter riders that blight the streets all police should be armed with minimum of a taser, and perhaps an armed team be visible on the streets. Criminals have become used to lack of police presence, police & judiciary action. And know too well there's not enough police about

8. Currently the law in this country forbids the use of electric scooters everywhere with the exception of use on private land. Why is it then, that I am, on a daily confronted by irresponsible users of these machines on public roads, footpaths and cycle tracks? Many users are in the age bracket of 10-16. Can the local force get these stupid machines removed and scrapped?

It just may help if signage is put in place to reinforce this.

9. I would like to ask. Why does it take so long to get cctv evidence? because after 4 weeks it gets deleted and then the evidence had gone and then you can't prosecute due to no evidence?

10. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation commissioned 'A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders' and reported their findings on 17 November 2021 (see URL at end of this question). Please explain what progress has been made locally or at county level to implement the report's seven recommendations relevant to the police that are listed below?

Local criminal justice services (police, CPS, courts, probation, prisons) and health commissioners/providers should:

10. develop and deliver a programme of mental health awareness-raising for staff working within criminal justice services. This should include skills to better explain to individuals why they are being asked questions about their mental health so that there can be more meaningful engagement;

11. jointly review arrangements to identify, assess and support people with a mental illness as they progress through the Criminal Justice System to achieve better mental health outcomes and agree plans for improvement.

The police service should:

14. ensure that all dedicated investigative staff receive training on vulnerability which includes inputs on responding to the needs of vulnerable suspects (as well as victims). This should be incorporated within detective training courses;

15. dip sample (outcome code) OC10 and OC12 cases to assess the standard and consistency of decision making and use this to determine any training or briefing requirements and the need for any ongoing oversight;

16. review the availability, prevalence, and sophistication of mental health flagging, to enhance this where possible, and to consider what meaningful and usable data can be produced from this;

17. assure themselves that risks, and vulnerabilities are properly identified during risk assessment processes, particularly for voluntary attendees. They must ensure that risks are appropriately managed, including referrals to Healthcare Partners, Liaison and Diversion and the use of appropriate adults;

18. Police leadership should review MG (manual of guidance) forms to include prompts or dedicated sections for suspect vulnerability to be included.

Link to report:

<https://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprobation/inspections/a-joint->

Site Specific Neighbourhood Issues

- 11.** What is being done about the incredible spike in vehicle thefts from Newhall alone (12 in 12 months) 2 taken within 10 minutes of one another. It keeps happening yet there is no increase in patrols and only more incidents over here.
- 12.** Is anything being done about the increasing number of cars parking on and blocking pavements in residential areas, particularly Church Langley
- 13.** I am a transgender women in Harlow Essex I don't feel safe at all I get hassle when using the toilets and in some shops
- 14.** Speed checks needed down Elizabeth Way/Herons Wood. Far too many speeding vehicles and HGVs
- 15.** Is there any reason why Potter Street from Prentice Place to Miller and Carter cannot have speed cameras or speed humps as I have lived on this road for 20years and the traffic does not take any notice of speed limits. Most traffic uses this as a rat run to avoid traffic going up to m11 roundabout many years ago there were often speed traps by the white horse pub but these seem to have gone by the way
- 16.** I am from Mark Hall Academy along First Avenue and one of our parents emailed in to say she would not send her daughters to school today 14th January as they witnessed and walked passed a fight that included a knife in the the First Avenue Underpass. This underpass is the only way to and from school. Would it be possible to ensure there is a community officer patrolling the underpass during the morning and afternoon about 3.10pm when students leave to get home, please.
- 17.** Why is it still after 6 years of telling the police that drug dealing is still occurring by the postbox at Arkwrights/Pittmans field? Its so blatant but seems to be overlooked! Can there not be a deterrent used?
- 18.** Is anything being done about the increase in electric scooters being used on the pavements, Particularly in Church Langley area.
- 19.** What is the Police policy in dealing with, Shoplifters, Bicycle riding and Electric Scooter Riding in the town centre? All of these are against the law but they seem to be ignored.

20. When you will allow more officers to patrol Harlow Town centre? Because unfortunately as a woman I feel unsafe to walk in that area after 4 pm because of the drunks and people on drugs which every time tries to intimidate you.

REPORT TO: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DATE: 15 MARCH 2022

TITLE: REVIEW OF ALLOTMENTS

LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL PITT, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
ENVIRONMENT (01279) 446114

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** Further meetings of the Councillor Task and Finish Group be arranged and a further report be received by the Committee in the following municipal year

BACKGROUND

1. Further to the Committee's resolution at its meeting of 7 December 2021 a meeting of the Task and Finish working group was arranged in February 2022 to consider the issues that had been identified.

ISSUES/PROPOSALS

2. It was noted that the continued operation of self- managed allotments through the Allotment Association relied on the voluntary work of a relatively small number of individuals, and that in some case those individuals had been carrying out this work since self-management was established. There was some concern that with increasing age the work involved might become increasingly burdensome.
3. While there is the possibility of individual sites self managing, there would be some risk for the management committee, as they would have to take responsibility for and effectively underwrite utility bills and other outgoings, in the hope of sufficient income from plot rental. Allotment sites varied in their popularity and the less successful sites were often not fully occupied, tending to reinforce the issues that made them less popular. This risk may act as a disincentive to this approach to self-management.
4. It was therefore considered important to fully explore these issues with the Association, to review what practicable support might be available, including support with seeking external funding opportunities where appropriate.
5. It was considered that much had changed socially since allotment letting conditions had been developed, and while the Council had revised letting conditions to accommodate the keeping of bees, chickens and rabbits, they were otherwise largely unchanged. Uses that might be considered reasonable, such as collective use by charity groups supporting people with disabilities, or use for mixed production and amenity, particularly for people who had no gardens, are perhaps difficult to accommodate within the rules, suggesting a careful review of allotment conditions might be constructive.

6. Provision for people with disabilities was considered to be modest on most sites; it was considered that comparing Harlow with other similar areas in this regard would be constructive.
7. It was proposed that further meetings of the Task and Finish working group be arranged during the forthcoming year and that a further report be presented to the Committee thereafter.

IMPLICATIONS

Environment and Planning (Includes Sustainability)

None specific.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance (Includes ICT, and Property and Facilities)

None specific.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

As outlined in the report.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Community Wellbeing

None specific.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance (Includes HR)

None specific.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Support

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

None