

Committee(s): Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee – For decision	Dated: 13/06/23
Subject: Suggested ways of working for the Crime & Disorder Scrutiny Committee	Public
Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?	N/a
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	N
If so, how much?	N/a
What is the source of Funding?	N/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?	N/a
Report of: Deputy Town Clerk	For decision
Report author: Richard Riley	

Summary

This note sets out the Safer City Partnership’s suggested ways of working for the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee – i.e. what we believe will best aid Member scrutiny and avoid duplication of the work of other existing policing and community safety committees.

Section 1 sets out the Committee’s formal terms of reference, section 2 sets out its formal agreed activities, and section 3 details what we suggest these should mean in practice. The most important point to note is that, legally and according to its Terms of Reference, this Committee’s purpose is to scrutinise, not direct the work of the Safer City Partnership on tackling crime and disorder.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to endorse these suggested ways of working or to set out – within the bounds of the formal terms of reference and agreed activities – where they wish to see them amended.

Main Report

Section 1 – Formal terms of reference

The City Corporation is required by law to have a committee overseeing the work of local ‘responsible authorities’ (statutory members of the Safer City Partnership) on crime and disorder. In line with that legislation¹, the below terms of reference were prepared by Corporation officials and lawyers and agreed by Members at an informal meeting of the nascent C&D Committee in January:

- *To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions;*
- *To make reports or recommendations to the local authority with respect to the discharge of those functions.*

Section 2 – Agreed activities

Under the ToR, and again in line with legislation and as agreed in January, the Committee’s ‘agreed activities’ in its governance advisory schedule are:

- *Reviewing and scrutinising reports relating to (a) the discharge, or decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge, by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions; or (b) local crime and disorder matters within the Committee’s remit;*
- *In undertaking this, the Committee may comment on strategic alignment across and within the responsible authorities on issues relating to crime and community safety within its remit;*
- *In undertaking this, the Committee may comment on the impact of organisational policy on crime and community safety insofar as this relates to the Committee’s remit;*
- *Requesting and receiving information from the responsible authorities or the co-operating persons relating to (a) the discharge, or decisions made or other action taken in connection with the discharge, by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions; or (b) local crime and disorder matters within its remit;*
- *Requesting the attendance at crime and disorder committee meetings of an officer or employee of a responsible authority or of a co-operating person or body in order to answer questions.*

Section 3 – The Committee’s work in practice

This section sets out how we suggest the above should translate into practical ways of working. The key point guiding its work in practice is that the Committee is not a decision-making forum for crime and disorder policy and does not have the power to itself direct the work of the Safer City Partnership.

- *Focus of scrutiny* – We suggest the Committee should, at a high level, act as a check on whether the SCP has ‘done what it said it would do’ – i.e. whether it is

¹ Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006

meeting the plans and milestones agreed at official level, and if not to request explanations. We do not suggest it looks in detail at delivery plans – sub-groups of the SCP (violent crime, ASB etc.) will instead articulate its key priorities and where it is against them, and Members will assess if this performance is adequate, making recommendations for improvement as appropriate.

- *A note on 'responsible authorities'* – The SCP is composed of several 'responsible authorities' (organisations that have a legislative requirement to take part), including the fire and rescue service, local health board, and probation service. We suggest part of the Committee's focus could be on ensuring, where relevant, that these organisations are properly involved in jointly formulating and implementing plans, and on holding them to account where not.
- *Focus of advice and comment* – We suggest the Committee discusses with officials the SCP's main next steps and, using their wider view across the Corporation, advises on where these could better align with other priorities and ambitions. For example, it may query whether the SCP's comms plans on violent crime are fully aligned with comms plans for Destination City advertising the City as a safe place to visit. In line with its Terms of Reference, the Committee does not have any formal powers to re-direct the work of the SCP – e.g. to say that it must do more on mental health – though it can informally recommend similar actions and/or take these to other relevant committees for action.
- *Commissioning of briefing papers* – We suggest the Committee is serviced by short (1-2 page) update papers from officials and its (draft) working documents where relevant – e.g. it may be sent the draft serious violence strategy (which legislation requires us to produce for January 2024). We do not recommend that the Committee itself commissions background briefing on, for example, NTE-related serious violence in the City. Doing so risks duplication and/or adding to the work of pre-existing committees in an uncoordinated way – we recommend instead that, if C&D committee meetings identify a knowledge gap, Members bring this issue to e.g. the next PAB meeting which can decide if a paper is needed.
- *Frequency and length of meetings* – Given the above – i.e. our recommendation that the Committee provides high-level scrutiny and strategic advice – we suggest hour-long meetings once a quarter would be proportionate. Or rather, we suggest starting with this format and reviewing whether it provides enough time after the first 2 or so meetings. In practice – as the SCP is composed of seniors from across the Force and Corporation – shorter meetings will also make diarising easier.

Appendix: Governance advisory schedule for the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee

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