

## **COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

**19th July 2023**

**Present:** Councillor Jabbar Riaz in the Chair

Councillors Ali, Altaf, Amos, Cooper, Desayrah, Lamb, Laurenson (Vice-Chair), Lawrance and Lewing

**Officers:** Lloyd Griffiths, Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities  
Tom Mountford, Head of Homes and Communities  
Warwick Neale, Community Services Manager

**Apologies:** Councillor Ditta

### **11 Appointment of Substitutes**

Councillor Lewing for Councillor Piotrowski.

### **12 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **13 Public Participation**

None.

### **14 Minutes**

**RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.**

### **15 Annual Platform Housing Group Update**

The Committee received a presentation from representatives of Platform Housing. In attendance were Lisa Fairlie – Director of Housing Operations, Marc Mayall – Director of Operations - Platform Property Care, Steve Eaves - Regeneration Director and Linda Colburn – Director of Asset Management and Sustainability.

The presentation contained information about Platform’s activity in Worcester over the last 12 months, including customer engagement and support, contact arrangements, repairs for the first quarter of 2023/24, and future investment priorities and capital works locally. They responded to questions from Committee Members.

Platform agreed to take away a number of points raised in the discussion and reply direct to the Members who raised them. Issues raised included Platform residents causing anti-social behaviour, arrears letters, performance relating to heating repairs, heating in communal areas, providing telephone contacts for Councillors and giving feedback on cases raised.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked everyone from Platform for the progress made since their previous presentation and for the information provided.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to note the contents of this report.**

## **16 Gorse Hill And Elbury Mount Nature Reserve - Update Report**

The Committee received a report on actions taken to date to tackle anti-social behaviour at Gorse Hill and Elbury Mount Nature Reserve. The Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities introduced the report and the Community Services Manager highlighted the main points. He explained that work is ongoing to identify opportunities for further improvements, including maintenance and landscaping changes to improve visibility when visiting the site, and privacy for neighbours to the nature reserve. Officers will continue to liaise with Severn Trent Water, West Mercia Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team and Worcestershire County Council. A summary of costed proposals with recommendations will be reported to the Corporate Director, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair, in October 2023.

The Community Services Manager responded to questions and comments from Committee Members. In the ensuing discussion the following main points were made:

- The contribution of Councillor Stanley, one of the local Members, in progressing the improvements was acknowledged.
- It was noted that the entrance will be narrower but access for users with disabilities is a prime consideration.
- Members were encouraged to let Officers know if anti-social behaviour is continuing in the locality.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to note:**

- 1. the contents of the report, and in particular the work undertaken to date; and**
- 2. that a further report on this project will be presented to this Committee in October 2023, setting out a business case for any funding that is required.**

## **17 Community Safety Partnership Annual Update**

The Committee considered a report covering the 2022-23 period. The report explained that there is a requirement for the Council to hold a Committee meeting at least once every 12 months to review and scrutinise decisions and actions in respect of the discharge of crime and disorder functions by 'responsible' authorities.

The Community Services Manager presented the report, which included information on strategic assessment and community need, governance arrangements, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner funding, projects and interventions, performance and impact.

It was noted that the South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership at their meeting in July will review the action plan for 2022-23 and propose a new action plan for 2023-24, as well as setting out plans to allocate its budget for 2023-24 to deliver against the priorities. The outcomes from this will be brought back to this Committee in 2024.

Officers responded to questions and comments from Committee Members. In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- The City Council receives no direct funding for Community Safety staff. There is third party funding from the County Council for youth intervention work.
- There was a question about how to control loose dogs on City Council land. More information was also requested on Dog Exclusion Areas. The Corporate Director stated that this requires a detailed answer which will be provided in writing.
- Officers will consider any requests from Members for the provision of a knife amnesty bin in their local area.
- Information on key safeguarding contacts has been sent to all Members via the weekly information bulletin.
- Officers acknowledged that performance indicators on Police statistics were not proving to be meaningful and have been dropped. Reassurance was given that West Mercia Police are focussed on responding to areas of crime which show significant increases.
- Mobile CCTV to enforce parking outside schools has been undertaken on a trial basis and the findings will be reported back to the County Council. Members expressed the view that this is an effective tool and the Council should be proactive in lobbying for it to continue.
- Officers will ensure that future reports on PSPOs will be balanced, including information on whether anti-social behaviour has increased or decreased and the reasons for this.
- Progress on Orders for the permanent closure of level crossings has been limited due to staff turnover at Network Rail. Council Officers have now been requested to confirm cost of putting new gates in. Whilst this work is ongoing the County Council have put temporary footpath closures in place until January 2024.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to note the contents of the report.**

**18 Quarter 1 Performance Report for 2023/24**

The Committee considered the quarter 1 performance report for Communities Committee. The Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities presented the report and Officers responded to questions from Members.

In the ensuing discussion, the following main points were made:

- The City Council is the lead authority for commissioning the private sector stock condition survey. The procurement process is open currently and it is expected to make an appointment in September.
- An oral update on Tennis in Parks was provided. Officers will shortly be meeting with representatives of Freedom Leisure on this topic and maximising usage and the Chair and Vice-Chair will be kept updated.
- The number of households with children in temporary accommodation fluctuates but is currently increasing. The Council acknowledges this and has a range of measures to increase the provision of self-contained accommodation. More information can be provided to Members.
- More information can be provided in writing regarding minimum energy efficiency standards and fines issued.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to note the Council’s quarter 1 performance for 2023/24.**

**19 Any Other Business**

None.

**20 Item Involving the Disclosure of Exempt Information**

**RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of information as defined in Schedule 12A of the said Act.**

**21 Community Safety Partnership Annual Update**

The Committee noted the strategic assessment which had been set out as an exempt Appendix 4 to item 6 on the agenda.

**Duration of the meeting: 7.00p.m. – 9.16p.m.**

Chair at the meeting on  
8th November 2023