

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOODS, INCLUSION, COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

4.00pm 1 JULY 2019

HOVE TOWN HALL, - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Knight (Chair)

Also in attendance: Councillor Moonan (Deputy Chair), Powell (Opposition Spokesperson), Simson (Group Spokesperson), Bagaeen, Ebel, Evans, Hill, McNair and Clare

Invitees: Anusree Biswas Sasidharan, BME Police Engagement Group, Joanna Martindale, Hangleton & Knoll Project, CCG Representative

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

Declaration of Substitutes

1.1 Councillor Clare was a substitute for Councillor Deane.

1b Declaration of Interest

1.2 There were none.

1c. Exclusions of the Press and Public

In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("The Act"), the Committee considered whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during an item of business on the grounds that it was likely, in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present during that item, that there would be disclosure to them of confidential information, (as defined in section 100A(3) of the Act) or exempt information as defined in section 100(1) of the Act).

- 1.3 **RESOLVED** – That the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item on the agenda.

2 MINUTES

- 2.1 **RESOLVED** - That the Chair be authorised to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2019 as a correct record.

3 CHAIRS COMMUNICATIONS

- 3.1 The Chair gave the following communications:

“Welcome councillors, standing invitees and members of the public (present and viewing via the web cam) to the first meeting of the NICE committee for the new civic year.

Committee members will be aware that we were due to consider an item on the Third Sector Commission 2020-2023. I have listened and considered the comments I have received regarding the item and have consulted the spokespeople for the Greens and the Conservatives. However, given the importance of the matter, I have decided that the item be withdrawn from this committee meeting and that a **special** NICE committee meeting be held.

This special meeting will be considering solely this item, so that we can give it the time it deserves. I intend to call the special meeting as soon as is practically possible, before the 25th July and the standing invitees will, of course, invited to attend the meeting. In fact I would very much welcome their attendance and input into the debate especially the community and voluntary sector representatives, so we may continue the strong collaborative relationship the council has with the sector.

In addition, I am conscious that committee members will be aware that a recent all committee review has taken place, looking at the remit and workload of each of the various council committees with the aim of making sure decision making is effective and streamlined.

The review found that there are some areas of overlap where work and responsibilities were being duplicated across committees. Therefore, a proposal is being put forward to the Policy, Resources and Growth Committee and then to Full Council later this month to reallocate work to more relevant committees. The aim is to reduce duplication and ensure that no one committee is overburdened. For example, rough sleeping is proposed to move to Housing and New Homes committee and responsibility for major projects, economic growth and regeneration will move from Tourism, Development and Culture to Policy and Resources Growth committee.

There is also a proposal to create a new committee by bringing together the Neighbourhoods, Inclusion, Communities & Equalities (NICE) and Tourism,

Development & Culture (TDC) committees. The new committee is set to be called Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture (TECC) committee.

ALL the work currently being undertaken by the NICE committee will continue and none of the focus will be lost. And with the shifting of some sizeable areas of work to more relevant committees, I am really confident that this new committee will continue to drive the work needed to tackle inequality in this city and support the community and voluntary sector to survive and thrive. Moreover, and really importantly, the proposal is to continue with our standing invitees on the new committee who bring welcome challenge and alternative view points and experience that add great value to our committee debates and decision making.

None of this negates the importance of the items we have on the agenda this evening, or at the special meeting. And I thank you all for your dedication to the remit of the committee - especially the community and voluntary sector representatives who have given their time and energy over the life of the committee and are coming with us to the proposed new committee. With your help and hard work, we have managed to not only mitigate the most damaging effects of the Conservative Government's ideologically driven cuts (to Social Services, the benefits system, the housing budgets, the NHS, the police and education – to name just a few) but also to build new structures and ways of working to protect and enhance peoples' lives. So thank you.

Now I would like to shift the focus away from council business, to look at what's been happening across our city, since the last committee meeting. It's a long and inspirational list!

The Council organised - in partnership with American Express - a wonderful celebratory event on 17th June, to say thank you to some of the amazing volunteers in our city. And I would like to invite by fellow committee members to join me in repeating that thanks here at this evening's committee meeting. Thank you.

Then there was the recent refugee week where the welcome message from the city was as strong as ever with lots of dialogue and support for unity and standing together against hate – so important in these divisive times. Especially inspiring was the hands against hate human chain in New Road, and Sanctuary on Sea's flagship Refugee Week event at the Dome.

And just to further confirm our City's reputation for creativity and inclusivity, we also had the go-live of a fantastic young people led project, again against hate and division. Supported by the council's communities team, the Young Voices project launched its social media project @anyonebrighton which already has 102 followers – please follow, comment and repost them on Instagram

The Communities team has also supported the growth and formal launch of Brighton & Hove Upstanders Network bringing together diverse community groups to stand together against hate and all forms of extremism

I am pleased to announce that there has been a fantastic number of bids (over 60 at the last count) to the first round of the council's annual grant programme - the

Communities Fund – these are currently being appraised and decisions will be out soon. Also, a reminder to everyone – present or watching - if you have groups looking for funding **please** do remind them that the next round of the Communities Fund is closing soon **26th July** and then our final round is mid October – October 18th, I believe.

I want to wish our Trans community and allies a safe and successful Trans Pride on 20th July. It has become a well-recognised occasion in the city's event calendar, attracting national and international visitors who can take part in a week-long programme of events of inclusion and celebration of trans and non-binary people. Most importantly, I take this opportunity to send a message of solidarity to the Trans and non-binary community here in Brighton and Hove, in the UK and Internationally. These are difficult times, and we stand with you.

As a socialist administration, we deplore the ongoing injustice and ill treatment of our citizens, under the Conservative hostile environment policy, so it was uplifting to see the celebration of Windrush Day in the city on June 22nd. There were many events but I would like to mention the Windrush Tea party that was held at the Royal Pavilion. This was a wonderful event made possible by the collaboration of B&H BME Heritage Network and Royal Pavilion & Museums.

And last week we held a multi-agency week of action to raise awareness of violence, vulnerability and exploitation in our neighbourhoods and communities as well as launching our #spotthesigns of exploitation social media and poster campaign– find it on twitter using hashtag #spotthesigns.

Highlights of this campaign included:

- exploitation awareness training for taxi drivers by WiSE;
- Albion in the Community, Sussex Police, Trust for Developing Communities and youth workers from the voluntary sector all took part in the Premier League 'Kicks' pop-up sessions on the Level – a programme designed to inspire vulnerable or hard to reach young people.
- There were also joint awareness visits by licensing teams from the council, police and the fire service to bed and breakfasts properties; including visits from the police 'cuckoo' car, to properties and individuals considered to be at risk
- workers from a large range of agencies visited neighbourhood groups to have discussions around these issues and how it affected them in their areas. I know that the members of both the Moulsecoomb and the Bevendean Local Action Teams, at their monthly meetings, were very interested to find out about the campaign around cuckooing and stamping out county lines.
- There was also a large event organised by Sussex Police at the Amex Community Stadium bringing together about 150 people from across the city to look at how serious crime, violence and anti-social behaviour impacts us as a city and as individuals and seeking positive ways to tackle this together.

So a busy, creative and inspiring time for the City. These events really highlight what is so amazing about our community, about our shared desire to both protect and

defend our residents, but also improve the lives of everyone that lives and visits. And it was a privilege – but also very humbling - to sit here and read that list out.”

4 CALL OVER

4.1 Items 7 - 10 appearing on the agenda were called for discussion .

5 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

5a Petitions

5.1 There were none.

5b Written Questions

5.2 Adrian Hart presented the following written question.

“It took Argus articles/direct pleas from residents before the plight of tenants at Milner Flats was taken seriously by the council. Across sixteen months of the Circus Street development officers and councillors became aware of hateful abuse directed at tenants from this PPP site. Yet no support was offered. Tenants at the forefront of abuse and least equipped to deal with it have learning difficulties (ie they’re a protected category). Does the Chair agree that the Council apology to all tenants (Argus May 10th) also needs an accompanying explanation of why a disadvantaged, unrepresented working class community was systematically ignored?”

5.3 The Chair gave the following reply:

“Thank you for bringing your question to the committee. I am aware that the residents of Kingswood and Milner were let down by the council, and I know the Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing has apologised for this.

As a member of a Labour administration, I would like to add my apologies, because we have always been the Party that prided itself on defending the most vulnerable in our society and it would appear to me that we fell short of that principle.

You have asked for an explanation to accompany the apology. I have spoken to officers and hope that the following is helpful to you.

As already accepted, in this instance we - certainly did not provide the levels of service we should have. And although a council representative attended every meeting, he was there in order to answer technical questions about the build and also about air and noise pollution issues but was not an officer from the tenant involvement team. He did take back questions and comments to the housing involvement team, but at the time, they had a remit to deal with landlord queries and didn’t feel able to answer questions

which were not about the landlord service. I know tenants felt frustrated at this as they just wanted the matter and their problems with Henry construction resolved but this didn't happen.

When this was raised with the Executive Director by Simon Burgess (on behalf of the local MP), she was concerned and so attended the following meeting. The Executive Director told residents at the meeting that the council had got it wrong and promised change.

Since that meeting every resident has since been visited, their concerns taken on board and action taken to ensure they feel safe in their home and I am also very pleased to hear that housing staff have attended every meeting since and continue to support the tenants. (I am advised that tenants have said informally that there is now better communication with the council)

At the meeting attended by the Executive Director, the tenants raised concerns about how the site will be managed in the future and Larissa Reed committed to working with U+I to address this.

In fact, the Executive Director has now met with the owners of the site U+I and has secured their agreement that they will work more closely and respectfully with tenants in the future – including working together to agree a list of acceptable behaviours that will apply to the residents that are moving into in the new accommodation.

I have been assured that there have been significant changes to the way in which we now work with residents in these situations, based on our learning from what happened to those you speak for, Mr Hart, including the setting up of new team who are committed to engaging in a meaningful and purposeful way with all residents.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Larissa Reed's openness and honesty about the council shortcomings in this instance. It is a really important principal to stand accountable for when things go wrong – because without this, it is impossible to build trust.

I really hope that you, and those you represent, feel that your voices have been heard today, albeit belatedly. I want you to feel reassured that lessons have certainly been learned from what happened to the residents of Kingswood and Milner Flats."

- 5.4 Adrian Hart then asked the following supplementary question:
"Would you agree that Local Authority prejudice against working class inhabitants is something that the Council is not immune to?"
- 5.5 The Chair replied that she agreed that prejudice did exist, but it was something to learn from this case.
- 5.6 Larissa Reed, Executive Director for Neighbourhoods, Communities and Housing stated that the council was proud of the work it did in this area and that the new service aimed to tackle this issue. She confirmed that tenants were community members and that the

council had to be mindful of prejudice around the issues of inclusion and cohesion. She also stated that she did not think it was fair to say that the council was prejudiced against tenants or white working-class people.

The Chair concluded that she was more than happy to respond on this question.

5.7 Mr Hawtree presented the following second written question:

“Would Councillor Knight please describe to us the Councillor and Reader involvement proposed for the next Libraries Plan before it is brought to the Committee?”

5.8 The Chair then gave the following response:

“Library Services are proposing to hold a number of workshops for Councillors throughout the process, before the Libraries Plan is written. Members will be presented with information from library users gathered through surveys and feedback, and collated with other needs assessment data, for initial discussions.

Following this, there will be engagement with local people in three main ways:

Firstly, Libraries will work with local ward councillors to consult and engage local residents on any proposals for specific libraries.

Secondly, feedback will be collected through Libraries many partner organisations in the city – such as community groups and the voluntary sector, schools and colleges, cultural organisations, the health and social care sector, and many others. This will enable Libraries to get a better idea of how to best support people’s reading, learning, cultural, health and well-being through libraries provision.

Thirdly, if there are any city-wide proposals for change then a city-wide consultation will take place.

The results of consultation and engagement on Libraries proposals will be reported to the committee in advance of the Libraries Plan being written.

The Libraries Plan 2020-24 will be produced following this series of engagement and consultation activity and will be presented to a future committee.”

5.9 Mr Hawtree then asked the following supplementary question:

“This is a cause for concern for readers – not the customer. Can I be assured that this will be a detailed comprehensive libraries plan with the emphasis on book stock and an overarching and binding plan? – Since we have not included the Carnegie Library previously.

5.10 In response, the Head of Libraries / Chair stated that they wanted to make this as detailed and comprehensive as possible and that it was over 50 pages long, with the previous one being 100 pages long. She replied that they had a history of providing detailed plans and that it would include the provision of books. She confirmed that they

would want to include more of the bibliographic service provision on how stock was used and bought so that it was clearly available to members of the public.

5c Deputations

5.11 There were none.

6 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

6 (a) Petitions

6.1 Christopher Hawtree appeared to hear the response to the petition on Hove Carnegie Library petition signed by 105 people which had previously been presented by Councillor Wealls to Full Council held on 28 March 2019.

6.2 The Chair gave the following response:

“The continued letting of a small reading room in Hove Library to a local music college is an integral part of the package of changes that were agreed by the cross-party Members Working Group on Hove Library last year. The contract with the music college is for the provision of lending library services as well as the study space, and this income is an essential part of the funding needed to make Hove Library more affordable and sustainable.

The college students do use the room and the library services provided and have given very positive feedback. For instance during May, 437 visits were made to the room by students. Analysis shows that student visits to the room are fairly evenly distributed over the six days Monday to Saturday, and climb quickly after opening at 10am, peaking at around 11am and remaining high throughout the rest of the day. Additional study seats were provided elsewhere in the library when the room was allocated to the music college service, and the room is available for public use in the college holidays.

The overall package of changes agreed by the cross-party Members Working Group included a nursery and the successful introduction of a café run by Café Domenica supporting people with learning disabilities. Since opening the café in October, footfall has increased by over 7% compared to the same period a year ago.”

6.3 Councillor Clare wanted to thank Mr Hawtree for being so committed to the facts and for giving the residents in her ward value.

6(b) Written Questions

There were none.

6(c). Letters

There were none.

6(d) Notices of Motion

There were none.

7 CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS- NEIGHBOURHOODS, INCLUSION, COMMUNITIES & EQUALITIES COMMITTEE

- 7.1 The Legal Advisor explained that this Item was required to request approval from the Committee to set up a Sub Committee and that she was happy to answer any brief questions.
- 7.2 Anusree Biswas remarked that she felt it was very forward thinking of the council to invite further specialists from the community as mentioned in paragraph 2.4.
- 7.3 Councillor Powell wanted it noted on record that regarding the issue of Item 11 of this meeting, she could not promise to commit to the Committee in future, due to the main items of quality regarding the Third Sector and where she felt all should be given the chance to vote on this issue.
- 7.4 The Chair said that she had given her full reasons in the Chairs Comms regarding Item 11.
- 7.5 Councillor Moonan stated that she wanted to note that Item 7 was a procedural item and that people had questioned the validity of the NICE committee and that this issue with Item 11 should have been more clearly published.
- 7.6 Councillor Simson stated that this item related to setting up an urgent Sub Committee and she was unclear about the difference between this and a special committee, as this was not detailed in the report.
- 7.7 The Legal Advisor replied that a subcommittee had fewer members was for urgent matters and could be called at short notice. A special meeting needed to be held outside the usual committee timetable and the object was to function as a committee but to deal with a single item. The rules on reports were the same as all committees and that papers were published in advance and the normal procedures for committees were applicable.
- 7.8 Councillor Simson queried the timeline for this special meeting. The Legal Adviser replied that although she was not privy to the availability of rooms and dates, every attempt was made for publication requirements to be met. She confirmed the special meeting would happen within 10 days, before 25th July.

- 7.9 Councillor Clare asked about Item 6a regarding the role of the Committee since there was anger in the room about not hearing the report today and people were wary that the terms of reference were not going to be met.
- 7.10 The Chair said that she had not lacked clarity on the subject and that terms of reference would be met. The Legal Adviser stated that they had rehearsed the rationale and that committee time had been set aside for this. She felt that they had dealt with the procedural aspects clearly to ensure that the committee's business of today was correct.
- 7.11 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed the following:
1. To note the committee's terms of reference, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
 2. To approve the establishment of an Urgency Sub-Committee consisting of the Chair of the Committee and two other Members (nominated in accordance with the scheme for the allocation of seats for committees), to exercise its powers in relation to matters of urgency, on which it is necessary to make a decision before the next ordinary meeting of the Committee to be approved.
 3. To invite one representative each from Sussex Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group and two representatives from Community Works in the areas of equalities and neighbourhoods to attend all meetings in an advisory capacity.
 4. To invite further specialist community representatives to attend meetings on an issue by issue, ad-hoc basis.

8 COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE

- 8.1 Jo Player, Head of Safer Communities briefly summarised the report and asked for any questions from the Committee.
- 8.2 Councillor Powell presented the Green group's Amendment which focussed on the trans community, since she stated that the BBC had stated that hate crime against the transgender community was currently up by 81%. She confirmed that the training for councillors was amazing and that everyone should be involved in this, with the scrutiny work involved had taken 3 years to complete. The Amendment was seconded by Councillor Ebel.
- 8.3 There was then a long discussion on this report and its subject matter with questions and points raised by the following councillors and answered by the Head of Safer Communities and Superintendent De La Rue, Sussex Police:
- 8.4 Councillor Simson was concerned about the increase in crime raised in the report and noted that it mentioned the decrease in homophobic incidents which was not in line with her own information on this subject. She asked the following 2 questions: 1. Regarding para 3.14 regarding Community Protection Notices that the police have had power to use since 2017. – Have these been used and why were incidents increasing?

Secondly, in connection with crimes reported in the St James St area, how are police recording homophobic crime incidents?

- 8.5 The Head of Safer Communities stated they continued to liaise with the social landlord to engage and use the powers, citing Pete Wong and the Community Safety meetings who were working on this. Superintendent De La Rue confirmed that Sussex Police were working with a perception-based approach – so if someone felt that the crime was homophobic in nature, the police undertook it as this. He also confirmed that there had to be evidence to support this, but that this was separate from the way it was recorded.
- 8.6 Jo Martindale stated that Hangleton & Knoll had been successful in getting funding from the Home Office to pay for youth coaches to assist with these problems since the hope was to catch young people before they resorted to crime. She confirmed that they had shown a £3 investment for every £1 of funding.
- 8.7 Councillor Clare asked 2 questions: Firstly about ASB figures, she asked how secure these figures were. And secondly, she queried what the Week of Action around County Lines entailed.
- 8.8 The Head of Safer Communities stated that the Week of Action had just finished, which had included a series of events including one for taxi drivers, which was really positive. She confirmed that they hoped to run similar events each year.
- 8.9 Superintendent De La Rue said it was important for people to get support who needed it, around County Lines and gave the example of cuckoo cars where criminals had taken over the home of a vulnerable person and explained Sussex police's method of dealing with this and that they had arrested 35 people in connection with this. He answered about the ASB issues that there had been a swing between crime and non-crime elements and that this was a judgement to be made by the police and not the public. He confirmed that the 101-telephone line was challenging when busy but that there were other ways of reporting including online reporting.
- 8.10 Councillor Moonan highlighted the fact that with Councillor Powell they had worked a lot on councillor training and that the LGBT and trans training was on the agenda and she hoped that this would receive a good turnout across the 54 councillors. Regarding the report she highlighted the problem with the austerity cuts to this budget and how it was linked to increased crime. She also referred to Councillor Clare's point on reporting fatigue and highlighted the post of the modern slavery co-ordinator, which she felt was important.
- 8.11 The Head of Safer Communities explained the history of appointing the Modern Slavery Co-ordinator post and that it was important for staff to be able to recognise the signs of slavery and trafficking. Superintendent De La Rue stated that it was important that this issue was reported to the police. Regarding the reporting fatigue, he confirmed that victims should report to the police but also engage with the stakeholder teams where it may be an issue for the broader community.
- 8.12 Anusree Biswas stated that hate crime was difficult to record and that it was important to examine all the statistics around this.

- 8.13 The Head of Safer Communities highlighted the Community Safety Strategy for 2020 where the statistics should be collected and analysed.
- 8.14 Councillor Ebel asked whether there would be extra funding available for reporting, citing the high number of non-reported domestic violence - DV cases on page 32.
- 8.15 Superintendent De La Rue replied that he currently had no further information on funding and would follow this up going forward.
- 8.16 The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing stated that funding had been increased with funding going to Rise and that no-one felt that there was enough money spent in this area and that this would be discussed at Budget Council.
- 8.17 Councillor Bagaeen said he wanted to highlight some issues re: paragraph 3.16 and 3.22 and it was unclear which crime figures had increased and which had decreased. He was unhappy with the figure of 10 % less racist incidents mentioned in the report and also asked about how the police and council had tackled the modern slavery trafficking in the Circus Street raid.
- 8.18 The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing replied that the Council had tightened up all checks since the Circus St raid and that they were in a stronger position now, since a meeting with U & I. She confirmed that no-one had suggested that it had been connected to modern slavery although it had been reported as trafficking, and that there had been no action proven on this since then, as they now ensured that checks were taking place.
- 8.19 Superintendent De La Rue stated that in relation to hate crime statistics the number of crimes had risen, although this seemed to be counter intuitive the general trend appeared to be an increase in these crimes.
- 8.20 Councillor Powell asked for figures on the rolling out of SoS and the 178 premises who had signed up as mentioned in paragraph 3.24. The Head of Safer Communities said she would be happy to check and come back to clarify on these figures.
- 8.21 Councillor Powell then asked about the reporting of disability hate crime and how the council were making disabled, sight impaired and deaf groups feel supported.
- 8.22 Superintendent De La Rue replied that the police encouraged the reporting of disability hate crime and that they wanted to engage with victim support groups and possibly move to a third-party reporting system. He confirmed that they had worked with Speak Out .
- 8.23 Emma McDermott - Head of Communities & Equality confirmed that the council had worked closely with the police and co-ordinated with the deaf community, with there being a new Police Liaison Officer for the Deaf community and wanted to get a similar forum established as they had in the Hampshire area.
- 8.24 Anusree Biswas asked about campaigns that may address the County Lines issues in Brighton & Hove.

- 8.25 The Head of Safer Communities replied that a media campaign had been launched that focussed on youth exploitation rather than drugs on this issue.
- 8.26 Councillor Simson queried how disability hate crime was categorised differently from other hate crimes.
- 8.27 Councillor McNair asked why violence against the person was up by 100 per cent as this was a huge statistic.
- 8.28 Superintendent De La Rue replied that this statistic included about 20 different offences that included DV and he also highlighted an increase in stalking offences and that the police needed to improve on mistakes in this issue.
- 8.29 Councillor Hill stated that it was important to show what the council and the police were doing and that a reduction in funding had affected this and that this would shore up enormous problems for the future.
- 8.30 Councillor Bagaean asked how many refugees the council had resettled since in Bristol they had resettled 150 people.
- 8.31 The Head of Communities & Equality replied that there was a report pathway that she could send out that detailed this information. She confirmed that the resettlement programme was discussed with leaders of various groups and 10 households were supported four years ago. They then went back to the Leader's group and it was agreed to take a further 10 households, so around 30 people. She stated that at least 3 families had properties allocated and that this was a challenging area. She confirmed that the program had been extended by one year and that they had received feedback from four families.
- 8.32 Councillor Powell cited Councillor Hill's comments on the effect of cuts for 10 years and stated that training needed to be prioritised for vulnerable people and that the council needed to ensure that the support was there.
- 8.33 Councillor Ebel stated that she wanted so to support the amendment for the trans community as it was important to be respectful to this group.
- 8.34 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed to the recommendations of the report as follows:
1. To note and comment on the information contained in the report which provides an update on work being undertaken by the Community Safety Team in relation to the Community Safety Team in relation to the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2017 – 20.

2. To give its continued support to the partnership work described in the report and to work described which is within the council's remit, thereby contributing to the management of crime and community safety priorities for the city.
3. To roll out the Trans Awareness Training recommended by the Trans Scrutiny Panel to new councillors as soon as possible as part of the current Member Development Package, given the sharp rise in recorded hate crime against our trans community both locally and nationally.

9 FIELD OFFICER SERVICE : PROGRESS REPORT

- 9.1 Annie Sparks – Regulatory Services Manager presented a brief summary of the report and outlined the business case that was initiated on 22nd January 2019. She confirmed that it had been agreed that there would then be a further update within the first 6 months. She highlighted the new agreed hours of 12 noon – 8pm for the service.
- 9.2 Councillor Ebel asked about the timeline to increase the service to 7 days per week and also asked about the volunteer-led beach patrol.
- 9.3 The Regulatory Services Manager replied that there was a planned launch over the next few weeks that was going ahead in conjunction with the Communications team. She confirmed that councillors would be notified about this. This would also link in with Pride weekend. She confirmed that they could talk about the future of the volunteers service and an effective communication exchange on these matters going forward. At the moment the service is being run during the day, but the evening could also be targeted.
- 9.4 Councillor Bagaeen commented on the importance of the planning enforcement work carried out by this service, so that the joined-up delivery service was fantastic. He queried the one council approach on this, since other councils like Bristol focussed on homelessness.
- 9.5 The Regulatory Services Manager replied that in terms of one council, they regularly reviewed the services that Field Officers – FOs are delivering on behalf of other substantive services and that they needed to use their resources more effectively. She confirmed that there was an understanding of the trends and issues that are being dealt with by different teams and that they could bring enforcement powers and join these different elements up. She stated that they had talked about the term “silo'd working” to ensure that areas are joined up and delivering what communities really need,
- 9.6 Councillor Bagaeen asked if there was a culture of “silo'd working”?
- 9.7 The Regulatory Services Manager replied that there was and that the team was getting better at working across all services and confirmed that they were one of the first teams to use tablets in the field in order to share information including sharing with the police, fire and other partner agencies.

- 9.8 The Executive Director – Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing stated that silo'd working is about working with people and that the FOs aim was to find a solution for a problem within the correct department. She highlighted the fact that at the PR&G Committee in May, the Customer experience strategy for FOs was explained and that one of the best things that the team did was to take responsibility for dealing with each case and that new technology had been required for this. The team aimed to give the resident an answer that made sense to their problems. The Chair added that this was a lot for a new councillor to take on.
- 9.9 Councillor Clare asked if the LAT – Local Action Team in her ward of Brunswick Adelaide could have a meeting with the Field Officer team in order to have a face to face contact with a designated officer.
- 9.10 The Regulatory Services Manager replied that they were looking into LATs and understanding the needs of different action teams. She confirmed that it was important to bring things together and that they had already had meetings regarding the Brunswick festival and that officers would be there to respond.
- 9.11 Councillor Powell thanked the FO team citing paragraph 3.6 of the report and she asked about the challenges every day and was keen to know how the team could be supported on this.
- 9.12 The Regulatory Services Manager replied that they were very pleased with the skillset across the team that included planning enforcement and regulatory services and how much patience the FOs had in dealing with matters. She confirmed that they were not receiving repeat complaints and that the team were prepared to go out at different times including evenings in pairs so that they could learn from each other, at present. She also confirmed that they were meeting the policing team in order to network and understand their work. She confirmed that external trainers were brought in sometimes and that FOs also learned by shadowing each other.
- 9.13 Councillor Moonan asked the officer to give a flavour of the real satisfaction of the FO job.
- 9.14 The Regulatory Services Manager replied that one of the Field Officers with her could answer and he gave an example of dealing with a complaint regarding tagged graffiti in the Hanover area, where they had managed to liaise with the freeholder of the building and got the graffiti painted over and that it now had remained graffiti-free.
- 9.15 The Chair stated that she felt it was important to speak face to face with customers and that this was better done in person, rather than over the phone, since problems could therefore be picked up on and de-escalated before they developed.
- 9.16 Councillor Simson stated that she had been supportive of the FO team since Day 1 and that she was sure that the service would improve and that there would be new work. She stated that she felt there was one area that was missing, since Housing Associations had a lot of problems and that there was a missing link between them and the council at present and that she hoped the FOs could link the two. She also felt that environmental improvement was important for the team to link into, but she stated that

she felt people were still confused about how they could link in to the FO team. She confirmed that she had taken part in a walkabout with members of the FO team and was still confused about which areas were possible for them to engage with and which areas were not. She was pleased that the areas of fly tipping and noise response had been taken on board and requested that more walkabouts with the FO team were taken up.

- 9.17 The Chair raised the issue of the Customer Survey deadline which had now been extended to September, since she felt that the FO team had a useful role to play in this.
- 9.18 Councillor Ebel proposed an amendment to add a sentence to paragraph 2.1 “to note the work and progress of Field Officers and future reports”. She stated that not many residents had been aware of the FO team and that since the FOs focus on inspections – such as what to do if residents had a noise complaint. She confirmed that to be able to operate effectively she requested an awareness-raising campaign.
- 9.19 Councillor Clare agreed there was a need to raise awareness since in her ward they needed more public awareness about the FO team.
- 9.20 **RESOLVED:** To note the recommendation of the Report as follows:

To note the work and progress of the new Field Officer Team during the first six months of operation, and request that future reports include detail on the options for an awareness raising campaign for residents.

10 VICTIM BLAMING PLEDGE

- 10.1 Jo Player, Head of Safer Communities briefly summarised and introduced the report.
- 10.2 Councillor Moonan stated that it was important that the notice of motion was agreed unanimously and referred to Full Council. She stated that she did not believe that this was an organisation where this was a major issue, however it was vital since it was not about virtue signalling. She asked whether there were any performance measures of improvement in this area?
- 10.3 The Head of Safer Communities replied that she had been asked to undertake this piece of work and had not researched any performance measures at this stage but would do going forward and that she would inform the Committee and bring them up to speed in the future.
- 10.4 Councillor Powell stated that it was a really important notice of motion that had been brought by Councillor Emma Daniel to the Committee that challenged unconscious biases. She stated that the report pinpoints the reason why the committee was here and that the client-centre approach was so important.
- 10.5 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee agreed to the recommendations in the report as follows:

1. To agree to the proposed actions by officers to implement the Victim Focus Charter Pledge when working with victims who have experienced trauma, abuse or crime, including asking victims how they have been treated.
2. That officers provide committee with an update in 12 months on the impact signing the pledge has made to how the council works with victims who have experience trauma, abuse and crime.

11 BHCC THIRD SECTOR COMMISSION 2020-2023

This item was Withdrawn – to be considered at a future Special meeting.

12 ITEMS REFERRED FOR FULL COUNCIL

12.1 There were none.

The meeting concluded at 18.25

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of