

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

MEETING HELD IN THE ROOM 11, ROYSTON TOWN HALL, MELBOURN STREET,
ROYSTON ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH MARCH, 2018 AT 7.30 PM

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors Councillor Tony Hunter (Chairman), Councillor Bill Davidson (Vice-Chairman), Sarah Dingley, Jean Green, Fiona Hill and Ben Lewis*

In Attendance: *Ashley Hawkins (Communities Officer), Ian Gourlay (Committee and Member Services Manager) and Amelia McInally (Committee and Member Services Officer)*

Also Present: *At the commencement of the meeting PCSO Penny Tomsett, PCSO Charlie Crichton (Hertfordshire Constabulary) and 4 members of the public.*

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gerald Morris.

43 MINUTES - 29 NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Royston and District Committee meeting held on 29 November 2017 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

44 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business notified.

45 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed those present, particularly PCSO (Police Community Support Officer) Penny Tomsett and PCSO Charlie Crichton from Hertfordshire Constabulary;
- (2) The Chairman advised that, in accordance with Council Policy, the meeting would be audio recorded; and
- (3) The Chairman drew attention to the item on the agenda front pages regarding Declarations of Interest and reminded Members that, in line with the Code of Conduct, any Declarations of Interest needed to be declared immediately prior to the item in question.

46 HERTFORDSHIRE CONSTABULARY

PCSO Penny Tomsett (Hertfordshire Constabulary) thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and gave a verbal update of the report of Sergeant Guy Westwood on the issues being addressed by the Hertfordshire Constabulary in the Royston and District area as follows:

Staffing News

That North Herts CSP (Community Safety Partnership) was still headed up by Chief Inspector Julie Wheatley; and the SNT (Safer Neighbourhood Team) Inspector remained to be Richard Lilley, who joined them last year.

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The local Sergeant was still Guy Westwood, who sent his apologies that he couldn't be at Royston and District Area Committee that evening.

Royston Urban PC's were Pete Cook and Jo Cattley, who had joined the team in December 2016, and Mark Ellwood was the Rural PC. Mark had been with the team for many years now.

It was reported that there had been a very positive change, in that they had four PCSO's on the team, which allowed for two urban and two rural officers, enabling better follow-up on crimes, and gave more visibility. The PCSO team was made up of Robyn Allen for the town, which had recently been joined by Charlie Crichton, who had joined them just after Christmas. Charlie was very keen and seemed to have settled in well. Sadly, however, Robyn was leaving on Friday 23 March, having joined BTP, (British Transport Police) which would put them back to three PCSOs. Penny Tomsett was moving back to cover areas of the town and some of the rural, just until they had a new PCSO in position within the town to work alongside Charlie.

The rural team of PCSOs was made up of Chris Brabrook and Penny Tomsett.

Local Priorities

Local Priorities remained unchanged – Burglary, Speeding and ASB (Anti-Social Behaviour). It was reported that when people had expressed an opinion on what they should focus on, those three subjects usually came high on the agenda. It was noted that they were open to changing the local priorities, and having Priority Setting Meetings if anyone was interested, and of course people could email them any concerns or ideas.

ANPR Cameras

It was stated that the long awaited ANPR cameras were all set up and working – the locations were:-

East bound and West bound Newmarket Road, Royston
North bound and South bound Melbourn Road, Royston

This had been part of a strategic review of ANPR across Herts, Beds and Cambs. There had been other cameras that had been put in across the area, but that was all Royston were allowed to have, for the legal reasons discussed at last year's meeting. It had been good news that these cameras were in place but was not the be all and end all of policing. The reason being, many criminals were camera aware and they would disguise their number plates, or use stolen or fake ones, which they would often change.

Crime trends

It was reported that the whole country was currently suffering an increase in theft from motor vehicles containing tools. Royston had also shared in this increase. The Police were carrying out increased late evening and night patrols, and had recently held a tool marking event on the heath, for tradespeople to go and have their postcode engraved onto their tools. They were also in the process of securing funding for further property marking events, using "Select a DNA" property marking,

The Committee were informed that whilst Royston was showing an increase in most crime types, the numbers were still very small compared to the whole of the county and crimes made up a very little proportion of the overall crime rate that had occurred over the last year.

Future for Royston SNT (Safer Neighbourhood Team)

Sergeant Westwood's report stated that he wanted to get the SNT back to going out offering timely crime prevention advice and working closely with Neighbourhood Watch and partner organisations such as the local Councillors, Royston First and local businesses. He strongly believed that they should be able to reduce the impact of predictable crime trends by helping people to help themselves with the correct crime prevention advice and products. The report

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made it clear that the policing landscape had changed over the last few years, with reducing budgets and increasing workloads. This made it impossible to be as visible as they would have liked in these vital areas of policing. This year it had been decided they would be focusing more on preventative operations that would hopefully help to show a reduction in their crime next year.

Following a question from a member of what the arrest success against crime rate was, it was agreed that PCSO Tomsett would request that Sergeant Guy Westwood email that particular figure to the Communities Officer as the exact detail was unavailable to her within the given report. PCSO Tomsett, did, however, state there had been several arrests made since Christmas and more recently that previous Monday an arrest had been made for assault of two police officers, PCSO Tomsett being one of them. She reiterated tool theft was the greater of the crimes being carried out, but funding had been requested in order to facilitate people with the correct preventative goods to ensure ease of trace of stolen property.

PCSO Tomsett confirmed at that time their policing priorities were burglary, speeding and anti-social behaviour. On the subject of speeding a member enquired as to what preventative measures were being taken. PCSO Tomsett stated that police officers had been out and about in the town with handheld lasers carrying out speed checks, in particular on Baldock Road and Newmarket Road. She specified the Police were aware Burns Road required to be added to that list due to speeding issues. PCSO Tomsett stated long term preventative/calming speeding measures for roads would be the responsibility of Highways to make structural alterations.

The Committee was informed by a Member, that as Councillors, they had been involved in the setting of the priorities and one of those was for speed setting. She informed that the Speed Indicator Devices (SID) were very successful, in that most people reacted well to them and did slow down when they saw them. She also stated that there would be more speed indicator devices put in place, and the ones they had, would be moved as and when required. She informed members that the police did have to agree to 20 mile an hour signs/zones in order for them to be implemented, this would ensure compliance with criteria – joint management strategy was a necessity.

Following a question from a member of the public, it was confirmed that PCSOs did not have the authority to issue parking tickets other than for obstruction. Assurance was given, however, they would continue to try and educate and advise members of the public on lawful and appropriate parking. It was confirmed Police themselves did have the right to issue tickets where a parking offence was committed

A member stated that the matter of unlawful parking arose at the Community Safety Cabinet Panel at Council the previous day and requested it be agreed that, in addition to asking the Police, the enforcement officers at NHDC be asked to assist during peak times in hot spots known to the Police in and around the town centre. All members were in agreement.

It was brought to the Committee's attention by a member that several businesses in the town were suffering due to the distraction of loud music caused by busking, for which no licence was required, thus making it extremely difficult to stop. He suggested that environmental health officers at NHDC worked with the police to assist with encouraging buskers to situate themselves in more suitable areas that were perhaps not so populated with businesses. All Members of the Area Committee were in agreement.

There being no other questions, the Chairman thanked PCSO's Tomsett and Crichton for their presence and for the work their team undertake for the Royston and District area.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Sergeant Guy Westwood be requested to supply and forward crime statistics to the Communities Officer of this Committee via email;

- (2) That the Communities Officer liaise with Parking Enforcement at NHDC, requesting their assistance with lawful and appropriate parking during peak times in hotspots known to the Police and in Royston Town Centre;
- (3) That the Communities Officer liaise with Environmental Health at NHDC, requesting their assistance to work with the Police, to encourage buskers to re-situate to more suitable unpopulated by business areas.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep the Royston and District Committee apprised of the work of the Hertfordshire Constabulary.

47 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation under this item.

48 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

The Committee was informed of ongoing and forthcoming highways matters in the Royston area as follows:-

- There had been a positive response from the joint Town, District and County Councillor working party in response to the Local Transport Plan being prepared by the County Council.
- Further to consultations, confirmation was given that the crossing in York Way would be implemented soon.
- There was a safety audit being carried out on the level crossing in Baldock Street to establish the requirement of any additional features or signage.
- The Integrated Works Programme was being finalised and results of the feasibility study on the A505 were expected by the end of March.
- Locality Budget – all of the schemes for 2017/18 were complete and the 2018/19 works would soon commence.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Gritting Team, who regularly go beyond the call of duty, be thanked for all of their efforts and hard work.
- (2) That the Pothole Team be thanked for all of their hard work and efforts.
- (3) That the verbal update on highways issues be noted.

49 GRANTS AND COMMUNITY UPDATE

The Communities Officer presented the report of the Communities Manager entitled Community Update. He drew the attention of Members to the information detailed in Appendix 1 Royston Area Committee Budget which related to the Area Budget balances for 2017/18. He confirmed there was no carry forward of unallocated funds from the 2016/17 financial year.

The Communities Officer reported that Royston & District Area Committee had allocated £8,200 of its £10,700 budget for the 2017/18 year. It was stated that this figure included £1,500 that had been allocated at the November 2017 meeting for the Free After 3pm Parking Initiative Scheme in Royston. He detailed that as the Committee had already catered for the initiative in the current financial year, it was agreed that the £1,500 would be carried over to

cover the initiative in 2018. The Communities Officer confirmed that the Committee had £2,500 left unallocated.

The Communities Officer stated, as detailed in Paragraph 8.1.1 of the report that Royston First was seeking funding support from the Royston & District Area Committee to assist with a new initiative within the town and surrounding villages to help reduce theft from vans, particularly in town centre locations and thefts from sheds and outbuildings in the rural areas. That project was aimed at supporting previous victims of such crimes, and making them and others less likely to become victims of such crimes in the future.

A member made comment on Paragraph 8.1.6 regarding Festival of the Cave, she pointed out that a such a large scale event, which this may turn out to be, would have a big impact on streets due to use of many roads. She suggested that Highways and Police be informed as soon as possible. The member also pointed out that County Council Locality Budgets would exist again for 2018/19.

Within paragraph 8.1.7 of the report of the Communities Manager, a member confirmed on the matter of a disabled access lift for Coombes Community Centre that a number of disabled people would like to hire a room in this venue, and how beneficial the addition of a lift to the Centre was. It was stated that Community Centre could apply for funding from the NHDC Capital Improvement Budget.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, in principle, the grant of £2,500 be awarded to Royston First, subject to officers receiving the appropriate supporting documentation and provided to Royston & District Area Committee in line with the Authority's grant criteria, and as detailed in Paragraph 8.1.1 of the report;
- (2) That any unspent funds from the 2017/18 financial year be allocated to Community Initiatives;
- (3) That the Communities Officer be thanked for all of his work that he carries out within the community; and
- (4) That the actions taken by the Communities Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston and District be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Royston and District area.

50 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

There were no ward or outside organisations members' reports.

The meeting closed at 8.12 pm

Chairman