

Council	Agenda Item 23
23 July 2020	Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject:	Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2020-2023 – Extract from the proceedings of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee held on the 7 May 2020		
Date of Meeting:	23 July 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

<i>Action Required of the Council:</i>
To receive the item referred from the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee for approval:
Recommendation: That the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2020-2023 be adopted.

Note: A briefing note has also been included for full council in accordance with the recommendations of the TECC Committee and is appended to the extract.

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
TOURISM, EQUALITIES, COMMUNITIES & CULTURE COMMITTEE

4.00pm 7 MAY 2020

VIRTUAL MEETING - SKYPE

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robins (Chair) Ebel (Opposition Spokesperson), Nemeth (Group Spokesperson), Childs, Evans, Mears, Powell, Rainey and Simson

Other Members present: Anusree Sasidharan, Joanna Martindale, Lola Ban Joko and Nick May.

MINUTE EXTRACT

PART ONE

70 COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY 2020-2023

- 70.1 The Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities which sought to inform members on measures taken to address crime and disorder in Brighton & Hove. The report was presented by the Head of Safer Communities.
- 70.2 On behalf of the Conservative Party, Councillor Simson moved a motion to add a recommendation 2.3 and 2.4 as shown in bold italics below:
- 2.3 *Authorises officers to prepare an addendum or briefing note in advance of Full Council to outline the implications of the ongoing Corona virus crisis on the Strategy.***
- 2.4 *Requests an Officer report on the specific issue of anti-social behaviour on Hove seafront for the next meeting of this committee. The report will detail, but not be limited to, vandalism of beach huts and other seafront structures and by-law contraventions.***
- 70.3 Introducing the motion, Councillor Simson noted that this motion was to take stock of upcoming changes during an era which would see a decrease in retail crime and burglaries while homelessness and reoffending would change.
- 70.4 Councillor Nemeth formally seconded the motion.

70.5 On behalf of the Green Group, Councillor Rainey moved a motion to ad recommendation 2.3 as shown in bold italics below:

2.3 That committee notes this Strategy was developed prior to Covid19, and therefore asks that officers discuss with the partners to this strategy how together we can respond to the impact of Covid19 on community safety, crime and policing, in areas such as;

- ***changes in domestic violence reporting and incidences during ‘lockdown,’ and the changing nature of support that may need to be provided***
- ***reports indicating increased incidences of abusive behaviour directed at essential workers, and support available***
- ***concerns regarding enforcement in the community, support for officers and the consistent application of government guidance***

and requests that officers report back to this committee on the work going on in this area.

70.6 Introducing the motion, Councillor Rainey noted the issues experienced within her ward and stated that new crime hotspots had emerged while drug related crime was spreading out of the city centre. It was stated that this motion was to look at the unprecedented measures that were explored and activated where needed.

70.7 Councillor Powell formally seconded the motion.

70.8 Councillor Carmen expressed support for the Green Group amendment.

70.9 Ms Sasidharan-Biswas welcomed the depth of research included in the report along with the work on modern slavery.

70.10 Councillor Nemeth sought legal guidance on whether the proposed amendments from both parties were at risk of seeking to achieve the similar conclusions.

70.11 The Head of Commercial Law clarified that the amendments were aiming in the same direction to address the crime strategy during the Covid 19 pandemic. It was noted that the Conservative amendment sought to request a briefing note to Full Council while the Green Group amendment requested a report back to TECC committee following consultation with partners. It was concluded that both amendments could be agreed on technical grounds or Members could decide to seek approval for one.

70.12 Nick May gave a brief overview of the crime status in Brighton & Hove, it was noted that general crime had decreased by 20% during this period. It was noted that this had slowly risen since the outbreak. It was further stated that reported domestic abuse was below what was expected as were the rate of burglaries. Offences were down partly due to the emptiness of streets however efforts were being undertaken to prepare for an expected rise in crime in line with the potential prominence of economic hardship. A rise in bicycle theft was among the most prevalent crimes as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic.

- 70.13 Councillor Simson referred to the crime figures and enquired if this referenced against the Government guidelines.
- 70.14 Nick May clarified that the crime figures were of Sussex as a whole. It was further noted that 530 fixed issue penalty notices had been served with slightly fewer than 200 specifically in Brighton and Hove.
- 70.15 Councillor Evans noted the decline in crime numbers and noted the necessity for re-examining the domestic violence figures later in the year.
- 70.16 Councillor Powell noted the increase in shoplifting and requested further insight in to current figures regarding domestic violence. Councillor Powell sought further information as to measures taken to protect key officers and if Sussex Police could confirm that PCSOs had received the correct PPE. Further clarification was sought with regard to the Police's action in regard barbers opening in the City.
- 70.17 Councillor Ebel referred to the fixed penalty notices and requested rough numbers and enquired if there was an issue with people still travelling in to the City during the lockdown period. Further clarification was sought as to whether the Police had changed how victims of domestic abuse could report crime.
- 70.18 Nick May stated that there was an under-reporting of domestic abuse and that there may be more cases following review in future. It was stated that police officers took a robust stance when called out and looked to take offenders to court when evidence was attained. In response to an enquiry regarding St James' street drug use it was stated that further robust action had been taken on this and that 2 significant operations regarding county lines had been carried out. It was noted that Sussex Police wanted to focus on this to stop drugs coming in to the city and that, where possible, PCSOs were encouraged to patrol St James' street.
- 70.19 Ms Sasidharan-Biswas expressed concern regarding the drop of reported domestic violence during the lockdown.
- 70.20 Nick May stated that other ways of reporting domestic abuse was being considered such as PCSO's being placed in stores to provide a visible presence.
- 70.21 Councillor Powell noted that the BBC had reported a national rise in calls regarding domestic abuse to 49%. Confirmation of the correct provision of PPE for PCSO's was sought.
- 70.22 Nick May stated that Sussex Police had obtained the correct PPE and that all officers had been provided with the necessary equipment.
- 70.23 The Head of Safer Communities stated that there as an increase in calls to national domestic hotline however this was not the case locally. It was noted that campaigns were being considered in the area and that a pan Sussex campaign was being launched. It was noted that in regard to barber shops opening up within the city, this would be an issue for trading standards to deal with and not just Sussex Police. It was clarified that a lot of work was being undertaken to communicate with businesses to notify them of the guidelines.

70.24 Nick May further stated that a large number of staff were out on patrols across the City and seafront and encouraged officers, where possible, to visit other open spaces and communities. It was noted that a vast majority of the public were very understanding.

70.25 The Chair put the Conservative motion to the vote that passed.

70.26 The Chair then put the Green Party motion to the vote which passed.

70.27 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote that were agreed.

70.28 RESOLVED:

- (1) That full Council be recommended to adopt the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2020-2023 attached at Appendix 2 of the report;
- (2) That it be noted this Strategy was developed prior to Covid19, and therefore asked that officers discuss with the partners to this strategy how together we can respond to the impact of Covid19 on community safety, crime and policing, in areas such as;
 - changes in domestic violence reporting and incidences during 'lockdown,' and the changing nature of support that may need to be provided
 - reports indicating increased incidences of abusive behaviour directed at essential workers, and support available
 - concerns regarding enforcement in the community, support for officers and the consistent application of government guidance,

and requested that officers reported back to this committee on the work going on in this area.

- (3) That officers be authorised to prepare an addendum or briefing note in advance of Full Council to outline the implications of the ongoing Corona Virus crisis on the strategy; and
- (4) That an officer report on the specific issue of anti-social behaviour on Hove seafront be requested for the next meeting of this committee. The report would detail, but not be limited to, vandalism of beach huts and other seafront structure and by-law contraventions.

