



# **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY AND GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 25th MARCH 2021**

**PRESENT:** Councillor S Goodall (Chair), Councillors A Farrell, M Bailey, R Bilcliff, P Brindley, T Clements, P Standen, Dr S Peale and P Thurgood

**CABINET:** Councillor Stephen Doyle  
Councillor Jeremy Oates

The following officers were present: Anna Miller (Assistant Director – Growth & Regeneration), Joanne Sands (Assistant Director Partnerships), Richard Powell (Planning Policy and Delivery Officer) and Jo Hutchison (Democratic Services, Scrutiny and Elections Officer)

**GUESTS:** Chief Inspector Paul Talbot (Tamworth Police Commander) and Sergeant Gary Harborow (Tamworth Police Deputy Commander)

## **45 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

*(Moved by Councillor Dr S Peale and seconded by Councillor R Bilcliff)*

## **46 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **47 UPDATE FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair reported that following on from the dry waste recycling item considered at the previous meeting he had received some draft text and would circulate it to members by email for their consideration.

## **48 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH COMMITTEE FROM CABINET OR COUNCIL**

No matters had been referred.

#### **49 TAMWORTH COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PLAN 2021 ANNUAL REFRESH AND TAMWORTH POLICE UPDATE**

The Chair welcomed the Portfolio Holder, Councillor S Doyle, the Tamworth Police Commander, Chief Inspector Paul Talbot, the Tamworth Police Deputy Commander, Sergeant Gary Harborow and the Assistant Director, Partnerships, Ms Jo Sands to the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder introduced the Assistant Director Partnerships who provided an overview of the Tamworth Community Safety Partnership Plan (Annual Refresh) which outlined how partners were collectively tackling community safety issues in the Tamworth borough.

The Assistant Director highlighted that the data in this year's annual report was impacted by the coronavirus pandemic with the restrictions imposed resulting in reductions in recorded crime and disorder from mid-March 2020 onwards. The Assistant Director reported the 2020 achievements and challenges and that overall the priorities in the plan remained relevant and proportionate. The multi-agency working and the oversight of the Community Safety Plan by the Tamworth Partnership Coordination Group was highlighted, as well as the role of this Committee in scrutinising it. During 2020 it was reported that the key issues which arose were:

- COVID compliance issues and the police approach
- The reduction in reported Anti-social behaviour (ASB)
- The reduction in all crimes between March 2020 and February 2021
- Tackling domestic abuse.

The Committee considered the Community Safety Plan and the priorities it contained and it was agreed that the priorities would be listed alphabetically.

The Chief Inspector provided an overview of the performance for the Tamworth area in terms of crime figures, ASB and road safety and then addressed some other topics. In particular he reported that:

- In terms of crime figures, whilst for the year February 2020 to February 2021 these were down on the previous year, there had been increases in two areas which he addressed; business robbery and more serious and violent crime. In terms of more serious and violent crime this was in part due to an increase in domestic violence and it was reported that the pressures and different circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic on families both financially and in terms of overall wellbeing were potential factors. To address these, it was reported that staffing had been increased in terms of domestic violence, as well as the review of cases of domestic violence being undertaken at an early stage and the use of the perpetrator programme to rehabilitate offenders and the use of diversionary tactics to work with the family to prevent harm. One further reason for the increase in the more serious and violent crime figures was reported to be due to the three fatal road traffic incidents.

- In terms of ASB, Tamworth area had seen a 2% increase over the summer in terms of non-COVID related ASB and this was reported to be one of the only neighbourhoods in Staffordshire to see an increase. As a result the police had looked at the possible reasons for this and worked more closely with partners in a multi-faceted way and that presently the local figures were significantly down and better than trend. In terms of COVID related ASB the Chief Inspector reported that the police reported that there had been good engagement. More recently there had been an increase in activity in open spaces and there had been an increase in the figures for COVID related ASB. To address this a Four Es Strategy was implemented, including engaging with the public, explaining and educating and enforcing. Work had been undertaken to identify, from evidence, the likely ASB hotspots as restrictions were lifted, and it was reported that appropriate plans would be put in place.
- Road traffic safety – whilst the number of serious collisions had decreased, there had been an increase in road traffic fatalities. It was reported that the Staffordshire road policing unit had been utilised locally which had led to an increase in tickets for mobile phone offences speeding offences and no insurance offences.
- One of the challenges posed by COVID-19 was that the normal engagement strategies between the police and local communities had not been possible and there had been an increased reliance on social media, and that some of the content, whilst intended to communicate with the community in respect of successful policing operations, could have led to there being a perception of an increase in crime.
- Engagement with young people, it was reported that the Reduction in Harm unit had started to introduce the Inspire to Change programme, which involved the police engaging with and going into schools to build relationships between the police and young people.
- In terms of County Lines the work continued to detect where drugs were being brought into Tamworth from the wider area and it was reported that this work continued to work well. The Chief Inspector reported that work would be starting to look at prevention activities, to stop young people being groomed into activities including by engaging with young people at the right level and earlier.

The Committee sought clarification in the following areas:

1. Crime data table at ward level – whether the technology existed to split the data for Castle ward to show the town centre and other areas separately. The Chief Inspector reported that it was expected that there would be the ability to drill down the data within wards.
2. The crime data identified Wilnecote as a hot spot for car crime, and it was noted that the speed of access and departure from Tamworth made it an attractive location in terms of car crime and therefore the police work continued to make Tamworth less attractive from this perspective.
3. The Assistant Director reported that the partnership work which had been run throughout the pandemic would continue to support those residents who had shielded for some time as the requirement to shield came to an end.

4. The Committee sought assurance on strategies to support females in our community to feel safe as lockdown was relaxed. The Chief Inspector recognised that there were vulnerable people in our locality, and that strategies would involve securing alarms for those vulnerable people as well as to ensure that the police patrol strategy delivered highly visible patrols in appropriate areas and for the police to continue to engage with all vulnerable communities.
5. The issue of the 101 crime reporting line and the delays residents encountered, particularly for residents who did not utilise social media was highlighted. The Chief Inspector recognised that this was a concern and that additionally could impact on the reported crime figures which the force used. As a Commander within the Commander group this concern was fed back to the force as an area of focus, and with the appointment of a new Police Commissioner and a new Chief Constable for Staffordshire there would continue to be opportunities to raise this issue.
6. The Committee sought clarification on the challenges the police expected to face as lockdown eased and the hospitality sector gradually reopened over the next few months. It was planned that the force was planning for the release of restrictions and for the opening of retail and hospitality and for supporting the community in enjoying these activities. The Chief Inspector reported that to deliver this required the force to be agile and to move resources to meet demand and to support the community in the reopening.
7. The Committee sought and received clarification on the role of the PCSOs which were described as a bridge between the police and the local community and it was recognised that PCSOs played a vital role in the community and as part of neighbourhood policing.

Councillor Doyle reported that in terms of the 101 crime reporting line, this issue was regularly raised at the Staffordshire Commissioners panel and was something which would continue to be raised by the panel as something required to be addressed.

Members thanked the police for their work throughout the borough in challenging conditions and for their thought in delivery on the ground.

Members further recognised the work of the safety partnership team alongside the police and thanked the team for their work.

The Chief Inspector reported that he would be leaving the Tamworth Commander role shortly following promotion, and that as an interim measure, Sergeant Harborow would take a caretaker role to ensure continuity of service whilst Staffordshire police ran a Chief Inspector process to identify a permanent appointment to the Tamworth Commander role. The Committee thanked the Commander for his work and congratulated him on his promotion.

The Committee noted the report.

The Chief Inspector, Sergeant, Assistant Director Partnerships and Councillor R Bilcliff left the meeting.

## 50 CIL SPENDING

The Report of the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Community Safety on CIL Spending was received by the Committee before consideration by Cabinet on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

The Assistant Director, Growth & Regeneration provided an overview of the report and the need for there to be a mechanism agreed for spending the different elements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Following the Council's adoption of the CIL at its Council meeting on 17 July 2018 it came into effect on 1st August 2018. It was reported that at the Council meeting in July 2018 it was resolved that a report covering the governance arrangements for CIL spending would be submitted to Cabinet. This report, following consideration by this Committee, would be presented to Cabinet for its approval for part of the proposed mechanism for spending the different elements of CIL in accordance with the relevant regulations and guidance.

The Assistant Director reported that the proposal was for:

1. 5% of CIL income up to 30 July 2021 to be retained by the Council and applied to administrative expenses associated with CIL;
2. 5% of CIL income per year from 1 August 2021 onwards to be retained by the Council and applied to administrative expenses associated with CIL;
3. The Council to retain the strategic element (80%) and allocate the funds to one or more infrastructure projects in the Borough;
4. Regeneration projects within Tamworth to be set as the priority for spending the strategic element of CIL

The Assistant Director reported that the remaining 15% for neighbourhood spending had been approved by Cabinet on 18 February 2021.

The Assistant Director further reported that the regulations require the strategic element of CIL to fund the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of the following types of infrastructure to support the development of its area:

- a) Roads and other transport facilities
- b) Food defences
- c) Schools and other educational facilities
- d) Medical facilities
- e) Sporting and recreational facilities
- f) Open spaces

The Committee sought clarification on:

- the types of projects which this funding could be applied to and it was reported that it could be applied to regeneration across Tamworth, and it would need to fit within the criteria (a) to (f);
- whether this council could access funds from neighbouring authorities and it was reported that it was possible for authorities to utilise the funds

outside of their areas and therefore it was important to work with neighbouring authorities where relevant.

**RESOLVED** that the Report be recommended for Cabinet approval.

*(Moved by Councillor Dr S Peaple and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)*

#### **51 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND UPDATE**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor J Oates, joined the meeting to provide a Future High Street Fund update. Councillor Oates reported that the Programme Board had met twice since the successful award had been announced and that activities were currently focussed on the mobilisation stage. Councillor Oates confirmed that the role of scrutiny had been discussed at the previous Programme Board and that further details, including project milestones would be provided to scrutiny.

The Leader of the Council and the Assistant Director, Growth & Regeneration then left the meeting.

#### **52 2020/21 FORWARD PLAN**

No further items from the Forward Plan were specifically identified for this Committee's consideration prior to Cabinet's consideration.

#### **53 WORKING GROUP UPDATES**

The Chair reported that he noted the inclusion on the Forward Plan of the Arts & Events Relaunch, which may be of relevance to the Arts & Events Working Group which had been formed.

The Chair reported that the ICT Working Group had met and had fed comments to the Head of Technology and Information Services and that Councillor Standen and the Chair wanted to thank him for the work on the new ICT Strategy.

#### **54 INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN**

**RESOLVED** that the meeting be extended to 9pm under Procedure Rule 9.1.13.

*(Moved by Councillor P Standen and seconded by Councillor S Goodall)*

The Committee agreed to update the Committee's Work Plan as follows:

**Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Work Plan**

<b>Work Plan 2020 - 2021</b>	
<b>DATE</b>	<b>SUBJECT</b>
<b>Quarterly updates</b>	Future High Street Fund (Growth) – Quarterly updates – starting March 2021
<b>June / July 2021</b>	Consideration of State of Tamworth Debate items
<b>xxx 2021</b>	Modern Slavery update
<b>xxx 2021</b>	EV Charging update
<b>xxx 2021</b>	Business Crime Reduction Partnership Update
<b>xxx 2021</b>	E-Scouters and E-Bikes
<b>September 2021</b>	CCTV update
<b>Sept / Oct 2021</b>	Kettlebrook and Bolehall Public Space Protection Orders
<b>xxx 2022</b>	Review of Taxi Licensing Policy – Points System
<b>When clarity on legislation</b>	Fire Safety Update

<b>Working Groups</b>		
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Possible WG Members</b>	<b>Target IS&amp;G Com meeting date</b>
ICT Strategy	SG, PS	
Fireworks	Open to all	June 2021
Events	SP, RB, AF, PB, SG	

<b>Upcoming Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny Committee Meetings</b>
<i>Dates to be confirmed</i>

**55 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE SAFETY & GROWTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 2020/21**

The Chair provided an overview of the draft Annual Report and thanked members for their work during this municipal year.

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Chair