

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17 July 2024

Present: Councillor A Grimston (Chair)
Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)
Councillors G Duduta, A Khan, P Kloss, T Osborn and R Short

Also present: Councillor Williams (Portfolio Holder) (virtual)

Officers: Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy
Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services and
Monitoring Officer
Environmental Health Manager (Environment)
Planning Strategy and Infrastructure Lead
Senior Democratic Services Officer

10 **Apologies for Absence/Committee Membership**

Apologies had been received from Councillors Hill and Newstead.

Councillor Rodrigues, Portfolio Holder for Property, Resources and Customer Service had also sent his apologies.

Councillor Williams joined the meeting virtually.

11 **Disclosure of interests (if any)**

There were no disclosures of interest.

12 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024 were submitted and signed.

13 **Other scrutiny meetings - minutes**

The Chair of Finance Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Khan, updated the committee on the last meeting. The committee had reviewed the year-end financial report which had also been to Council. Members received a useful briefing on temporary accommodation and subsequently resolved to support the sale of the property on Rickmansworth Road.

Deployable CCTV

The committee received a presentation of the Associate Director of Planning, Infrastructure and Economy, the Planning Strategy and Infrastructure Lead and Environmental Health Manager.

The presentation covered the provision in Watford, the regulations underpinning the use of CCTV, details about the deployable units and the trial that had been undertaken, the challenges faced and data on effectiveness of the trial programme. The committee was also informed about other measures in place to tackle fly-tipping.

During the course of the subsequent discussion, the following points were made:

- The Envirocrime team identified hotspots for fly-tipping and made recommendations about locations for CCTV.
- Consultation had taken place with some ward councillors, but sites were restricted by a number of physical features of the sites and in some cases alternative nearby locations sometimes had had to be sought. There were specific privacy issues that had to be considered in residential areas.
- Fly-tipping did continue to happen but the deployable CCTV had not proved to be effective in increasing the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) or prosecutions.
- The cameras had difficulty identifying individuals who were not using a vehicle and could not follow people beyond the range of the camera. They could move but had to have been pointing in the right direction to capture an offence as it happened. The regulations required that signs were in place alerting people to the presence of CCTV. Where there had been FPNs issued, this had often been as a result of other investigative measures.
- The town centre cameras were part of an effective network over a broader area and benefitted from two-way communication from the Police. There were, however, only a limited number of operatives surveying 300 cameras. These were used in real-time for higher risk crimes but were not a substitute for other safety measures.
- The cameras could not be repurposed for ANPR uses; this was a power held by Hertfordshire County Council to enforce offending vehicles. Should the trial be ended, the cameras could be repurposed as permanent installations as part of the network; the locations for relocations would be subject to consultation and technical assessment.
- The cameras provided high-quality images in daylight and met the legislative requirements, however the offences were often at night.
- Poster campaigns highlighting the issue of fly-tipping had proved quite effective in Callowland ward. However, other councillors reported that posters had less of an impact on fly-tipping levels in their wards. This

approach could be used elsewhere if there was a suitable location for signage. It was important that measures did not just relocate the issues.

- It was considered bad practice to employ dummy cameras as the regulations required transparency and dummy cameras caused all cameras to lose their preventative effects.
- The data showed that fly-tipping was still happening but often not at the camera sites.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the officers and the committee for their presentation and discussions. He highlighted the campaign in Callowland where fly-tips were marked up as a crime scene. Fly-tipping was antisocial behaviour and was never justified.

Officers extended an invitation to the committee to visit the CCTV Control Room in the town centre.

Resolved –

The committee noted the presentation.

15 **Update on Corporate Peer Challenge**

The committee received a presentation by the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services. The final report of the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge, undertaken in November 2023, had been included in the agenda. The presentation covered the purpose of the peer challenge, its scope, the areas for recommendations and updates against the action plan.

During the discussion, the committee was advised that:

- The Chief Finance Officer was reviewing the timeliness of updates to Finance Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee. This was part of a more fundamental review of the risk management strategy.
- An independent member of the Audit Committee had been recruited and had attended his first meeting. Details about the process would be circulated to members.

Resolved –

that Overview and Scrutiny Committee notes the update.

16 **Delivery Plan 2024-26**

The committee received a report of the Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services. The Associate Director introduced the report. A new Delivery Plan, covering the period 2024-26 would sit below the Council Plan to provide detail on specific activities and had been developed halfway through the mayoral term to update on actions and outcomes. As previously, updates on the delivery of these activities would be reported quarterly to Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Discussing the report, it was noted that:

- The Delivery Plan was drafted by the Associate Directors, other officers and with portfolio holders. There had been a focus on ensuring that outcomes would be supported with appropriate resources and the plan informed the service planning process.
- Where there were deliverables which were not within the council's area of direct responsibility, such as buses, the plan made clear that these outcomes would be delivered in partnership and the council's role would be to promote and influence outcomes. The plan aimed to be clear about how the council's resources were being used.
- The council had recently agreed an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) policy and there was a delivery plan which underpinned it. Updates on this would be included in the next quarterly report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The committee requested a deeper dive into the EDI policy and delivery plan.
- The Delivery Plan was being translated into service plans and communication channels would be used to highlight tools available to residents, such as the highway fault reporting tool.
- The Delivery Plan contained 100 commitments; this was the result of the process between services and portfolio holders. Although 100 was a number that resonated; the plan would be for delivery.

Resolved –

that Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

1. notes the Delivery Plan 2024-26
2. notes that progress against the Delivery Plan 2024-26 will be reported on a quarterly basis to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The scrutiny committee was invited to review the current Executive Decision Progress Report for 2024-25 and consider whether any further information was required.

Resolved –

that the current 2024/25 Executive Decision Progress report be noted.

18 Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee

The committee noted that Councillor Martins was now the representative on the Health Scrutiny Committee. He had been unable to attend the last meeting and the minutes would be circulated to the committee.

19 Work Programme

Members were invited to review Overview and Scrutiny Committee's draft work programme for 2024/25. The committee wished to add the EDI Policy to the work programme.

Resolved –

that the Chair work with officers to incorporate members' suggestions into the 2024/25 work programme.

20 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would take place on Thursday 25 July 2024 for call-in.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.05 pm
and finished at 8.25 pm