

Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2018

Present:

Councillor Hacking - In the Chair

Councillors Cooley, M Dar, Evans, Fletcher-Hackwood, Kirkpatrick, Rawlins and Rawson

Councillor N Murphy, Deputy Leader

Councillor S Murphy, Statutory Deputy Leader

Councillor Rahman, Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure

Councillor Stone, Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Lovecy, member of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Chief Superintendent Wasim Chaudhry, Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

CESC/18/22 Minutes

Decision

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 as a correct record.

CESC/18/23 Police and Crime Plan and additional police resources

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which detailed the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan and provided an overview of how it was envisaged the additional police resources agreed to be funded through the precept would be prioritised.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- The development of the Police and Crime Plan;
- The draft priorities;
- The consultation;
- The outcomes framework;
- Finance; and
- Next steps.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- How the 100 police officers being recruited would be utilised;
- Whether the role of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was being expanded and whether they were equipped with the skills for this expanded role; and
- Concerns about residents' and traders' experience of the 101 police non-emergency number.

Chief Superintendent Chaudhry informed the Committee that 50 additional police officers would be recruited this year and a further 50 next year. He reported that these officers would work in frontline roles and that GMP was currently considering the most effective way to deploy them which could involve them working in groups, for example, tackling anti-social behaviour in one area and then moving on to a different area. He advised Members that deployment decisions were made based on an assessment of risk and harm. He informed the Committee that the role of PCSOs had expanded and that the role profile and also the training provided was being reviewed. He also outlined the training PCSOs currently received. He informed Members that, while the number of calls to 101 had decreased, 999 calls had increased and were becoming more complex and that these calls had to be the priority. He advised that the average time for GMP to answer a 101 call was now two minutes and 44 seconds, although there were some cases where it was much quicker and some where it took much longer. He reported that GMP was running a campaign to signpost the public to other services which it might be more appropriate for them to contact than 101. He also reported that all 101 calls were now being triaged before they reached the 101 exchange. He informed Members that GMP was looking at how technology could be used to enable the public to inform GMP about non-urgent issues.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/18/24 Greater Manchester Police (GMP) Presentation

The Committee received a presentation from Chief Superintendent Chaudhry of GMP about how GMP was operating in a changing environment.

Chief Superintendent Chaudhry referred to the main points and themes within the presentation, which included:

- Future policing across Greater Manchester;
- The case for change;
- GMP's strategy;
- Ongoing programmes; and
- Work to tackle organised crime.

The Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee informed Members about his Committee's recent visit to the Early Help Hub South. He reported that good joint working was taking place and praised the contribution of the police officer based within the Hub.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- Whether it was appropriate for GMP to become more reliant on technology, for example, for communicating with the public, given that IT could be unreliable, the initial costs involved, the lack of personal contact and the difficulties it presented for some disabled people.

- Sickness levels within GMP, including the reasons and what was being done to address this;
- Where police officers had been placed into a multi-agency team such as an Early Help Hub because they were temporarily unfit for active duty, was it appropriate to move them back to neighbourhood policing once they were fit, considering the relationships they would have built up; and
- Work being done to tackle the exploitation of vulnerable young people (for example, 'county lines' where vulnerable young people were used to carry drugs).

Chief Superintendent Chaudhry informed Members that, in order to deliver services with limited resources, GMP had to look at how it could make better use of technology to achieve this; however, he acknowledged that this did present challenges and that it would not be suitable for all circumstances. He outlined the actions being taken to address sickness levels within GMP and offered to provide Members with data on sickness levels. He acknowledged the point about moving officers back to frontline roles once they were fit but advised that, as the police service was stretched, this could be necessary. He reported that decisions were made on a case-by-case basis and that, if an officer could be moved to a neighbourhood policing role in the same area, the relationships they had built up would still be valuable. He informed Members that GMP took a multi-agency approach to tackling the exploitation of vulnerable young people, including working with the Community Safety Partnership, local authorities' children's social care departments and with schools.

Decision

To note the report and thank Chief Superintendent Chaudhry and his colleagues in GMP for their service.

CESC/18/25 Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Update

The Committee received a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (Growth and Neighbourhoods) which provided an update on the refreshed Community Safety Strategy 2018 - 2021 together with details of how the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was responding to the issues around serious and organised crime and violence impacting on young people.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report, which included:

- The consultation on the Community Safety Strategy 2018 - 2021;
- The five priorities within the Strategy; and
- Work to tackle serious and organised crime and violence, including serious youth violence and knife crime.

The Senior Quality Assurance Officer from the Council's Education Service outlined early intervention and prevention work taking place in relation to knife crime among young people, serious youth violence and county lines, which included:

- School assemblies on knife crime;

- Targeted thematic workshops on knife crime and county lines for young people most at risk;
- Educating staff in Pupil Referral Units and other settings; and
- Piloting a Keeping Safe Day in a local high school.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The involvement of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups in the work of the CSP;
- How the CSP's work could be embedded in every ward and how good approaches to tackling issues such as anti-social behaviour could be shared with other areas; and
- The valuable work of the Positive Engagement Programme and whether funding could be made available for work in other wards.

The Community Safety Lead advised that Macc, the VCS support organisation for Manchester, attended every meeting of the CSP and that other VCS organisations attended the meetings, depending on the subject being discussed. She outlined how the CSP worked across the city, reporting that north, central and south Manchester each had one CSP officer assigned to them and, where a problem was identified in a particular area, the officer would bring together partners to problem solve the issue. She advised Members that the Positive Engagement Programme had limited funding so was targeted based on an assessment of crime hotspots and existing youth provision but that officers would like to broaden this further if additional funding could be identified.

Decision

To note the report.

CESC/18/26 Delivering the Our Manchester Strategy

The Committee received reports of the Statutory Deputy Leader and the Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure which provided an overview of work undertaken and progress towards the delivery of the Council's priorities as set out in the Our Manchester strategy for those areas within their respective portfolios.

The Statutory Deputy Leader referred to the main points and themes within her report, which included progress and outcomes in relation to:

- Our Manchester;
- Social inclusion;
- The Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS);
- Homelessness and rough sleeping;
- Equalities;
- International relationships;
- The Local Government Association (LGA); and
- Domestic violence and abuse.

Some of the key points that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- What support was being made available for people who fell into debt due to the introduction of Universal Credit; and
- When the work on the Poverty Truth Commission was due to start.

The Statutory Deputy Leader reported that the Council funded advice services which provided support for people experiencing debt problems and was also looking at how it could support food banks to signpost people to advice services and other payments they could be eligible for. She reported that the Council had included £1 million in its budget to help mitigate the effects of Universal Credit but warned that the Council could not fully protect residents from its impact. She informed Members that the first meeting of the Poverty Truth Commission would take place on 28 June 2018.

The Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure referred to the main points and themes within his report, which included progress and outcomes in relation to:

- Leisure and sports;
- Culture and events;
- The Youth Offer;
- Parks;
- Libraries; and
- Schools.

Members discussed the Manchester Active Board and re-iterated their previous recommendation that further consideration should be given to having representatives from sports clubs on the Board. The Executive Member agreed to look into this.

Decisions

1. To note the reports.
2. To note that the Executive Member for Schools, Culture and Leisure will provide an update on the membership of the Manchester Active Board in a future report.

CESC/18/27 Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Fund Task and Finish Group

The Committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which set out the proposed terms of reference and work programme for the Our Manchester VCS Fund Task and Finish Group. The Committee was asked to agree the terms of reference, work programme and membership of the Task and Finish Group.

Decisions

1. To agree the terms of reference and work programme.
2. That Councillor Rawlins be appointed as the Chair of the Task and Finish Group and that Councillors M Dar and Kirkpatrick be appointed to the membership.

3. That the Chair of the Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee and two additional Members of that Committee also be added to the membership.

CESC/18/28 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained a list of key decisions yet to be taken within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Neighbourhoods informed the Committee that the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime had been unable to attend today's meeting but would attend a future meeting.

The Chair drew Members' attention to the Register of Key Decisions within the Overview Report. He advised Members that key decisions could be called in after the decision had been made but that the Committee could also ask to receive a report prior to a decision being taken to try to influence the decision before it was made. He asked Members to contact him if they wanted any items to be added to the work programme.

Decision

To note the report.