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Community Leadership Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

14 November 2023

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON TUESDAY, 14TH NOVEMBER, 2023 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Steady (Chairman), Barrett (Vice-Chairman), Davidson, Doyle, Guglielmi, Griffiths, McWilliams and Oxley
Also Present:	Councillor Gina Placey (Portfolio Holder Partnerships)
In Attendance:	Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Katie Wilkins (Head of People), Leanne Thornton (Safer Communities Manager), Jenny Brouard (Enforcement & Community Safety Co-ordinator), Keith Durran (Committee Services Officer) and Bethany Jones (Committee Services Officer)

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Codling and Councillor Ferguson (substituted by Councillor Guglielmi).

9. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday 3 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Councillors in relation to any item on the agenda for this meeting.

11. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

Pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 38, Councillor Griffiths asked the following question:-

“Can we clarify why it takes over a year to produce a Health and Wellbeing Strategy? With a general election next year, and the possibility of a change of government, is there not a possibility that any strategy considered by the cabinet at the start of next year, could have to be reviewed due to a change in political direction at national government level”?

The Chairman responded based on information provided to him, as follows:-

“The Health and Wellbeing Strategy was considered for review in late 2022. To update the document requires a review of data, for which the 2021/22 information has only recently been made available, and consideration of potential future priorities in alignment with partners.

With an election in May 2023 it was appropriate to await the result of the election before proceeding as the strategy highlights the Council's health and wellbeing priorities. The high level priorities of the Council are currently being drafted and there is the potential for the Strategy to be included.

Whilst determining priorities consideration is given to the focus of our partners to ensure effective partnership working and alignment.

The Health and Wellbeing Strategy is now being aligned to the developing place planning work undertaken by the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance which will see a greater focus on place within Tendring.

Alignment with partners priorities to help deliver a system based approach which is soundly based on data is likely to remain a consistent approach even if there is political change”.

Pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 38, Councillor McWilliams asked the following question:-

“At the meeting of the Full Council held on 11th July 2023, the Cabinet Member for Partnerships informed the Council that the new Clacton CCTV cameras and work associated with the scheme regarding upgrades, etc., which is being funded by the £317,000 of Essex Safer Streets funding, would be started soon in mid July 2023. It was also said that the system would be fully operational by October 2023.

As this system has not yet been in operation, could you please inform me as to why this has not yet occurred and when it is expected to be completed and fully operational”?

The Chairman responded based on information provided to him, as follows:-

“The Portfolio Holder for Partnerships is delighted that the Council was successful in its Essex Safer Streets bid. The work has indeed begun with the ordering of lighting upgrades for parts of the seafront gardens and the successful procurement of CCTV equipment for the work.

Regrettably, since the update provided to the Council in July, the officer team has identified some additional complexities around consents and procedures, including planning permissions (part including a conservation area matter), highway consents and the like, that need to be resolved in terms of the detailed locations of new poles and cameras.

This is regrettable, of course, but the officer team has been widened to include the necessary specialism to further address the intricacies referred to.

Due to the aforementioned complexities, the team has secured the extension of the funding period to March 2025 and is in the process of reviewing the proposals in order to ensure that the relevant processes, procedures and consents are followed or put in place as applicable.

The officer team is preparing a revised timeline for the works, which will begin with further lighting upgrades in the short term and necessary consultations and applications

with the camera installations to follow, beginning with equipment in current locations, and new poles and equipment on them forming the final phase.

I am sure that fellow members may be disappointed that progress has been checked. However, I am confident that the officer team, from the various necessary professional backgrounds, will be working as hard as possible to get each tranche of the works completed (as soon as they can properly be done), whilst ensuring that the enhanced system will be as effective as it can be and that benefit to the community is maximised.

Furthermore, I have been informed by officers that Clacton will receive ten years of funding and support totalling £20 million over the decade. This investment will focus on long-term strategic transformations as well as shorter-term improvements. The funding will be focused on high streets, heritage and regeneration, and public safety and security. So, there is also the opportunity in Clacton for long-term support to improve public safety and reduce anti-social behaviour”.

12. POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME COMMISSIONERS REVISED POLICE AND CRIME PLAN AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE DISTRICT ALONGSIDE THE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting for this item. He indicated that there were a number of speakers and that as such (in order to ensure all those present had the opportunity to submit details of their activities) there was likely to be a restriction on the time for the Committee Members to question each speaker. However, this approach had been agreed by Committee Members in advance of the meeting and areas for further questions/exploration would be recorded would be captured and then prioritised to support the development of the enquiry.

The Committee then heard an opening statement from Councillor Gina Placey in her role as Portfolio Holder for Partnerships:

“Good evening. As chair of Tendring CSP I am pleased to be able to welcome you to the first meeting of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee since its formal designation as the statutory Crime and Disorder Committee; I would also like to thank the partners engaged in the Community Safety Partnership both for their ongoing contribution and for their attendance this evening.

Members of the committee are reminded that the CSP is made up of a number of statutory partners, including Tendring District Council, whose responsibilities include working together in formulating and implementing strategies to tackle local crime and disorder in the area and to address the partnerships identified priorities through a local CSP Delivery Plan.

The partnership has three key priorities:

The first: Tackling ASB and the root causes; this priority supports repeat and vulnerable victims of ASB. We are all aware that ASB affects families and communities so by working together to address the root causes we can help to improve the quality of life in the community.

Secondly: Preventing and reducing serious violence; this priority covers many areas, including Domestic Abuse, Sexual Offences, Exploitation, Gang related Violence, Hate Crime, Modern Day Slavery, Human Trafficking and Violent Extremism, to name but a few.

Our final priority speaks for itself as it relates to emerging threats and trends. The CSP works alongside the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for Essex, who unfortunately cannot be here this evening, however we will be hearing presentations from several Essex Police Officers in relation to how the partnership supports schemes to address domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as other crime types as identified within the PFCC's overall plan for Essex.

The partners here this evening will be able to update us on general policing, crime and ASB statistics over the last five years, numbers of Officers in Tendring, county lines and cuckooing, as well as all partners being able to answer any other questions relating to the delivery of the CSP delivery plan, which is annexed in your pack.

You will see from the Delivery Plan there is a lot of fantastic work being carried out by all partners including many charitable/voluntary organisations, such as Youth Unity's 1-2-1 mentoring programme.

Colleagues also have on the committee agenda tonight an item considering the proposed themes of the emerging Corporate Plan; I hope that they can see how those help to support these objectives and TDC's role within the CSP; in particular the theme of 'working with partners to improve quality of life'.

As Members will be aware, we received interesting and useful feedback as part of the consultation on the new Corporate Plan, and this is being considered further by officers for a wide range of applications, including our work within the CSP.

Senior officers from the Tendring Council Community Safety Team are also in attendance tonight to answer any particular questions relating to the delivery plan or any other matters not covered in your pack of information.

I look forward to working with the Crime and Disorder Committee to achieve the CSP's key objective of tackling local crime and disorder in the district. Thank you".

The Committee was joined by a varied panel of guests (as follows):

Chief Inspector Ella Latham – Essex Police District Commander for Tendring – General Policing Update

Sargeant Wendy Byrne – Essex Police – presentation on Domestic Abuse

Inspector Aaron Homatopoulos – Essex Police

Mark Shorter – Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care Board (SNEE ICB) - Health

Quentin Sage - Essex County Fire and Rescue Service

Dave Sexton – Chair - Tendring Neighbourhood Watch

Adam Scott – National Farmers Union (NFU) County Advisor Essex

Roger Hirst, Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC), Jane Gardener, Deputy Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Detective Superintendent Gary Biddle –

Essex Police, had also been invited to attend. However, they had sent their apologies for not being in attendance.

The Head of People (Katie Wilkins) introduced the report submitted to the Committee in respect of the scrutiny enquiry being undertaken. She mentioned that this was the first enquiry by the Committee concerning crime and disorder matters since its designation as the statutory Crime and Disorder Committee of the Council. As such it was appropriate that the Committee considered the very broad nature of the work of the Council and the other responsible authorities for crime and disorder strategies in the District of Tendring.

The Committee heard that, by its nature, this would involve significant explanation from the Council's partners around the respective roles of the Council and also responsible authorities, including how they would themselves have regard to the strategies and directions provided by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner as well as the views of the public on the subject of crime and disorder.

Members were reminded that, as part of its remit, was to consider whether it wished to make any reports or recommendations to the Local Authority with respect to the decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions.

The Chairman invited Chief Inspector Latham to address the Committee with an oral update on Crime and Disorder in the District. The focal point of the discourse centered on the police response to the three priorities delineated in the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), with particular attention to addressing anti-social behaviour (ASB).

The Committee heard that, in collaboration with local police forces and the CSP, there had been a commendable 44% reduction in ASB over the preceding 12 months. Noteworthy initiatives, including Operation Gingerbread, were executed to address ASB in the town centres through coordinated patrols with local ambassadors and targeted interventions in hotspot areas. The success of Operation Gingerbread was underscored, emphasizing a 48% reduction in ASB during the summer of 2023 in comparison to the antecedent year.

Furthermore, Operation Sunbeam was introduced as a responsive measure to heightened summer demand within the district. This initiative encompassed dedicated foot patrols, reinforcing the endeavours of Operation Gingerbread, resulting in a 48% reduction in ASB during the stipulated period. The report delineated 199 stop searches, reflecting an 11% increase from the previous year, with positive outcomes. The overall success of these operations was underscored, with indications of plans to perpetuate analogous initiatives in the future.

Subsequently, the assembly addressed initiatives to forestall and diminish serious crime, focusing on gangs and county lines. The strategically positioned Raptor team responded to instances of serious violence associated with gangs and county lines. Notably, 212 arrests of county line nominals were made, with only 21 arrests associated with county lines in the Tendring District. The speaker accentuated collaboration with referral agencies and the Prevention, Prepare, and Protect team in safeguarding individuals involved in county lines.

The ensuing discussion delved into the support and prevention of domestic abuse, with Acting Detective Inspector Wendy Burn who was a specialist in the field of domestic abuse, who had been part of the Tendering Domestic Abuse Investigation Team for the past five years, conveyed that recent figures indicated a decline in domestic abuse incidents. The detection rate had concurrently risen, showcasing a positive trend. The speaker outlined the team's focus on medium and high-risk cases, with a notable 16.3% reduction in crime related to such cases over the past year. Additionally, cases with a standard-risk rating had witnessed a reduction of 21.1%. The speaker attributed these successes to the collaborative efforts of specialized teams, including the Domestic Abuse Problem Solving Team and independent advisors from an organisation named 'Next Chapter' that specialised in support around domestic violence. These teams worked diligently to break the cycle of abuse, enforce court orders, and support victims through various initiatives.

Furthermore, the speaker highlighted recent operations, such as Operation Advance targeting outstanding suspects and Operation Nightshade focusing on apprehending the most dangerous offenders. The speaker expressed a deep commitment to ensuring the safety of individuals and giving victims the voice they deserved. Despite the challenges posed by the silent nature of domestic abuse, the team managed to achieve a significant reduction in incidents while successfully detecting more crimes, reflecting a commendable accomplishment in addressing this pervasive issue.

The Chairman invited Quentin Sage from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service to deliver an oral up to the Committee, he reported that deliberate fires in the Tendering area had seen a notable reduction over the past few years. Collaborating with community partners, efforts had been focused on preventing fires, educating youth through fire cadet programs, and engaging in training initiatives. The strategy involved community partners working in schools to enhance education among the younger generation. Tactical responses were employed in towns and villages, offering free smoke alarms to community members, with these resources still available through the official website. Targeted interventions and reduction plans were implemented in areas with a high number of fire-related calls. Additionally, motorcycle teams actively engaged with motorcyclists as part of the broader reduction program, not only addressing deliberate fires but also contributing to road traffic collision reduction efforts.

The Chairman had invited Adam Scott, representing the National Farmers Union (NFU), to give an oral presentation. He provided a comprehensive report on the reduction of deliberate fires in the Tendering area and shed light on the multifaceted challenges posed by rural crime. Mr. Scott, who also farmed on the other side of Colchester, highlighted that the NFU, primarily known as a trade association for farmers, had increasingly found itself engaged in discussions about rural crime, a topic often overshadowed by more visible urban crime issues. With approximately 920 NFU members in Essex, Mr. Scott emphasized the prevalence of rural crime in the county, where 71% of the area was rural, and 14% of reported crimes were categorized as rural crime, translating to around 23,000 incidents in villages or on rural businesses and farms.

Members heard of four significant challenges faced by farmers, starting with the theft of machinery and plant equipment, including tractors and telly handlers, often spirited away through ports like Harwich and Felixstowe. The theft of GPS (global positioning system) equipment, essential for modern farming practices, was also noted as a

growing concern. He detailed the organized nature of these thefts, highlighting the challenges farmers faced beyond the financial losses, included disruption to work schedules, insurance costs, and potential linkage to organized crime networks. The second issue Mr. Scott discussed was illegal hair coursing, a practice that extended beyond a seemingly innocuous sport, revealing an intricate world of gambling, streaming events for betting purposes, and even intimidation. Mr. Scott acknowledged Operation Galileo's success in reducing hare coursing in Essex but noted its potential relocation to neighbouring areas.

Members also heard the third challenge highlighted was the issue of illegal encampments, which, though improved due to consistent policing efforts, continued to pose a problem. Mr. Scott commended the work of Deputy PFCC Jane Gardner in ensuring a more consistent approach across Essex and advocated for continued efforts to discourage illegal encampments. The final challenge addressed was fly-tipping, a problem exacerbated by both industrial-scale waste dumping and individuals improperly disposing of domestic waste. Mr. Scott underscored the importance of public awareness about using licensed waste carriers to curb this issue. While discussing these challenges, Mr. Scott emphasized the need for farmers to strike a balance between securing their properties and maintaining the rural way of life. He urged farmers to report incidents, build trust with law enforcement, and work collaboratively to address the vulnerabilities inherent in living in remote areas. Despite noting improved relationships with Essex police over the last several years, Mr. Scott acknowledged that challenges persisted, emphasizing the ongoing need for vigilance and collaboration to safeguard rural communities effectively.

Lastly the Chairman invited David Sexton, of the Tending Neighbourhood Watch, to address the Committee. He provided an overview of the organization, comprising 90 individual Street Watches with approximately 1,500 members across the Tending area. At the time of the meeting they were conducting an audit to determine the exact membership count, they faced challenges due to Data Protection (GDPR) restrictions held by street watch coordinators. Despite difficulties in obtaining responses during the audit, the primary goal of the Tending Neighbourhood Watch was to enhance community safety by encouraging members to report crimes. They disseminate information received from various sources. Additionally, the organization had begun analysing crime reports to gain valuable insight and actively supported the police, maintaining affiliation with Essex County Council.

The Members of the Committee had the opportunity to ask a number of questions of the guests in attendance and they asked their questions. The Chairman invited further questions and none were indicated.

The Chairman thanked the guests for their attendance and the valuable insights provided and that they looked forward to working with them in the future as the Committee utilised the information provided by its Members for further examination in the process described earlier in this Minute. The offer from Chief Inspector Ella Latham to visit Clacton on Sea Police Station would be pursued as would an offer from Acting Detective Inspector Wendy Byrne to visit the Police Station and discuss measures to address Domestic Violence further. There was also a wish to visit the Traffic Police 'hub' at the Thorpe-le-Soken Police Station.

After a short adjournment to facilitate those guests who had addressed the Committee to leave, the Committee reconvened and discussed what was reported to them and **RESOLVED** to press ahead with the approach previously agreed by Committee Members and submit areas to Officers for further questions/exploration to then be prioritised to support the development of the enquiry.

13. WORK PROGRAMMING INCLUDING MONITORING OF PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATIONS AND SCRUTINY OF FORTHCOMING DECISIONS

The Committee was provided with a written report which provided an update on its approved Work Programme for 2023/24 (including progress with enquiries set out in its Work Programme), feedback to the Committee on the decisions in respect of previous recommendations from the Committee in respects of enquiries undertaken and a list of forthcoming decisions for which notice has been given since publication of the agenda for the Committee's last meeting. In respect of recommendations monitoring, the report set out the Cabinet's decisions (from its meeting on 21 July 2023 (Minute 20 refers)) on this Committee's recommendations from its meeting on 7 March 2023 (Minute 26 refers) in respect of children missing from education.

The Committee heard an update on the Mainstream and Community Transport Provision Task and Finish Group from its Chairman, Councillor Steady. He outlined that the Group had undertaken one meeting with representations from Essex County Community Transport Groups and that a future meeting was to include the private transport companies.

The Committee also heard an update on the School Age Education Provision Task and Finish Group from its Chairman, Councillor Barrett. He outlined the position of the Group, having decided their two main focus areas, the first being attendance and absenteeism and the second being mental health provision for students. He informed the Committee that the Group had met once so far and had sent out letters to five schools in the District requesting permission for Members of the Task and Finish group to visit the schools and discuss the matters as addressed in the scope of the Task and Finish Group. The next meeting of the task and Finish was to be held on 11 December 2023.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report including the updated provided at the meeting.

14. CORPORATE PLAN (OUR VISION) CONSULTATION

The Committee received a copy of the report provided to the Cabinet meeting on 21 July 2023 in respect of the emerging Corporate Plan for 2024-28. The Head of Democratic Services and Elections introduced the report, he explained that the corporate plan consultation had concluded, and that Cabinet had recently approved a revised version of the Corporate Plan to be submitted to the next Council meeting.

The Committee were informed that Members would soon receive an electronic copy of the agenda for the upcoming Full Council meeting (with the revised version of the Corporate Plan 2024/28) and that Cabinet aimed to present the initial version of its highlight priorities for 2024/25 at its December meeting, along with tangible actions to

implement the Corporate Plan in that first year of its term. These highlight priorities could be provided to the Committee as it considered elements of the budget for 2024/25. The Committee, although dealing with a discrete element of the Council's budget, could review the Cabinet's highlight priorities against the budget during its meeting on 11 January, particularly focusing on working with partners and grant funding for improvements in the quality of life, and funds received from entities like health bodies.

It was **RESOLVED** that the proposal for the Cabinet's highlight priorities to be provided to the Committee at the meeting where it considers elements of the budget for 2024/25 be approved.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.09 pm

Chairman

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