

**MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON**

9 February 2021

7.30 - 8.57 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Tony Edwards (Chair)
Councillor David Carter (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Joel Charles
Councillor Bob Davis
Councillor Maggie Hulcoop
Councillor Stefan Mullard
Councillor Emma Toal

Officers

Hannah Criddle, Governance Support Officer
Simon Hill, Head of Governance
Adam Rees, Governance Support Officer

33. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Shannon Jezzard and Shona Johnson.

34. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

35. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2020 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

36. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

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

None.

38. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

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

None.

40. **POLICING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REVIEW - PRESENTATION AND Q&A WITH THE POLICE**

The Committee received a presentation on policing from Inspectors Paul Austin and Stephen Wright. During the presentation the Police explained their response to the global pandemic and the impact that it has had on the types of crime being committed. The presentation showed that there had been an overall reduction in crime in Harlow, although there had been an increase in ASB, partly due to lockdown contraventions. Inspector Austin also explained that Operation Raptor had helped to target modern slavery and county lines in the town. Following the pandemic and lockdown, the Police would be re-focussing on face to face engagement, the use of closure orders for problem properties, targeted ASB patrols and the town centre.

Inspector Austin showed the Committee solve rates for crime in Harlow and confirmed that the figures could be sent to Committee Members for their information but were published on the Commissioners Website. In response to questions on crime in the town centre and different neighbourhood hatches, Inspector Austin advised that the Police had a variety of techniques including increased patrols and engagement, partnership working, CCTV and the Town Centre Action Plan.

When asked about the impact and dynamics of serious organised crime, Inspector Austin confirmed that the Police now find it easier to identify other types of serious organised crime. The Police have also had more time to be proactive. In terms of County Lines, the Operation Raptor team has a strong understanding of the area and was on top of different lines that they were aware of. The Police also confirmed that they were better at recognising modern slavery e.g. car washes, nail bars and brothels.

Inspector Austin advised that there were still options available to victims of domestic abuse despite Covid-19 restrictions. Inspector Austin also agreed that a future meeting between Essex Police and the Council to discuss domestic abuse in Harlow could be arranged.

The Police confirmed that the current partnership working with the Council was working really well. Inspector Austin asked for any support the Council may be able to provide when face to face community engagement recommenced.

The Committee thanked the Police for attending the meeting and for all of their work in the town. The Committee agreed to consider the information provided by the Police and any recommendations for Cabinet at a later meeting.

41. **WORK PLAN**

The Committee received a report summarising its work plan for 2020/21. It was agreed that the Committee would complete the two outstanding housing related reviews before commencing further scrutiny topics.

RESOLVED that the work plan and order of reviews be agreed.

42. **ALLOTMENT - TOPIC SUBMISSION FORM**

The Committee agreed that Councillors David Carter, Hulcoop and Mullard would form a Sub Committee for this topic. The Committee also agreed that the Herts and Essex Community Farm and Derek Harris (Chairman of Harlow Allotments) be included as witnesses for the review.

RESOLVED that the topic submission form be agreed.

43. **REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES**

None.

44. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE