

**MINUTES**  
of the  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

held on 7 February 2022 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor J. Galley (Chair)  
Councillor S. Young (Vice Chair)

Councillors L. Ashley, M.W. Bracken, W.A. Daden, I.D. Fuller, R.J.E. Gisby, I.S. Grundy,  
J.C.S. Lager, M. Sismey, C.M. Shaw, M.S. Steel, and N.M. Walsh

Also in attendance:

Councillors R.J. Moore and S. Rajesh

**1. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Tron.

**2. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**3. Declaration of Interests**

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

**4. Public Question Time**

No questions were asked or statements made.

**5. Decisions Called-In**

The Committee noted that no decisions taken by the Cabinet had been called-in.

**6. Cabinet Portfolio Update – Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford**

Councillor Moore updated the Committee on their role as the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford. The Committee received a presentation from Cllr Moore which provided an overview of their role and highlighted the key areas of work across the last year. The Committee heard that key aspects of the role included

providing political and strategic leadership along with attending meetings and briefings with senior officers. Cllr Moore also noted the support from Cllrs Davidson and Rajesh in their Cabinet Deputy roles along with assistance from Cllr Willis, in their role as Climate Ambassador. [The presentation slides can be viewed here.](#)

The Committee heard that the main areas of focus for the portfolio were as follows:

- Leisure and Heritage Services
- Parks and Green Spaces
- Public Health and Protection Services
- High Street and Charter Markets, street trading
- Street Care
- Recycling and Waste Collection Services
- Love your Chelmsford, Climate Action

Cllr Moore informed the Committee of the following areas of note in the portfolio across the last year.

- The Ice Rink at Riverside had seen the busiest month for some time with over 16,000 customers attending.
- Participation in sport, physical activity and health had continued to be supported by the Community Sport and Wellbeing team with schemes such as Active Health and Play in The Park.
- Events such as Enlightened at Hylands Park had brought welcome revenue and had been a great success.
- A major Festival in Creamfields was due to return in 2022 after a 4 year period without a major festival at Hylands Park.
- Wedding bookings for Hylands Estate continued to be at record levels.
- The woven willow tanks at the High Chelmer Multi Storey roundabout were due to be replaced with a new exhibit from the same local artist in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.
- Since the relaxing of Covid restrictions, Community Planting days had restarted. It was also noted that for 2021/22 woodland and tree planting was on track.
- Floodlighting had been installed at the skatepark in Central Park, which had been well received by users of the facility.
- The Council's Health and Wellbeing Plan was due to be refreshed and a revised air quality strategy is to be published soon too.
- The Council operated a full waste and recycling service throughout 2021 apart from three days' suspension of food waste during the Christmas period.
- Work had continued with the Management Companies and Housing Associations to assist with the challenge of recycling, waste storage and collection from flats, apartments and sheltered accommodation.
- World Clean up Day had been held on 18<sup>th</sup> September and included partnership working with many other organisations across Chelmsford.

In response to questions from the Committee, Cllr Moore informed them that;

- The further use of the Highway Rangers from Essex County Council would be explored with officers.
- It was difficult to assess the usage rates of the car park at Hylands, since charges were introduced due to Covid and poor weather conditions.
- The use of mobile cameras to assist with enforcement against fly tipping would be looked into with officers.

- Dog fouling was an area of focus for Public Health and Protection Services in 2022.
- Chelmsford's recycling rate continued to be above average due to the comprehensive kerbside collections. However due to the closing of a plant at Basildon, unfortunately all black bin waste was going to landfill, at high environmental and financial cost.
- The Council were supporting grants to improve properties with low energy performance ratings and the grants had to be spent by June, with applications required in by the end of March.
- The proposal for a youth shelter near the skatepark in Central Park continued to be considered and once finalised could be installed quickly.

Cllr Moore thanked the staff in their portfolio for their continued hard work. The Committee thanked Cllr Moore for the comprehensive update provided.

RESOLVED that;

1. the update be noted;
2. the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford be thanked for their attendance and;
3. the staff members across the directorate be thanked by the Committee.

*(7.02pm to 7.52pm)*

## 7. Annual Presentation by Safer Chelmsford Partnership and Essex Police

The Chair informed the Committee, that the two items had been combined into one for this year and after each element of the presentation, questions could be asked.

The Council's Public Protection Manager gave a presentation on behalf of the Safer Chelmsford Partnership, regarding its statutory duties, key priorities, key projects and funding in 2021/22.

The Committee was reminded of the Partnership's statutory duties, which were;

- Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan
- Co-Ordination of Partnership activities
- Strategic Priorities plus Reducing Reoffending
- Prevent, Modern Day Slavery and Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Face the Public – combined with Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Essex Police.
- Survey Public opinion – fear of crime and perceptions
- Annual presentation to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee was informed of the strategic priorities for the partnership in 2021/22.

- Tackling violent crime
- Driving down anti-social behaviour in public places
- Identifying and supporting vulnerable people
- Tackling rural and environmental crime

The key projects carried out in the last 12 months included;

- The Community Safety Hub was now well established since it opened in march 2019 and the Mid Essex Livewell Alliance were joining soon.
- Home Officer Safer Streets and Essex VRU Locality Funding.
- Partnership response to tackling ASB associated with rough sleeping and supporting our most vulnerable.
- Education, awareness and community engagement
- Night-time Economy Interventions
- Purple Flag Virtual Assessment 2021
- Specific areas of work on Violence and Vulnerability
- Improved Communications with Councillors, including a Sharepoint site ad Local level data for members.
- Effective use of City Life News
- Better Community Engagement via the use of Teams and Zoom for meetings.
- The visit of the Knife Angel exhibit which had 18,000 visitors in a month.
- Safer Streets Fund Round Three

The presentation was continued by Chief Inspector Steve Scott-Haynes, the District Commander for Chelmsford and Maldon, Essex Police. The Committee were updated on areas including, performance levels, the impact of the pandemic, policing tactics and Chelmsford Police Operations.

The Committee was informed that crime had risen by 2.2%, a similar figure was noted across Essex, but ASB had dropped by 27.2%. It was noted that there had been less opportunity to commit crime due to the reduced night-time economy and the detection/solved rate was 12.8%. The Committee heard that the pandemic had been of significant impact, due to additional patrolling of areas for social distancing and high levels of staff having to isolate. There had been an effective response to pandemic related issues along with the continued support of victims of domestic abuse, which had been a higher risk during lockdown. The Committee heard that being visible and responding to demand when appropriate was a key area of focus in Chelmsford, along with being accesible via street meets, or online meetings. It had also been key to ensure there was capability to support rural areas and working with partners such as NHW and Farmwatch. The Committee was informed that a strong commitment to the Community Safety Hub continued, with an important joint Tasking and problem-solving approach. It was also noted operations continued against Violent Crime and Drugs and Vulnerability. The Committee was also updated on Local Issues such as speeding in certain areas and pedal cycle theft. The use of E-Scooters was also discussed and the Committee were informed that 358 illegal E-Scooters had been seized since 2019.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Council's Public Protection Manager and the Chief Inspector provided the following information;

- The improved Neighbourhood watch data would be added to the Sharepoint site for Members.
- Work was still ongoing to obtain ward level date for members.
- There were currently less response drivers available but work continued to improve 24/7 response rates.
- A ten point improvement plan had recently been put in place to improve solve rates.
- A new media campaign was due to start to recruit further special constables.

- Staffing levels had now reached 2010 levels and would surpass them later in 2022.
- Operation Windshield continued with further assistance from the road policing team, including planned work in rural areas to combat speeding and other anti social driving issues.
- There are 63 Parish Councils across Chelmsford and Maldon, so it was impossible to be present at all of the meetings but rural engagement was being looked into to see where it could be increased.
- Calls to '101' were seeing a lower abandonment level and improved response times.
- Speed watch events were being held in different areas as required on a weekly basis.
- Burglaries had seen a slight increase of 3.9%, but this was partly due to a change in definition so they now included shed and garage burglaries too.
- Shoplifting in town centres had decreased by 8% and the town centre policing team now had more work related to the theft of pedal cycles than shoplifting.
- The use of CCTV had to be proportionate and was difficult in residential areas. It was noted that it worked well in City Centres, because of the Night-time economy, but improved lighting could often be a preferred option in other areas.
- Each High School has a PCSO who are not tasked with looking into crime, but for engaging with students and parents and talking about concerns.
- One of the best protection methods against shed or garage thefts, continued to be target hardening, including better locks and other measures.

The Committee thanked officers and Essex Police for their attendance and detailed presentations.

RESOLVED that;

1. the presentations be noted and;
2. the Committee's appreciation for the excellent work of the Safer Chelmsford Partnership and Essex Police be noted.

*(7.53pm to 8.59pm)*

## 8. Work Programme

The Committee considered a report on its work programme which had been updated following the last meeting on 22 November 2021.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

*( 9.00pm to 9.02pm)*

## 9. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business brought before the Committee.

The meeting closed at 9.02pm.

Chair