

OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

1 September 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Northeast (Chairman), English (Vice-Chair), Bennett, Bicknell, Mrs Cooper, Dixon, Elkins, Gunner, Huntley, Miss Needs, Roberts (Substitute for Dendle), Miss Seex, Ms Thurston (Substitute for Mrs Catterson) and Tilbrook

Councillors Coster, Mrs Gregory, Lury, Oppler, Dr Walsh and Mrs Yeates were also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

Apologies: Councillors B Blanchard-Cooper Mrs Catterson., Dendle, Purchase Mrs Staniforth, Stanley

166. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

167. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous Overview Select Committee Meeting held on 9 June 2020 were approved.

168. LOCAL POLICING - CHIEF INSPECTOR CARTER

The Chairman welcomed Chief Inspector (CI) Jon Carter to the meeting and invited him to deliver his presentation to the Committee.

CI Carter advised the Committee that he became CI in August 2019, he then provided a detailed presentation to the Committee that covered his mission statement – “to make Arun and Chichester even safer places than they already are” as well as providing updated figures on incidents that had been reported in 2019 vs 2020 to date. He confirmed the PCSO deployment across the Arun District and provided Members with a number of headline incidents that detailed successful charges that had been brought against individuals.

The Chairman then invited Members to ask CI Carter their questions, these are detailed below in the order they were presented to CI Carter.

Cllr Gunner question was, on resourcing last year the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) talked about how there would be 400 new officers across Sussex. What does that increase mean for Arun, and how will that make us better able to tackle crime in the district? I also would like to know how that trickles down to the parishes?

CI replied the precept increase mainly cover the increase of 100 PCSO's and did allow for some Police Officers as well. Most of these had been put into our front line, emergency services where this was very much needed. Our front-line officers operate

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as part of a boarder less response team, as these individuals are in such a responsive role, it is hard to monitor/pinpoint a specific dedicated area as officers are proactively moved to where they are needed. Specifically, in Arun there was an uplift of 10 officers, plus additions to PCSO's Arun and Chichester benefitted very well out of this uplift.

Cllr Gunner then asked for clarity on the actual officer numbers as he was unclear from the response given, CI explained that there were specifically 14 more officers but again explained that they move their resources to where they are needed at any given time.

Cllr Mrs Cooper's question was, I believe a lot of low-level crimes can be traced back to drugs and or drug dealing. With this in mind what intelligence is being used, how is this cascaded up the chain and how is the awareness/action channelled back down to locally elected members and also Parish/Town councils who are often at the sharp end and if given the opportunity can contribute much needed valuable intelligence?

CI Carter replied I hope that the example in the presentation re the Henry Line proves useful and shows how intelligence can be used effectively. It may come from reports from members of the public, plus police observations, interrogation of devices or suspect interviews themselves. These are the main routes for intelligence. In terms of how Parish/Town Councils are then informed of these instances, we have to be extremely careful about how we record, manage and who has access to intelligence we are monitoring, this can make it difficult for us to share information as we cannot disclose source information. I am looking to close the communication gap that is currently there with sharing information like this. As a police officer, I would never say no to any information being reported, generally if something doesn't look right, it should be reported so the Police can investigate and where we can take action. What we have to ensure is that we make sure that the relationship between Police and anyone reporting information does not become one where the Police are then tasking you with monitoring or collecting more information as this can become dangerous for you as individuals. The issue you are raising about how we feedback is being looked into at a local and national level and we are keen to make improvements where we can.

The Chairman's question was, the role of a uniformed officer is seen as a valuable part of any local community, can we expect to see a return to the amount of PCSO's as part of the Governments promise to return the numbers lost in the financial cutbacks?

CI Carter replied how PCSO's are deployed was covered in the presentation, in terms of the cuts the PCSO numbers had been cut across the board to 196 Officers (approx. half) the Police service had been through some very tough budget cuts. The precept uplift in early 2018 had enabled the recruitment of 100 PCSO posts back into the force bringing the figure up to 296. This can only be positive although its still nowhere near where we were. However as someone who has lived through all these cuts, my submission is that we are working efficiently and well, the main change being that one PCSO dedicated to one specific area is not the most efficient. We are working with a hybrid approach, the advantage of this approach is that I can flex the deployment

of officers to different areas which gives us a more consistent and focused approach to taking action in areas that are infiltrated with Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Crime.

In Cllr Blanchard-Coopers absence the Chairman read out his question which was PCSO's locally have not been granted powers to "cuff", is this to be revised? The Cabinet and Members have previously been incorrectly advised that they cannot be allowed to do this, however my understanding is that Central Government have given those powers but given the Chief Constable the decision on whether those powers are given to their PCSO's or not. Given that security guards can have powers to cuff, do you feel it appropriate that a PCSO can merely request someone to stay (detain them) while someone with the power to cuff and arrest attends? Is this a good use of officer time?

CI Carter replied that as the force lead for PCSO's, there was only one force anywhere in the Country that has issued their PCSO's with cuffs, that being the British Transport Police Team. PCSO's will never have the same powers to arrest somebody, like a Police Officer does as there is a huge amount of training that is required to be undertaken in order to be able to do this correctly and lawfully. From survey work that had been completed there was no desire highlighted from PCSO's themselves to have cuffs issued currently. Whilst I would never say never, at the current time this is not something that I will be pursuing.

Cllr Gunner's next question was, does the possibility of an economic recession heighten the possibility of crime, and how is the constabulary responding to this? Aside from this, what does the constabulary see as the challenges and priorities in the Arun area going forward?

CI Carter replied, yes you are right, and it is fair to say historically that recessions can bring about an increase in criminality. On the one hand what is being translated by the Government is that this will be the longest and deepest recession Britain will have ever seen. In terms of what that will translate too in terms of Crime is difficult to say. We are recruiting very heavily now, so Police numbers are on the up, this is about getting our numbers back to where we were prior to the cuts made previously. What my team and our partners are doing is trying to get ahead by using our community intelligence and trying to identify how this may translate to new crimes. If we stuck with more traditional deployment methods, we would get stuck very quickly. We make sure we are very reactive to crime trends; we have briefings from all over the country as well as keeping an eye on what's going on across Europe.

Cllr Gunner then asked, looking at the trends from other countries and previous recessions what do you think will be the potential trends in crimes and what will be the planned response?

CI Carter replied, potentially we may see an increase in acquisitive crimes, due to the racial make-up of the district, and how that racial make-up may change because of Brexit. Another potential increase we may see is civil disorder, this is where individuals take action on things, they are unhappy about, we are doing a lot of

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education through schools to try and get a head of any future individuals falling into the crime trap. We routinely engage with property owners about property crime prevention opportunities during local patrols. As well as always being focused on going after those who are known to us for committing crimes.

The Chairman read out Cllr Blanchard-Coppers second question which was, how is policing locally performing against its own targets and what ones if any are not being hit, and what is the plan to bring this in line with expectations? Are all police including PCSO's managed in the same way for a consistent approach across all stations to achieve effective time management of teams?

CI Carter replied, in terms of targets we currently have a fluid environment in relation to targets, it's a more general approach. Themes are identified by the HMICRFS which they test Police forces against, the reports and results of these are published. Like all forces we have areas of strength and areas of development, for Arun District a significant area of development was highlighted around stalking. The Government want to be more target driven in the future; however, we are still waiting for the guidance and detail on this. I am held to account for Policing and Performance for a broad range of targets inclusive of response times, crime reduction, crime protection performance, legitimacy of stop and search, to name a few. In terms of this district and things I want to improve on, domestic abuse, repeat offending, providing a better service to victims and witnesses. In relation to the last part of the question, I'm not clear on what is meant by this, but what I can advise you is PCSO's are not Police Officers, Police Officers are Crown Servants not employees, PCSO's are employees so there are differences on the performance management of these two sets of individuals.

Cllr Mrs Copper's next questions was, having tried myself many times to report crimes online, I found that there are so many hoops to jump through that it is very understandable why a large percentage of the public simply say they gave up despite our repeated pleas to report, report, report. We believe that the reporting of certain types of low-level crime online is disproportionately time consuming and I am concerned that as a consequence the crime figures are potentially distorted and lower the real picture as a result of this under reporting.

What trends are you seeing for the reporting for crimes such as:

- Vandalism including Car crime
- Begging (not homeless)
- Antisocial Behaviour
- Drug Dealing in community
- E scooter nuisance

How are you working with the prevention teams to deal with this and how does that link in with our Community Safety team, do you feel everyone concerned has enough power to be effective?

Cl Carter asked Cllr Mrs Cooper for clarification on the difficulties she had found in reporting crimes, she explained that the level of and number of questions that are required to be completed online meant that she found herself having to be untruthful in her reporting just to make her report online. Cl Carter explained that he would need to give this feedback to the crime reporting force room as that was not something he could influence. The challenges are the requirements of the information we need to record which are set nationally by the Home Office, so it is impossible currently to change that at a local level. However, I do take on board your feedback, and if the process is causing people an issue and difficulties then they will not report it, which is not what we want. The thought process then turns to what do we do instead, not something I expect you to answer, but something we need to look at. I had covered most of these other areas within the presentation earlier, although I would state that car crime would not be included in with vandalism. Regarding begging this is a topic we could have a meeting on just this topic, the homeless situation is very confused and complicated within Arun District, it is fair to say that some of those individuals who take part in begging are not in fact homeless. For us to deal with begging, sitting on the floor with a sign is not classified as begging, it has to be active begging before we can do anything. It is a complex issue, the solution to this is dealing with substance addictions and other various issues that drive this behaviour.

ASB is a really wide topic, it has increased, we have had challenges on how we work with the Council ASB teams, the Council Officers do have access to our systems, however this access cannot be remote.

Drug dealing covered in the presentation earlier, we do recognise the threat that, this issue is to the district. We are looking at not only the supply but also the demand side of things and trying to tackle it from both ends of the problem. I am hopeful that as this work progresses with Arun teams that we will see some improvements soon.

E Scooters, this issue has not been reported to us, so perhaps an offline conversation regarding this can take place. The legal position is that E-Scooters cannot be used on roads (this is inclusive of pavements). I can not predict the law and any possible changes, but there may be some changes coming in a few months' time, this will bring with it its own challenges. My personal view on this is that there is a major road safety issues with this, anyone who has come off a bike at 30mph it hurts and can cause serious injury. If the education side of things does not work, then we will seize the E-Scooter if required. What I am asking from you as elected members is to do some education with parents/residents of your areas. This will help greatly as a lot of people do not realise the law/requirements for those who own E-Scooters and there is a space for community education. The only place you can legally ride an E-Scooter is on private land with the landowner's permission, roads/pavements are not allowed. Somebody found to be riding an E-Scooter on a road or pavement will be dealt with as if they were in charge of a vehicle without a license or tax.

Cllr Elkins was then invited by the Chairman to ask his questions which was, regarding the reporting of the 101 line, the magistrates inspectorate reported that 43% of 101 calls went un answered, the information I have is that 90% of call were being answered within 60 seconds and current waiting time was 4minutes and 11 seconds. Have times for responding to 101 calls increased or continued to increase and has anyone who has called on that number, is there the option for them to be offered a call

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back or divert them to the internet? Has there been an improvement on those who choose to wait regardless?

CI Carter replied that he could not give specific figures on this topic at the meeting. However, the online figures have increased, which would suggest that less calls are coming in as people are using online services more. The 101-wait time of 4 minutes, sounds about right, for call-backs, we use a system called 'QueueBuster' but for specific figures I would have to go away and obtain those figures.

Cllr Needs question was on Homelessness and how are the Police in Arun looking at these issues and what provision will be put in place to help individuals that may need practical help with these issues?

CI Carter replied that homelessness is not something that is in our gift to solve solely but we are part of the team equation to help resolve it. We work along side both District Councils and other statutory providers to ensure we are all working together to try and get all those who are homeless into safe and permanent homes. Where that does become more of a policing issue is where the substance abuse issues cause people not to be housed. We are doing a lot of work with the community safety partnership group. These people very often have very complex needs and require specific support.

Cllr Tilbrook's questions was relating to Stop and Search on Black and Asian members of the community, according to overall Sussex police data black people in Sussex are 12 times more likely to be stopped and search against white people? Why do you think this is?

CI Carter responded we cannot currently define that right down to local figures. In terms of West Sussex overall, the figure is 7%, so the problem is still there, and the reasons are very varied. What I want to make clear is that this is absolutely an issue and we need to be clear about what we are doing about it. One of the challenges is If I stop and search someone, I am required to record their ethnicity that information is then compared to the census information from 2011 and there has been no census since. If I stop and search you and you are visiting the area for the day it will sit against the figures for that district. I don't want to make it sound like this issue is all down to stats because it isn't. We do have a Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel and I am a part of the strategic board on that. We are looking at our internal recording and our process in relation to stop and search to ensure that officers are acting lawfully at all times. I want to set up a local Independent Advisory group (IAG) that replaces the division wide one that is currently in place, I want to ensure that this is varied in its membership. Part of the tasking of the IAG will be to hold me to account around the Stop and Search figures in the Arun area.

Cllr Tilbrook then asked was traffic data included in the stop and search or is it recorded differently. CI Carter replied that it was reported differently.

Cllr English was invited to ask his question which was on domestic violence, he said, we've all heard a lot through the media about worsening domestic violence

because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. I just wondered have you actually found that there had been an increase and what has been the Police's action taken to resolve these incidents?

CI Carter replied that a huge amount of domestic abuse does still go unreported for varied reasons. We do an a lot of work on this matter and one of the opportunities we took from the Covid-19 Pandemic, was that because people were being asked to do shopping on their own, we took the approach to set up stands in supermarkets for people to take up the services that were being provided through these stands. For Officers who do attend reports of domestic abuse, we will always seek to arrest, even if the victim says they don't want any action taken, in order to create some space between individuals. Where we have evidence that a crime has been committed even if the victim is not willing for action to be taken, we can and will still pursue this.

Cllr Dixon's question was, the council spends a significant sum each year repairing damage caused by vandalism. From April this year we are keeping a record of the locations of acts of vandalism and the cost of repairs. We should soon be able to identify "hot spots" and high value problems. Once we have this data how might the police use it?

CI Carter replied that there is a multi-layered approach to dealing with this, one of the things that really concerns me is that there is a risk that this is related to a possible gang culture. We have seen several gang tags being left in some areas as well as seeing a number of extreme right-wing messages being left. Moving forward and looking to the future, the data is already collated, and we use this to target offenders. The less extreme stuff and the possible gang related tags which is seen a lot within the Littlehampton area, we are watching very closely, and we are trying to identify where these offenders live. In relation to the wider issue, the hotspot identification is useful to me as I can direct patrols to where they are needed. I do have some other assets open to me that I can deploy, such as mobile CCTV, but I am required to have good reason to deploy.

Cllr Dixon the explained that, he walks everyday through the underpass in Bognor, this was vandalised 5 times in the last year and re painted by the Council each time, and I bet that you (CI Carter) didn't even know about it. So, he felt that the communication between the Council and the Police needs to be improved greatly. CI Cater agreed with Cllr Dixon on this point, explaining that if these incidents are not reported then there is very little that can be done about it.

Cllr Gunner was invited to ask his next question which was, what were the future plans for police stations in the Arun area?

CI Carter explained that the two main buildings we have are in Bognor and Littlehampton both are fully utilised currently. In the medium term my ambition is to put local policing back into Littlehampton and our specialist investigation team is also based in Littlehampton.

Cllr Gunner then asked for further clarity by asking can you confirm that there won't be any change to our police stations?

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CI Carter replied, no, I cannot make that promise, we are always looking into ways to use our buildings as efficiently as we can. There are no planned closures that I am aware of. The patrol base at Arundel has a covenant on it so it can never be sold, and it always has to be used as a police station. I understand why the original change was made to move permanent police presence to Bognor. However, fundamentally it concerns me that arguably one of our highest demand hubs does not have a police presence in it.

Cllr Bicknell was invited to ask his question which was, following on from the last question, are there any plans to make more efficient use of police buildings by sharing with other organisations? In the past there had been talk about the use of a 'Blue light' hub to be based in Littlehampton? Would it not be better to base something like this nearer to the A259?

CI Carter replied that he was not sure if this option was even still on the table and if it was, it was now much further down the priority list than it may have been when first discussed. We do have shared hubs in other locations and in some of these areas it works quite well, but what we are seeing more commonly is a smaller scale sharing of facilities, for me that would detract from what I am trying to do in terms of having a more significance presence from local police.

Cllr Roberts was invited to ask his question which was, what is the feeling within the force towards use of the new "super tasers" approved by the Home Secretary? Is this something you would support being provided regionally? In terms of PCSO's being given cuffs, leg restraints and CS Spray and I am aware of 3 forces in Wales having trialled this and I wondered if you would consider this here?

CI Carter replied, Sussex Police has committed to providing all front-line officers with a taser, who want one, providing they can pass the course for it. We are looking to have 80% of front-line officers equipped with tasers. I would anticipate that this 'new super taser' will be something that replaces the existing tasers which only came in about 18 months ago. The likelihood was it would come with potentially a 4-day training course due to the fundamental changes in the taser equipment. In terms of PCSO's they can be authorised to have various restraints, an approach to the Chief Officer would come from me as the lead for PCSO's in this area, I would need to contact the Welsh teams to understand more about why and how they trialled this and what the results were. It's also worth noting that PCSO's are employees and not Crown Servants and Unison would have a view on this.

Cllr Roberts then asked, do you record the offence of making off from a policeman or PCSO?

C/Insp Carter advised yes, we do record this, but this is very rare. So rare in fact I can't remember the last time it happened.

Cllr Roberts then asked the parking of camper vans on Mill Road in Arundel has long been a contentious issue amongst local residents. Often there can be 25-30 of them parked and occupied not only just overnight, but often for many days/nights. Arundel Town Council has tried resolutely to try and address this with WSCC but been

told it is a police matter as it is illegal to sleep in a public vehicle on a road overnight. I assume it is impractical to ask you and your Officers to investigate and move on vehicles every day. How can we work together to get at least restrictions on overnight parking of these vehicles, such as with Goring Gap?

CI Carter replied, I would be interested in finding out who gave you that information as it is incorrect. Section 77 of the criminal justice public order act 1984 is really clear, local authorities are empowered to direct unauthorised campers to leave land in the open air where they are trespassing and that includes land that forms part of the highway. The Local Authority has to give them a direction to leave, the challenge will be are they trespassing, specifically Mill Road has no restrictions, so the first step would be to put a restriction on the road. The Parish council would need to apply for a Traffic Restriction Order, it's not a quick process, but it's the correct process to follow.

The Chairman then invited Cllr Bennett to ask his question, he said, I had a meeting with the Chief Constable a few weeks back and she advised that quite a large number of PCSO's had become official police officers. CI Carter advised yes it does happen, off the top of my head since the start of the year in Arun, we have had approximately 3 PCSO's who have become Police Officers. As soon as we know that a PCSO has applied to become a Police Officer we start the recruitment for replacement, so the gap is very often non-existent.

Cllr Bennett then asked that unfortunately we are seeing a large number of armed incidents across the area and County, do Sussex Police have enough highly trained Officers and resources to deal with these specific incidents?

CI Carter advised that the deployment of firearms officers and firearms is overseen by Strategic Risk Assessment which is a national document as this is a national commitment and yes, we do have enough resources.

The Chairman then obtained permission from the Committee to have two questions asked by two Cabinet Members.

Cllr Lury was then invited to ask, from my calculations shows there has been a 44% increase in mental health issues is this causing a strain on the Police force? Would you accept that the justice system is in a perilous position with a huge backlog of cases with some rape cases waiting over a year to be dealt with? Has Chichester Court been reopened? And finally, when I had been into schools my biggest concern is around County Lines and how many young people are being drawn into that?

CI Carter replied stating that at the moment in mainstream schools there is very little evidence to show that individuals are getting drawn into this from this area. I have 2 education groups and schools are the best place to identify these problems and then the Police would respond if a problem was identified. Why was Chichester Crown court closed, like most other public buildings during Covid-19 it is now back open and heard its first case yesterday. In terms of mental health crises, we sadly do have to get involved when these cases reach a certain level, its not a situation we want to be in and in comparison to a mental health nurse who is fully trained we certainly would not be

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the best people to deal with these instances. The backlog in the justice system needs a lot of work, and there is a Government focus to make improvements here.

Cllr Coster was then invited to ask his questions which was, can I clarify with regards to Bognor Regis Police station, operationally do you feel that you now need a building of that size, or if you could have a brand new building that was built to specifically suit your needs would be better?

CI Carter, in terms of the footprint, yes, we probably could operate in a smaller size building however, the challenge for us is more about location rather than size. The Police have a very proactive remit as well as reactive. Ideally, we would have ready access to high demand, high harm, areas such as town centres, but also, we need to be located near to a good road network to be able to get around quickly.

Cllr Coster then asked, so just assuming on the same location in Bognor it could be possibly feasible that you could have a more efficient building that wouldn't take up so much space? CI Carter replied, yes, but an obvious solution would be to build upwards instead of outwards.

Cllr Dixon was then invited to make a final statement, he stated that he was really pleased to have heard from CI Carter's presentation that a well-known thief in Bognor Regis had now been dealt with and the reactive actions your teams took with this individual has had a good result. However, it seemed to me you may not be getting the support you need from judiciary and what concerns me is that this could lead to vigilantism.

CI Carter replied that the individual and the case were very complex, we as Police Officers do get frustrated when we take something to court and we don't get the result we want from the Court. Sometimes the perception can feel like the Courts are not supportive of our case, however, the courts are also under a lot of pressure to act within the guidelines set by the Ministry of Justice I am concerned about vigilantism and this is an ongoing concern. I can only reassure you that we do provide very detailed and graphic reports to the courts to support our cases.

The Chairman then thanked CI Carter for his time and attendance at the meeting today. CI Carter advised that he would be more than happy to come to future meetings to answer questions and obtain feedback as ultimately this would help to improve Policing across the district.

169. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT TASK & FINISH WORKING PARTY MEMBERSHIP

The Chairman advised the Committee that they needed to revise its Membership of this Working Party and that he had, had interest expressed from Cllr's Gunner, Seex, Elkins, Tilbrook and Dixon and if the Committee were happy that they and he would form the new Membership for this Working Party of which the first meeting would take place on 13 October 2020.

The Committee

RESOLVED that;

The new membership of the Working Party be made up of Cllrs, Dixon, Elkins, Gunner, Northeast (Chairman), Seex and Tilbrook.

170. COVID-19 UPDATE

The Group Head of Policy introduced this item in the absence of the Chief Executive and highlighted to the Committee that next update would be presented to Cabinet at their next meeting on 21 September 2020 and the minutes of this meeting would then be presented to the Overview Select Committee to be scrutinised at its next meeting on 6 October 2020. The reason that the process had seemingly changed was due to the additional Cabinet meetings that have been held and would be held at Members request due to the current and ongoing pandemic response and therefore meant that some meetings were out of sequence.

Cllr Bennett raised a situation that the Parish and Town Councils have found themselves in during this pandemic in that, they seemingly have been forgotten in terms of financial support during the Pandemic and there appears to be very little ongoing support emerging. He said that they were suffering massively with a lost income of £22k due to no government funding.

The Director of Place explained that it was the upper tier authorities that had been encouraged by the Government to provide and make available grants/funding for Parish and Town Councils, he explained there had been an announcement recently regarding supporting these areas also, however, it would need to be checked that this applied to Parish and Town Council's too.

Cllr Bennett advised that he had checked this information and confirmed that Town and Parish Council's had not been included within these regulations. The director of Place then reconfirmed that it was for the upper tier authorities to provide financial support to Parish and Town Councils.

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The Chairman then raised his concern regarding the Track and Trace workload that had been handed down to local authorities, he wanted to know if there had been a briefing on this that had included the financial support to complete this work and also what would this additional work impose on staff workload. The Director of Place confirmed that the principal authority for track and trace is the County Council. He further advised that Arun would be working closely with them on this matter, stating that there were a lot of ongoing conversations in relation to operational needs and it should be noted that we are all learning as we go on this matter, there currently is no rule book, we are working in very unusual circumstances currently.

Cllr Tony Dixon asked the Director of Place to clarify if the cost to the Council was being estimated at £5 million pounds and was this a gross or net figure? The Director of Place confirmed that it was a net figure, but he would recommend to all Members to read the financial report being presented to Cabinet on 21 September for a more up to date picture on the financial situation for the Council.

Cllr Mrs Cooper asked if there was an ongoing piece of work on the Council's emergency plans in terms of the pandemic and was it being updated with what had been learnt so far? And could it be confirmed who and where this work was being completed? It was vital for Town and Parish Councils to be able to feed off, of Arun's Emergency Plan.

The Director of Place explained that the Council was very much focused on reacting to the current needs of the pandemic as well as planning for any possible second peak during the winter months and or possible local lockdowns. He suggested that maybe the time to scrutinise is not yet, and that it might be worth waiting until after we are through the winter months that we are fast approaching. It was then advised by the Committee Manager that the Environment and Leisure Working Group were meeting on Thursday 3 September 2020 and the agenda for that meeting contained an emergency planning update.

Cllr Dixon was invited by the Chairman to ask the final question on this item and he wanted to understand what the footfall of the high-street was, since the high-street had been reopened. The Director of Place advised that whilst he did not have specific figures, he could only speak from his own experience and felt that the footfall figures were quite mixed, in that some pockets of people were only going out once or twice a week and completing bigger shops, whereas there had also been reports from traders that other pockets of people had returned to a more normal way of shopping like we had seen prior to the pandemic.

171. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS AND UPDATES

The Chairman thanked Cllrs Mrs Gregory, Mrs Staniforth and Coster for their updates they had provided Members in advance of the meeting, he then invited Cllr Coster who was in attendance at the meeting to present his highlights to the Committee.

Cllr Dr Walsh, Leader of the Council was then invited to speak by the Chairman, he expressed his thanks for Cl Carter having given such a refreshing, truthful and frank presentation to the Committee. He then provided the Committee with an update on some aspects of his portfolio. He explained that the housing sector had reportedly taken off and advised the Committee of a site visit in Littlehampton he had undertaken with Cllr Lury, Cabinet Member for Planning, he reported he was very pleased to see the progress that had been made so far. He advised a report on the feasibility of a cycle lane from Littlehampton to Arundel would be ready around November 2020.

Cllr Lury, Cabinet Member for Planning then provided his update regarding the site visit he did with Cllr Dr Walsh, he noted that the number of mature trees that had been included in this build as well as the overall level of the build at this site.

Cllr Dixon, registered his concern that a commercial manager has still not been recruited

Cllr Gunner was then invited by the Chairman to ask his questions that have been detailed below;

- Cllr Yeates since you became the Cabinet Member how much more have you invested into the day centre activities for the elderly, Cllr Mrs Yeates replied that the activities are rolled out through Age Concern and that the idea was that the amount of money Arun invests has reduced due to having granted a lease.
- Cllr Lury how have you made planning decisions more local, Cllr Lury replied we have a very good planning Committee and we make decisions as a whole District team.
- Dr Walsh when will you be transferring the ownership of the town hall to the people of Bognor Regis. Cllr Dr Walsh confirmed that there were currently no plans so far and advised that it was up to the Town Council to make an approach on this.

Cllr Gunner then explained that the reason he asked these questions as these are promises you made your electorate at the last election in May 2019.

Cllr Bennett asked Cllr Dr Walsh if remote meetings were to be continued after May 2021 and when would face to face meetings reconvene. Cllr Dr Walsh replied that he was not aware of any Government legislation that allows for meetings to return to a face to face setting. He also confirmed that he had not heard of any extension beyond May 2021.

Cllr Bennett explained that the reason he asked the questions was it seemed that Government had Councils had been forgotten when all other businesses have been considered for a return to face to face.

Cllr Roberts asked Cllr Coster about rumours re: The Arcade in Bognor Regis having had an offer been made for this to be purchased. My second question is regarding the Commercial Manager recruitment and was this a chicken and egg situation. Cllr Coster replied that he could not do all the work on his own as he had not

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had a lot of officer support, we need an officer to operate and coordinate this work. In terms of the rumoured offer on the Arcade in Bognor Regis, He agreed that he had heard the same rumours and was currently in a fact-finding stage on this matter.

172. WORK PROGRAMME 2020/2021

The Group Head of Policy advised that the Committee had 4 meetings left of this municipal year, there had been some movement on some items since the Committee last met and Members were requested to note these changes.

Cllr Gunner advised that he was concerned at the number of items moved to January and March 2021 specifically the equalities and diversity item. The Group Head of Policy explained that this was simply down to not having had the time to complete the work due to the level of work that has been required during the pandemic. However, she advised that if Members felt strongly about completion of this work being brought forward then the organisation may wish to look into providing additional resource to get this work completed.

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL - that;

the Work Programme for 2020/21 be approved

(The meeting concluded at 9.31 pm)