

COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 15 February 2022 at 6.00 pm in Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors E J Carter, V J Holt, T L B Janke, B J Thompson, C R Turley (Chair) and D Wright

In Attendance: A Astley (Executive Director: Housing, Communities & Customer Services), J Bedesha (Service Delivery Manager: Safer, Stronger Communities (Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services)), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy (Policy & Governance)), M Powell (Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network, Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services), K T (Active Travel Delivery Specialist), and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer Scrutiny))

Also Present: Councillors R Overton (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Enforcement and Transport), and P Watling (Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities)

COMSC34 Apologies for Absence

None.

COMSC35 Declarations of Interest

None.

COMSC36 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the chair.

COMSC37 Work Programme Review

The Committee received an update on the work programme from the Service Delivery Manager - Legal & Democracy, Policy & Governance. The Committee agreed to the current work programme with no further comments.

COMSC38 Safer Stronger Communities

The Committee received a presentation from the Service Delivery Manager: Safer, Stronger Communities about Safer Stronger Communities.

Members heard an overview of the project, a £2.5m two year investment programme with £500,000 Police and Crime Commission (PCC) funding. The programme has 12 primary areas of focus. It was said that these areas had

been identified from data and intelligence that informed the decisions and priorities; local stakeholder engagement; and community involvement and co-production. The Service Delivery Manager explained that the approach built on the community COVID-19 response which focussed on working with community stakeholders and local external partners, parish and Borough council collaboration to meet local need.

It was explained that the Safer Stronger Communities programme was taking a multi-agency approach that looked at tackling the causes of crime and provided local problem solving aimed at helping the community. The programme focused on social regeneration so that the local community could take ownership of, and pride in, their community.

Members heard that the programme started in Brookside and would continue into Sutton Hill, building upon a number of investments; Safer Streets 1 & 2, CCTV, and the Community Action Teams.

The Service Delivery Manager went on to explain how the Safer, Stronger Communities Plan had been devised. The framework for the programme was a systematic action plan that used a whole system approach which included service providers and local authorities working collaboratively so that the community could take 'ownership' in their area.

Six priorities had been identified for the programme: Education, Skills & NEETs; Housing Standards; Crime Reduction; Environmental Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour; Community Resilience; and, Health Inequalities.

Members were informed about the Neighbourhood Action Plan (NAPs) for the programme. Members heard that each area of Safer, Stronger communities programme has a NAP. It was explained that this was a targeted intervention approach that was based on geographical location and common issues.

It was explained that for the NAPs there were borough wide themes that they were working to support. These were, a lack of Youth Provision; Severity of Crime(it was explained that they were working with the St Giles trust to bring in targeted approaches to areas of crime like gangs;) Private Sector Housing (with a particular focus on poorly managed Houses of Multiple Occupancy ;) NEETs; and CCTV & Additional Street Lighting.

Members heard that the programme would be evaluated based upon performance. There were a series of performance measures that, at the time of the meeting, were being developed to monitor the success of the programme. These included monitoring levels of recorded crime, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping; monitoring the NEET data; school exclusions; HMO mapping; and, levels of unemployment in those areas.

Following the presentation, the Committee heard from the Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities, who noted that this was building on the 10-year Cooperative council investment the council had put in place. The aim for the programme was to work with different trusts and partners for future

funding and for sustainability for the community. It was hoped that the project would be rolled out across the Borough.

After the presentation, Members posed a number of questions:

Are there plans for further digital engagement with young people?

There are ambitions to look at how digital technology and engagement could be used to engage with young people.

Sports are used to engage with young people, are there other activities that can be used to engage with them?

There is an importance in engagement with young people to build lasting relationships based on supporting them. The Cabinet Member discussed the example of South Telford and explained that 12 young people, not previously identified as NEET, were identified to work with partners to see how best to support them, such as using IT for development and access to support.

The targeted approach that the programme had adopted would utilise digital services to create different levels of bespoke support. This was to work with different people and engage with them through different issues by using the skills of communities and local services to provide targeted support.

Is there the possibility to bring this programme to other wards that face similar issues?

The wards identified for this programme were identified on locality and similarity of issues but there was the possibility of expanding to other wards in the future.

What is the involvement of the police and schools with Council cross collaboration?

There was a close working relationship with local schools and the police to provide support to communities. A multi-disciplinary approach was largely used for sustainability of the programme.

Young people involved in sport is helpful and essential for some to help them through issues, has a gender balance been considered for the programme?

Gender balance was important and there were events and sports programmes for all. There were five different open events for support that could be accessed across the Borough, in collaboration with AFC Telford. There were, for example, boxing groups for both girls and women in one area. The programme had zero tolerance of abuse towards girls and women and the project aimed to promote this.

Is there consideration of working with vulnerable young people as part of this programme?

It was explained that this is what the work with the St. Giles trust will explore.

RESOLVED - that the Committee

- i) Endorse the approach the Telford & Wrekin Safer, Stronger Communities Programme.**
- ii) Considered the approach taken to develop Neighbourhood Action Plans and any intervention that could be taken into account going forward.**
- iii) Note that the planned roll out of this investment programme in 2022 and the community engagement taken to date.**

COMSC39 Transport Strategy - Active Travel

Members received a summary presentation on the Active Travel Update report by the Service Delivery Manager: Strategic Transport & Highway Network and the Active Travel Delivery Specialist.

Members heard that in 2019/20 it was recognised that the Council's Sustainable Travel work, which included the Active Travel Strategy, needed to be prioritised. With no significant national funding available, further local investment was required. It was explained that the government had since reacted to the issue with two significant policy documents, Gear Change, LTN 1/20 and creating Active Travel England.

The Committee was informed that, in 2021 the team had expanded to meet growing pressures with the creation of the following posts; a dedicated Active Travel Delivery Specialist and a Bike Hub Manager. This was to expand upon development to encourage people to take up more active forms of transport, such as cycling and walking and improve local infrastructure. An Active Travel Survey was launched to find out more about residents' needs and demands to which there were over 500 responses received regarding cycling and walking.

The Service Delivery Manager continued, discussing the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This was a working plan that would be developed to provide a structure of what was going to be provided for the Borough. The plan took a long term view of plans of development whilst also looking to review and update the local strategy that sits beside the LCWIP which was developed in 2016 and needs a refresh. The LCWIP looked at key areas such as wards and towns in the Borough for development and improvement, through measures such as connecting corridors that did not previously exist and improving those that do.

The LCWIP was data oriented in its planning, especially in terms of walking and cycling zones. In the case of Walking Zones, it was stated that data showed that on average people are willing to walk around two miles a day and this data helped with the design of the plan to encourage more walking. Zones would be based around the Borough's towns and their connectivity. Data collection had helped to determine priorities both long and short term around infrastructure for active travel.

Members heard about the funding for Active Travel; through the Travel Telford Sustainable Transport Fund there was £2.6m over four years in active and

sustainable travel. Additionally, there was £305K from the Department for Transport (DfT) Active Travel Fund and £181K in DfT Revenue funding for capability funding. A bid had been submitted for £1.8m for improvements on the Silkin Way and, at the time of the meeting, the Council was awaiting a decision. It was stated that for government funding an LCWIP plan was needed to support future funding bids.

The Committee heard that the Silkin Way Investment Plan was developed in 2021 and covered the whole 14 mile route which runs from Bratton to Coalport. To ensure the best allocation of resources and future evaluation, a survey was undertaken to establish the priorities of residents. From this, the improvements that will be made to the area were identified, these were: Surfacing; Signing; Crossing Points; Street Furniture, such as bins and benches; CCTV; and, Lighting. Route-wide maintenance had commenced in late 2021 to improve accessibility in the short term.

Members heard about other projects that constituted the Active Travel strategy. The first concerned the A518, which had a new 1.25 miles of shared use footway/cycle way, segregating active travel modes from traffic. The second project was on-road sweeper developments, dedicated sweepers for local walking and cycling routes had been introduced. The last project discussed were cycle stands. There was the potential for 200 to 300 cycle parking stands across the borough. At the time of the meeting, 176 stands had been provided to local communities.

Following the presentation, Members posed questions.

Following from a recent accident on the A518, is there possibility of extending the route further to interconnected routes for safety?

There was the potential for future development but there were issues over property and land ownership.

There are some regions of development and areas that have good routes for Active Travel that are not on the maps in the report. Is there a way of promoting these and utilising good routes for development?

The reason why some routes were not on the map was due to early demand analysis. However, the team were working with the communications team to develop signage and publicity for good active travel routes, as well as engaging with the public to illustrate what was around them and to promote active travel.

After these questions, the committee considered the recommendations in the report. Following a vote it was:

RESOLVED - that the Committee

- i) Endorse the approach to Active Travel and progress that had been made to date.**
- ii) Consider the approach to develop a Local Cycling & Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) and associated strategy refresh and**

whether there were any interventions that could be brought forward.

COMSC40 Chair's Update

None.

The meeting ended at 6.55 pm

Chairman:

Date: Tuesday, 12 April 2022