

Present: Councillor Claire Rylott (Chairman), Councillor Stuart Evans (acting Vice-Chairman), Councillors Alison Austin, Neil Drayton, Mike Gilbert, Patricia Marson, Ralph Pryke, David Scoot and Suzanne Welberry

In attendance:

Officers –

Assistant Director - Regulatory, Community Safety Manager, CCTV Manager, Scrutiny & Policy Officer, Climate Change and Environment Manager, Insights & Transformation Manager and Democratic Services Officer

55 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were tabled for Councillor Lina Savickiene and for Portfolio Holder Councillor Anne Dorrian.

56 MINUTES

With the agreement of the committee, the Chairman signed the minutes of the previous meeting.

57 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Alison Austin declared she was a Director of Centrepoint Outreach.

58 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No questions were tabled.

Prior to moving into part 2 of the agenda the Chairman welcomed Inspector Ian Cotton, Superintendent Lee St. Quinton and Zoe Walters the Business Manager for the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership, to the meeting.

59 CRIME AND DISORDER

The Community Safety Manager presented the report, supported by Inspector Ian Cotton of Boston Police with Superintendent Lee St. Quinton, of Lincolnshire Police and the Zoe Walters Business Manager of Lincolnshire County Council presenting the Safer Lincolnshire Partnership (SLP) report within the covering report. The Assistant Director for Wellbeing and Community Neighbourhoods was in attendance in support of the report.

Committee were advised that the annual report to a scrutiny committee, was a strategic requirement and whilst it was very comprehensive, it was important that members had full context of all the information.

Providing a brief overview of key data across the priorities members were advised that Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week was an annual campaign which had been successful in highlighting the work that the partners did to tackle incidents of ASB and, in raising public awareness of the importance of reporting ASB and how to report it.

The Noxious Odour Policy had been adopted by Lincolnshire County Council, with all other authorities and the Police adopting it using the pilot scheme originated from Boston Borough Council

The Hate Crime Awareness Week campaign was an annual event to raise awareness of what such a crime was, how it should be reported and the help available to victims. A communication plan had been delivered across the South East Lincolnshire Committee Partnership (SELCP) to further increase awareness.

One of the biggest projects undertaken was Operation Plotting aligned within the Safer Streets and Nighttime Economy priority and funding had been secured at the start of the current municipal year from the Serious Violence Fund which was managed by the County Serious Violence Core Priority Group. Several projects had benefitted from the funding including the introduction of community rangers who were now operational within the town, the installation of planters and interviews were taking place for a Community Engagement Officer who would assist the minority communities, to understand UK customs and law through a targeted engagement programme. Additionally, work was ongoing to improve the CCTV provision in the hot spot areas of the town with the installation of a number of new cameras to cover gaps in Central Park, Wormgate and West Street.

Referencing the priority for the safety of Women and Girls, members were advised that the annual White Ribbon Day & 16 days of Action would again be delivered. A substantial communications plan had been produced and delivered by the Domestic Abuse Partnership, supported by partner organisation to maximise its effectiveness.

Work continued in Boston to upgrade the CCTV camera systems within the Safer Streets Fund Round 4. It had taken longer than in Spalding and Skegness (both of which were now complete), due to the need to upgrade the BT fibre network. A Police CCTV volunteer continued to work within the CCTV suite to help with tasks such as image reviews and burning disks which frees up the CCTV Operators to focus on monitoring the cameras.

Addressing updates in respect of the Vulnerability & safeguarding priority, members were advised that the focus had been on identifying the range of scams and what mechanisms were required to deal with the issues. Furthermore, Domestic Abuse Officers had now been introduced to all three authorities within the SELCP, who would be supporting the teams a key contact, and a member briefing would be scheduled towards the end of the year.

Referring members to section three of the report which detailed the regular statistical data, the Community Safety Manager confirmed that following a request by members from the previous years report, comparative data had been sourced over the last few years.

A brief overview of the work of the SLP was provided and members were advised that a Community Safety Partnership was a requirement for each local government area, uniting the police, local authorities, fire and rescue, health, and probation to formulate strategies for the reduction of crime. Boston Borough Council currently discharged its statutory duties for reducing crime and disorder at a strategic level through the SLP, and at an operational level be delivery services such as CCTV and ASB investigation and enforcement work.

The statutory duties included preparation and implementation of a partnership plan that set out a strategy for the reduction of reoffending, crime and disorder, combatting substance misuse, serious violence, community engagement and addressing the priorities identified in the strategic assessment. It further set up protocols and systems

for information sharing and was required to regularly engage and consult with the public about their community safety priorities and issues. Additionally, it commissioned domestic homicide reviews following notification by the Police of a domestic homicide but had delegated the reviews to the Domestic Abuse Partnership.

Members were advised that whilst the SLP had been an informal arrangement, agreed to by all partners to have one county wide strategic partnership across the county, moves were underway to look at it a change to a formal merger. Discussions had agreed it would be appropriate to put forward a paper in respect of the opportunities and challenges, to ensure an appropriate consultation was undertaken. The timeline for the Strategy Board Time was their next scheduled meeting on the 27 June and all parties would be informed.

A strategic needs assessment was due to be undertaken to inform the current plan which was due to review. New reporting included annual updates from the Stay Safe Partnership who delivered preventative information to the primary and secondary schools across Lincolnshire.

One question was tabled in advance of the meeting which asked the Police if they felt it necessary to walk around the wards to see what Policing was needed. Inspector Cotton responded and advised that it would be an option in an ideal world, but with budget restraints it was impossible to provide dedicated policing walking around in all neighbourhoods. Members were however reassured that the ethos of neighbourhood policing was how to engage with communities, and this was practised very efficiently with partners, schools, youth groups and with key individuals within the communities. Engagement led to problems being identified and then it was the practice to involve the communities in resolving the issues. Resources were available for such activity.

Committee deliberation followed which included:

Responding to a question in respect any future provisions of the planters out into the Parish wards, the Community Safety Officer confirmed that the planters sited within the marketplace were through a funding stream for serious violence and the funding was ringfenced for hot spot areas of the town centre.

On questioning police representatives on their engagement with schools in respect of education on criminal matters, a member also enquired if education of 'County Lines' was provided, which whilst not a problem with Boston currently, would at some point become one.

Inspector Cotton confirmed that the Community Engagement Team along with the local PCSO's were very active within all secondary schools in the Borough and fully aware of the need to be vigilant in respect of 'County Lines'.

Superintendent St. Quinton advised that from a county perspective, the Stay Safe Team delivered education into every secondary school and achieved a reach of 92,000 pupils over the previous year, with 100% of secondary schools and approximately 87% of primary schools having some form of intervention by the team. The team had a strong commitment and were aware of the impact of their interventions on the children's progression and education.

The Business Manager further advised committee of a new facility in Sleaford. The 'Happening' was an immersive, preventative education centre and a county wide resource for referrals when required. Members were encouraged to visit the site to view the facilities.

The Community Safety Manager confirmed that a member briefing would be scheduled in due course in respect of 'County Lines'.

A member questioned concerns already raised on social media in respect of money laundering establishments, associated to some cash dependant businesses such as nail bars, barbers and launderettes, and the proliferation of such establishments over recent years. Many of these always appeared to be depleted of customers, but survived financially and the member asked what the police were doing in respect of such establishments. Inspector Cotton reassured members that many premises had been closed due to the work of a joint agency response who were aware of illicit goods and focused their attention of such premises. Furthermore, the Police actively supported ongoing lobbying for further changes in legislation.

Referencing ongoing incidents of serious violence over a long period within the same area of the town, a member questioned how much information was being gathered to try to understand the reasons for such incidents and to see if tension between the various communities was considered a factor in the violence. The Business Manager advised that there was a vulnerable localities index which was used in respect of antecedent and vulnerabilities within communities which assisted in layering information to identify target areas for support or interventions. It took time to prevent violence by evidencing impacts based on population, with data layering being collated from schools and the national census of demography of communities, down to pockets of communities. Superintendent St. Quinton further reminded committee that Lincolnshire Police had sought funding through the Home Office grants in April 2024 which had allowed support of the current Hot Spot campaign which was now well embedded within the Boston area. Responding to calls for more shops to have radios enabling a more effective communication network within the town businesses and Town Rangers, the Community Safety Manager confirmed that was already in practice with the Rangers radios being connected to the CCTV Suite and the Council were encouraging businesses to have radios and was looking at potential funding to assist in the initial cost of purchase.

RECOMMENDATION:

Committee noted the report.

60 CCTV ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT & POLICY REVIEW

The CCTV Manager presented the report supported by Inspector Cotton, the Community Safety Manager and the Assistant Director for Wellbeing and Community Neighbourhoods, confirming it was produced as part of its statutory Crime and Disorder annual review. Committee were advised that Boston Borough Council's public realm CCTV system consisted of digital high-definition CCTV cameras and CCTV control room equipment that covered Boston town centre, Kirton as well as other areas including Boston College, Pilgrim Hospital and Pescod Square.

The CCTV report provided a range of performance data for 2023/24 for members to review the data range of the review being from 01 April 2023 to 31st March 2024. The Council also monitored cameras on behalf of NKDC, SHDC and ELDC, and therefore data related to these areas was also included within this report. During 2023/24 the CCTV service had recorded 13,654 Daily Log entries, completed 955 incident records, and contributed to 119 arrests for the Boston Borough Council area. Furthermore, it had contributed to 383 arrests for the total CCTV area, produced 148 CCTV Evidence Packages from the Boston Borough Council area for Police / Court use, and produced 450 pieces of evidence in total.

Referencing the CTV Policy which had become effective in December 2015, the CCTV Manager advised that in accordance with its own requirements, it had been reviewed by

members of the Management Group and whilst only a few minor changes had been identified which were identified within the report, the amended version was subject to agreement by the Cabinet. Furthermore, it was recommended that the policy be reviewed every three years and not on an annual basis.

Committee deliberation followed which included:

Responding to a query in respect of the colour coding within the reporting, the CCTV Manager confirmed that it had been that way since performance reporting had been monitored, and the reason helped to identify when decreases were recorded, if there were any issues in the operation of the suite. When figures were up it was a positive performance in how the suite was working.

Following a question in respect of capacity to monitor additional cameras, the CCTV Manager confirmed that should the increase be significant, it would potentially require additional staffing, however the cameras recorded all the time, and it was impossible to monitor each camera 24 hours a day. When an incident was reported then the recordings were a key source of data gathering and used for evidence. Indeed, a significant part of the operatives' roles was in the collation of evidence for the Police.

The volunteer scheme had resulted in 5 new operatives now supporting the staff and the cohort of the of the suite was appropriate.

Questioning ongoing issues of fly tipping in known hot spots of the town, a member sought clarification of the use of CCTV cameras on those sites to help identify the culprits. The Community Safety Manager advised that when an address was known it was possible to site a camera under RIPA providing the site was not blocked in any way, however the team worked with the Environmental department, as fly tipping was an environmental crime and such sites would be targeted through the enviro contract, which had been successful in its prosecutions.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Environment and Performance committee recommend to Cabinet, adoption of the Policy.

61 PROPOSED JOINT SCRUTINY ACTIVITY FOR 24/25 FOR THE SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

Presenting the report to the committee, the Scrutiny Officer, advised that when the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership had been established, there had been recognition of matters of common strategic interest which would benefit from a co-ordinated partnership approach.

There followed the establishment of the joint scrutiny framework, to allow consideration of important matters in depth, from a Partnership perspective. The outcomes of which had resulted in the development of Policy; as well as enabling the Partnership to collectively explore issues facing the sub-region.

Prior to the end of the last municipal year, scrutiny Chairs and Vice Chairs, across the partnership had considered a list of potential scrutiny items for the 24/25 year. The topics which had been identified were the "Partnership Enviro Crime Enforcement Contract" and "A review of the scope of the Sub-Regional Leisure Facilities offer." It was proposed that the Leisure Facilities Task and Finish Group be the first to commence its work, with the Enviro-Crime scrutiny review taking place later in the year.

RESOLVED:

That Councillors Mike Gilbert, Neil Drayton and Suzanne Welberry agreed to become members on the task and finish group reviewing the Leisure provision.

That Councillors Stuart Evans, David Scoot and Ralph Pryke agreed to become members of the task and finish group reviewing the Enviro Crime Enforcement Contract.

62 ANNUAL JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP FOR THE SOUTH & EAST LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCILS PARTNERSHIP

The Scrutiny Officer presented the report, confirming that when the Councils formed the Partnership in October 2021, the Memorandum of Agreement committed the Councils to undertake an annual scrutiny of the Partnership ‘to understand its effectiveness and opportunities for further development’. In November 2021, Council agreed that the annual Partnership Scrutiny Task Group should be made up of the Scrutiny Committee Chairman, Vice Chairman and one additional Scrutiny Member from each of the Partnership Councils’ relevant Scrutiny Committee. Once the scrutiny has been undertaken, the Task Group’s report would be presented back to the relevant Scrutiny Committee at each Council before being presented to each Cabinet with an associated Action Plan for consideration. The key lines of enquiry were to review delivery of the recommendations from the 2023 Partnership annual scrutiny; to consider how the partnership was responding to shared and common challenges and opportunities at a local, corporate, and sub-regional level across the southeast region of Lincolnshire; to review the progress being made to achieve the combined financial opportunity of up to £42m (if all service integration opportunities are embraced) identified in the Partnership business case and to monitor the Partnership securing service delivery improvements and resilience across the Partnership. Finally, the group would monitor how the Partnership was creating additional capacity and increased resilience to do more for its communities.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Patsie Marson be appointed to the group alongside the Chairman Councillor Claire Rylott and the Vice Chairman Councillor Lena Savickiene.

63 ENVIRONMENT POLICY

The Portfolio Holder Councillor Callum Butler presented the report supported by the Group Manager for Climate Change and confirmed that in February 2021, a new Environment Policy had been introduced to provide the mandate for work to underpin the strategic aim within the 2020-2024 Corporate Strategy around Environmental Awareness and Accountability. The policy had provided the framework for more detailed plans and strategies to be developed and helped to embed climate change and environment considerations across all services and directorates. The development of the new Sub-regional Strategy for the South and East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership in 2024 set out a collective ambition for the three Councils and had at its heart the Environment as one of four sub-regional priorities. It was a timely opportunity to review the existing policies of East Lindsey and Boston and produce a revised document that underpinned delivery of the Environment priority in the new Sub Regional Strategy. Climate change was widely considered to be one of the greatest challenges facing our

society and it was recognised that the Partnership has a stronger voice and influence by working together.

The Council's Climate Change and Environment Team worked across the three Councils to achieve environmental aims and objectives and had been responsible for implementing carbon foot-printing assessments and monitoring, delivery of environment projects such as community orchard planting, the establishment of a South and East Lincolnshire Climate Action Network and delivery of multi-million pound programmes of home energy advice and capital works to improve the energy-efficiency of residents' homes. Achieving the collective climate change and environment ambitions of the Partnership and meeting Net Zero targets however could not be delivered by one team in isolation. It required buy-in from all areas of Council operations from procurement through to service delivery and it was therefore important that guiding documents set out a clear plan for what considerations need to be part of decision-making activities.

The new SELCP Environment Policy (Appendix A) set out the key themes and priorities that underpinned the strategic aim of the Sub-regional Strategy and that simple approach was designed to provide the basis from which to link to wider initiatives and funding proposals, and also provide the framework under which more detailed plans and strategies sat e.g. the Carbon Reduction Plan, Sustainable Products Policy and Climate Change Strategy. Monitoring of the Environment Policy would be driven by the Performance Management Framework and Annual Delivery Plan as outlined in the Sub-regional Strategy given that the policy directly supported delivery of the Environment priority.

A broader approach to quantifying how the Partnership was delivering against its Climate Change and Environment ambitions was also currently being developed to evaluate progress across service areas and to enable a level of benchmarking against other authorities and organisations. The Environment Policy would be embedded as part of any agreed monitoring process.

Member deliberation followed which included:

Several suggestions were tabled including the provision of recycling bins within the town allowing the public to dispense their rubbish in the correct receptacle, with the current bin provision being that of all disposals in one bin which was not supporting recycling. It was noted that such bins were prevalent on the continent where the public used them correctly.

Another suggestion was that of the provision of water fountains, again used overseas to cut down on plastic water bottles. A further suggestion in respect of the disposal of bottles and cans was the provision of reserve vending machines enabling the public to recycling their used receptacle in the correct way and gain a payment for doing so.

A further suggestion in relation to protecting the environment was the cutting back of ivy at its roots, on trees where it was prevalent and could kill the trees or even fell them.

Members did agree the need for further education and that it was important that the schools be involved as pupils who understood the need, would recycle themselves and more importantly, educate their families including parents on how to recycle.

In response the portfolio holder stated that at one point, recycling bins had been installed within the town but had been abused in their use by the public, who disposed of all rubbish in any of the bins and not using them as designated.

The issue of providing water fountains had been considered within the PE21 project.

The cutting back of Ivy was something that could be raised with the grounds team.

Responding further to the suggestions, the Group Manager for Climate Change advised that the recycling bins were a challenge in balancing the managing of waste against the

recycling side and linked to a wider programme of awareness raising. A scheme was due to be trialled on the coast with a dedicated bin for plastic bottles which would have signage around it, relating to the dangers of plastic within the marine environment. Members were advised that any decision in respect of the cutting back of Ivy would need to be a careful balance, as its value to wildlife as a valuable food resource in winter would need to be considered.

RECOMMENDATION:

That Environment and Performance Committee recommends to Cabinet that the new Environment Policy be adopted.

64 QUARTER 4 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Presenting the report the Group Manager for Insights and Transformation advised members that the report allowed members to consider areas for future reporting to committee.

Following detailed discussion at the previous meeting, additional details had been added to clarify the trend measures and more targeted data had been requested with the Assistant Directors having been approached, to consider if targets on certain areas could be set, along with potential benchmarking also being provided. Not all the data provided was performance related, with the trend data being used to analyse the position and make decisions.

Committee were also advised that the Council now held trend measures for a full year for the Kingdom service and that too could possibly be added to the performance reporting. Referencing the graph within the report, the Group Manager for Insights and Transformation confirmed that it was cumulative across the whole partnership, identifying the targets originally set and the actual outcomes achieved which had been more than anticipated.

Member deliberation followed which included:

Concern was noted in respect of the rough sleeper data with a request for the numbers of verified rough sleepers to be provided moving forward. The member seeking the request advised that it was due to mounting criticism from the charitable sector across Lincolnshire and the treatment / mis treatment of those rough sleepers who died. The member noted that quite a few had died within Boston Borough, and it was a growing concern with all Council's and agencies needing to answer hard questions as to how to address the situation. A further member voiced concern in respect of the lack of a right to an investigation into any death of a rough sleeper. The Group Manager for Insights and Transformation advised that they intended to raise this with the relevant Service Manager/Assistant Director, and they suggested that the subject could be considered for the work programme.

In response to a question in relation to the data provided in respect of visitors to the town and concern on how the data was calculated, The Group Manager for Insights and Transformation clarified that the figures were based on the footfall at the GMLP (Geoff Moulder Leisure Pool) and not based on the footfall within the town.

Furthermore, the Group Manager confirmed it was difficult to predict a target for property improvements as there was no way of knowing how many interventions would be required. What could be provided would be a percentage on the performance on those that were actioned.

In answer to a members' concerns at the reduction in satisfaction within the staff surveys, the Group Manager for Insights and Transformation confirmed that more people were completing surveys which could impact on the trend, and that annual reviews were held with all staff to enable managers to identify and address any specific concerns. The figures were not of concern overall and quite good in comparison to others.

65 WORK PROGRAMME

The Lead Officer for the committee, the Assistant Director for Regulatory, advised members that a further report would be tabled to the next scheduled meeting on the 5th September 2024, which would be in respect of controlling the feeding of wild birds within the town centre. A public consultation was taking place which would conclude at the end of July 2024 and a report would be produced thereafter, which would look at the public nuisance and include the effect of bird faeces left on street furniture and the public realm, along with the effect on heritage buildings and the cost to those who had to clean it up.

The Meeting Closed at 8.20 pm