

Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 13 October 2021 at 7.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:

Councillor Ian Wingfield (Chair)
Councillor Victor Chamberlain (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Humaira Ali
Councillor Peter Babudu
Councillor Jack Buck
Councillor Gavin Edwards
Councillor Sarah King
Councillor Sunny Lambe (Reserve)
Councillor Hamish McCallum (Reserve)
Councillor Margy Newens
Councillor Leanne Werner

**OTHER
MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Rebecca Lury, Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Democracy
Councillor Catherine Rose, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parks and Sport
Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:**

Norman Coombe, Head of Corporate Team, Legal Services
Everton Roberts, Head of Scrutiny

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall, Councillor Victoria Olisa and Martin Brecknell (co-opted member).

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair informed the committee that Item 7, the Borough Plan Performance Challenge update information was contained on supplemental agenda No.1 and information relating to Item 5, Review of Southwark Community Safety Partnership Activity was contained on supplemental agenda No. 2.

At this juncture Councillor Victor Chamberlain expressed concern at the number of late reports generally received by the committee and the impact this had on the committee's ability to function as well as it could.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Councillor Leanne Werner declared an interest in respect of item 5, 'Crime and Disorder – Review of Southwark Community Safety Partnership Activity and Progress against the Plan' as she was Deputy Cabinet Member for Domestic Abuse.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 be approved as a correct record.

It was reported that the outstanding Minutes of the meetings held 3 March, 22 March and 8 July 2021 would be submitted to the next meeting for approval.

Councillor Victor Chamberlain raised concern over the timeliness of minutes being submitted for approval.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING AS CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE

At least one ordinary meeting of the overview and scrutiny committee (or commission) will act as the crime and disorder committee for the year.

This meeting was therefore held in 2 parts. The first part of the meeting was held as the crime and disorder committee, followed by the ordinary business as listed from items 6 onwards.

5. CRIME AND DISORDER - REVIEW OF SOUTHWARK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITY AND PROGRESS AGAINST THE PLAN

The committee heard from Stephen Douglass, Director of Communities, Colin Wingrove, Police Borough Commander, and Councillor Evelyn Akoto, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (in relation to her portfolio brief for Violence Against Women and Girls).

It had been expected that the committee would also hear from Councillor Darren Merrill, Cabinet Member for Safer, Cleaner, Borough, he had however submitted apologies due to an illness in his family. The chair reported that Councillor Merrill had offered to attend a meeting later in the year to speak on the community safety aspect of his portfolio.

Stephen Douglass introduced the officer report which provided progress against the Southwark Community Safety Partnership Plan Activity 2017 -2020 and updates in respect of the following:

- police recorded crime,
- tackling youth violence,
- tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG)
- tackling anti-social behaviour
- Reducing reoffending
- Reducing substance misuse
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Hate crime
- PREVENT (Prevention of Terrorism)

Police Borough Commander Colin Wingrove informed the committee of how the police were prioritising violence against women and girls, with council and other partners and work being developed over the coming months in this area.

Commander Wingrove also touched upon Hate crimes and the partnership approach being undertaken to make sure everyone is safe and free from experiencing crime. Commander Wingrove also highlighted the prioritisation of the issue of knife crime and its link to robbery, along with steps to address the problem, such as additional patrols, proactive work, making sure that offenders were being identified and taking opportunities to intervene and make arrests where appropriate, and seeking positive outcomes.

Commander Wingrove reported that crime performance was now being measured against pre-covid levels in order to get an understanding of where they were in terms crime post-covid. Crime reduction had reduced under all categories with the exception of sexual offences which had increased. Appropriate focus and resource would be given to partnership work, working with community groups, the council's licensing team and licensed premises as well to keep people safe.

Councillor Evelyn Akoto stressed that tackling the violence against women and girls, had always been a priority for the council and informed the committee that the council has a 5 year VAWG strategy, agreed in 2019 and built upon the previous domestic abuse strategy. Councillor Akoto informed the committee that Southwark was one of only a few boroughs that had been lobbying for misogyny to be classed as a hate crime. The council had also been lobbying the Commissioner of Police and Police Borough Commander to focus on VAWG issues and make it a priority for the metropolitan police service.

Work (including training) was also being undertaken with faith communities to identify cases of domestic abuse or VAWG in their congregations.

After the presentations from the Director of Communities, Police Borough Commander and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, questions and discussion took place around the following:

- Challenging misogyny in the police force
- Lack of data held in relation to hate crime against women
- Work being undertaken with perpetrators of misogyny and sexual offences
- The scale of stop and search over the last two years and effective use of police resources in that context
- Unlicensed music events
- Concerns over increased knife crimes, post Covid
- Connection between knife crime and cut in youth service provision
- Increase in hate crimes related to sexual orientation
- Anti-social behaviour and cuckooing
- Proactive policing versus reactive policing
- Congregating people creating low level anti-social behaviour which at times escalates, and actions to stop this from happening
- Inclusion of child exploitation as a separate priority (modern slavery, county lines, cuckooing, gangs) to child sexual exploitation
- Making hate crime a separate priority (separate from PREVENT)
- Metropolitan police's commitment to rebuild trust with women, and work being undertaken
- The diversity of Southwark police officers and how closely they reflect the communities of Southwark
- Increased reporting of sexual offences
- Role of schools in educating young men and boys on their conduct and interaction with women
- Ongoing work around female genital mutilation
- Increase in hate crime against black people

At the end of questions and discussion, Police Borough Commander Wingrove invited members of the committee to observe the police in a 'ride along' / walk and talk' or to visit one of the investigative teams. It was agreed that an email from the clerk would be circulated to members of the committee to establish interest and make arrangements as appropriate.

RESOLVED:

That the review and progress made against the Southwark Community Safety Partnership Plan Activity 2017 – 2020 be noted.

6. BRIEFING FROM CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, PARKS AND SPORT - RE-OPENING OF RYE LANE TO BUSES / STREET SPACE TRIALS

This item was taken after item 7

Re-opening of Rye Lane to Buses

The committee received a presentation from Councillor Catherine Rose, cabinet member for Transport, Parks and Sport in relation to the re-opening of Rye Lane to buses (a copy of the presentation is available to view with the agenda published on the council website).

The committee also heard from Councillor Jasmine, local ward councillor, a community representative, a few local business owners and Dale Foden, Head of Highways in respect of consultation, and working with businesses and the community.

Questions and discussion were then held around the following:

- Alternative cycle routes and the Southwark Spine cycling strategy, including prioritisation of completion of the Spine
- Data held around Rye Lane scheme and modal shift
- Varying levels of consultation engagement taking place in different parts of the borough.
- Option of returning Rye Lane to full pedestrianisation
- Interchange between buses and train station, and data held
- Completion of a climate impact assessment
- Impact on people with mobility issues

Street Space Trials

Councillor Catherine Rose proceeded to provide members with a briefing/presentation on the street space trials taking place across the borough. It was however requested that the presentation be deferred due to the lateness of the hour.

It was agreed that the briefing/presentation take place at the cabinet member's next scheduled attendance.

7. BOROUGH PLAN PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE UPDATE

The committee received a presentation from Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council on the annual Borough Plan Performance report 2020-21.

Councillor Williams explained to the committee that the performance report covered the period that was at the height of the Covid 19 pandemic and highlighted some of the responses and achievements delivered in partnership with the voluntary sector, NHS and other agencies throughout the pandemic, as detailed below:

- 80% Contact and Test and Trace
- 100% of clinically extremely vulnerable people contacted
- The housing of 273 rough sleepers
- The supporting of 4,265 businesses
- The delivery of 27,000 food parcels
- 73,000 welfare calls to residents
- 100,000 vaccine doses delivered in partnership with the NHS
- £1.1m spent on PPE, ensuring that schools, and social care settings had access to the PPE it needed

Councillor Williams reported on a number of other areas of council priorities around delivering homes people can afford, transitioning to a low carbon Southwark, and tackling inequalities in the borough. Councillor Williams highlighted the following:

- 4 kilometres of cycle lanes
- 12th highest rate of young people in education and employment in the country
- 34% reduction in the pension fund carbon footprint
- 48 new pedestrian crossings
- 99% of refuse not going to landfill
- 100% of council operational estate now using renewable electricity
- Implementation of 155 electric vehicle charging posts
- Implementation of 180 cycle hangars
- 231 empty homes brought back into use
- 300 people supported by the new NEST (mental health) service
- 535 new council homes started on site
- 1000 people supported into work
- 1489 homelessness incidents prevented
- 1800 supported by the wellbeing hub
- 2000 visits to the new library on Walworth and Heritage Centre
- 2000 people supported through the domestic abuse services in partnership with Solace
- 8014 trees planted in one year
- 62000 people supported through the councils EU resettlement programme
- 500,000 kilogrammes of surplus food redistributed in the borough

- £5m committed to installing heat pumps on Southwark estates

Councillor Williams expressed thanks to council staff delivering vital services through the pandemic alongside and in partnership with Southwark residents and other partners.

Following the Leader of the Council's presentation, questions and discussion were held around the following:

- The amount of the council's pension fund that was invested in oil and gas companies over the last year
- Progress on Homes for All
- Tackling the cladding crisis
- Performance areas of concern

It was agreed that information relating to the pension fund would be circulated to members of the committee.

RESOLVED:

That the annual borough plan performance report be noted.

8. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF REGENERATION IN THE BOROUGH - DRAFT REPORT

This item was deferred to the next meeting as the draft report was still being prepared.

9. REPLACEMENT OF VICE-CHAIR - HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Damian O'Brien be appointed vice-chair of the housing and community engagement scrutiny commission.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED:

That the work programme as at 13 October 2021 be noted.

The meeting ended at 10.46pm

CHAIR:

DATED: