

Minutes

Meeting name	Scrutiny Committee
Date	Thursday, 12 September 2024
Start time	6.30 pm
Venue	Parkside, Station Approach, Burton Street, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. LE13 1GH

Present:

Chair Councillor M. Brown (Chair)

Councillors A. Thwaites (Vice-Chair) D. Chubb
M. Gordon S. Lumley
R. Sharp

In attendance Inspector D. Richardson – Neighbourhood Policing Area Commander for Melton and Rutland, Leicestershire Police
Councillor S. Butcher – Portfolio Holder for Town Centre, Growth and Prosperity
Councillor S. Cox – Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources

Officers Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)
Assistant Director for Customers and Communities
Strategic Lead Safer Communities
Safer Communities & Neighbourhoods Officer
Democratic Services Officer (HA)

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9	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Atherton, Child, Cliff and Pritchett.</p>
10	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024 were approved.</p>
11	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>There were no matters to discuss arising out of the Minutes and the response tracker was noted.</p>
12	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>Councillor Chubb declared a non pecuniary interest due to his membership on the Police Liaison Advisory Group.</p>
13	<p>REVIEW OF THE FORWARD PLAN</p> <p>The Chair introduced the Cabinet Forward Plan and invited Members to comment, however no comments were received.</p>
14	<p>REVIEW OF THE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25</p> <p>The Chair introduced the Scrutiny Work Programme 2024/25 and invited Members to comment.</p> <p>Members were informed that the Youth Strategy Workshop would be taking place on 17 September. It was expected that a task and finish group would be established as a result. If it is, then the task and finish group would be required to provide feedback at the Scrutiny Committee meeting in March 2025.</p>
15	<p>CRIME AND DISORDER ANNUAL REPORT</p> <p>The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources and Chair of the Safer Melton Partnership introduced the Crime and Disorder Annual Report.</p> <p>Inspector Darren Richardson, Neighbourhood Policing Area Commander for Melton and Rutland addressed the Committee and confirmed how the positivity of the partnership and the acquired funding secured had had a very positive and strong effect on the town and the borough. He advised that there had lately been a national deployment of staff due to recent incidents around the country, with Melton police officers being deployed elsewhere nevertheless, as a testament to the partnership within the town, there had still been a reduction in violent crime and public disorder. Inspector Richardson confirmed that all deployed officers are now back in Melton.</p> <p>Inspector Richardson advised how the Police had set up a Safety Advisory Group (SAG) with the Parish Councils, in respect of the recent festivals that had been held in the Vale. The SAG had been successful, as it had been working alongside the</p>

community to ensure there was no anti-social behaviour and noise pollution. He advised that this style of support would continue with other events over the coming year.

During the discussions, a Member asked if the Activity Bus from StreetVibe would be returning to Melton after March 2025, it was advised that it would be dependent on additional funding and Melton would have to apply again for the bus to be deployed here be it through StreetVibe or another organisation that would offer a similar service.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources and Chair of the Safer Melton Partnership advised members that the Police and Crime Commissioner had just completed his own consultation on how to use the funding going forward and had recognised that councils would be better able to tailor projects to their own communities and hopefully this would be introduced into his plan going forward.

A Member queried how effective Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) were. In response it was advised that FPNs had recently been increased in line with Government guidelines to act as a deterrent and, at Melton, the policy is that if a FPN is not paid, there would be a prosecution. Consideration is being given to community pay back, especially for the under 16's, though the national action plan for this is not yet in force. It was advised that there are other deterrents in place for persistent offenders for example a Community Protection Order which would remain in place for 12 months and if breached could lead to a custodial sentence.

A Member asked how many people get a visit when a crime is reported as it has been commented on social media that when crimes are reported no Police Officer comes out to attend. In response, Members were informed that the Police work with the Victims' Code, which is a system that identifies a victim of crime and any vulnerabilities. The code states that an identified victim of crime should expect some form of contact by police within 24 hours, depending on the severity of the crime some victims will receive an in-person visit and some victims will receive a phone call. The Police would continue with 28-day updates and Officers would immediately contact the victim if there were significant updates. The preference in communication is decided by the victim. The Victims' Code will soon be made statutory.

Concern was raised regarding the Police taking 24 hours to visit a victim, especially if the perpetrator is on the premises. In response, Members were informed that each response is graded, and an emergency response is within 15 minutes. It was recognised that geographically, it can be difficult but that neighbouring areas can send an officer in an emergency.

In following up, the question was asked on whether helicopters can be deployed to pursue perpetrators who have left the scene. In response, it was confirmed that helicopters can are still deployed but not as often, as it costs £15k each time. The helicopter is a regional resource which is mainly deployed for safeguarding

situations such as a missing highly vulnerable person. Drones are deployed more often for both missing people and crimes in progress.

It was noted that the burglary rate in Melton is low and averages about one a week.

It was reiterated that the public need to be encouraged to report all crime and not just post about it on social media where it escalates with no clarification if the crime had been reported. There is a Mobile Independent Advisory Group in the community which feeds into the Police what has been raised in the communities and on social media, what is being discussed or complained about and this information is actioned by the Police, where appropriate.

A Member commented that they are seeing a lot of posts from Police Officers on social media about their daily performances, e.g. number of arrests, and would rather the Police spend their time on their duties instead. In response, it was recognised that there would always be a debate on how the Police are best to engage with residents via social media. Some Officers decide to update the public via social media, whilst others prefer to just sort crime out, but the key is to get the balance between keeping the public informed and using the time to do police work.

Members all agreed the Ring doorbells idea was good but asked if other areas of the Borough were to be considered and not just the town centre. In response, the Committee were informed that the Council were bound due to funding conditions, however, we are due to receive another 400 units, and these would be distributed throughout the Borough.

There was reference to prison leavers and the role of the Council. In response, Members were advised that there is a Prison Release Protocol and the Council is part of a regional network which is part of the East Midlands Council, where briefings take place and the Council is then informed of: forthcoming prisoner releases, the locations where people are being released and the dates. This will then prepare the teams to understand where any pressures could be and support and arrangements could be put in place.

In terms of early release, Inspector Richardson stated that he isn't involved in how prisoners are selected but that a factor would be the type of crime they committed, therefore the dangerous prisoners are less likely to be selected for early release.

A comment was made that it was encouraging to hear of work being actioned on the issue of fly tipping but queried on what is the strategy across the Borough. In response it was noted that historically there was a disconnect between the rural community and the Council but with some work, there is now a strong line of communication. This has led to fly tipping being reported more and in turn the community have felt they are being listened to.

It was recognised that the team has done a good job but the KPIs don't reflect this. It isn't easy to prove that the Council is getting value for money. In response it was stated that KPIs are set at a national level. The government have changed the way

that they record FPNs. There is no consideration on the size of the Borough or the number of issued and paid. Members noted that setting targets can lead to increased costs. The real measure is digging more and understanding the themes.

Members requested whether they could report incidences and register queries directly to a Police Officer, as opposed to using the form, as the form is clunky and doesn't always provide the best responses. The Committee was informed that Police Officers' email addresses are on the website, therefore they can be contacted directly. Inspector Richardson stated that he is happy for Members to contact him directly but that, due to his workload, a response won't be instant.

Following a query, Members were informed that the introduction of the knives amnesty had been successful. There is a bin at the Police Station, in which people can come and drop knives into.

The Committee welcomed the neighbourhood links initiative that that PCSOs have been undertaking. It was recognised that this is a good way for the Police to communicate with residents.

The Chair reminded the Committee that Melton Mowbray and the Borough isn't an unsafe place but that doesn't mean that it is safe at all times. There is a lot of good work done by the Council, the Police and Partners in order to make the town and Borough safe.

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URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

The meeting closed at: 8.10 pm

Chair