

FULL COUNCIL

8 DECEMBER 2020

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

1. COUNCIL UPDATE REGARDING STRONGER AND SAFER COMMUNITIES

1.1 Purpose of Report

To advise Members that a decision making session was held on 27 October 2020, covering CPH Stronger and Safer Communities.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 This report highlights some of those decisions which have been made, but not all. Members wishing to view all decisions made can find these at <http://eservices.solihull.gov.uk/mgInternet/mgListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

1.2.2 Attached to this report is a list of decisions made.

1.3 Decisions

1.3.1 27 October 2020

1.3.2 Review of Solihull Connect Operating Hours

1.3.3 As Cabinet Member, I approved the permanent implementation of revised operating hours for Connect services, following conclusion of the pilot period. I agreed that the libraries at Chelmsley Wood and The Core will provide a reactive service for vulnerable customers on Saturdays, in response to the concerns highlighted by the Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board.

1.3.4 Council Plan and Priorities

1.3.5 Work is on-going to support the Council Plan priority - Creating the Conditions for Communities to thrive. We continue to work with all partners, including the Voluntary and Community Sector, to develop an integrated community based approach to enable people to start and live well.

1.4 Good News and Issues of Interest

1.4.1 World Homeless Day – Solihull puts Change into Action

1.4.2 In the twelve months since its launch, **Solihull Change into Action** has raised more than £46,000 to support specialist organisations and outreach services working to change the circumstances of individuals sleeping rough and those at risk of homelessness.

1.4.3 As well as big donations from The Enterprise Trust, National Express, Paragon Bank, Renewal Church, Solihull BID and Touchwood, the campaign has also received donations from individuals donating online and at collection points in shops in Solihull Town Centre.

1.4.4 So far, grants have been given to: Accord Housing Association, Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid (BSWA), Solihull Churches Action on Homelessness (SCAH) and St Basils. These have been used to help with accommodation and furnishing needs, tackle social isolation, pay for transport costs and purchase starter packs for mothers and children.

1.4.5 Solihull Council scoops a Silver for its support to the Armed Forces

1.4.6 We have been given a Silver Award by the Ministry of Defence for its support to the Armed Forces as part of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme (ERS). The ERS was launched to recognise and reward employers who support Defence and inspire others to do the same. The award was presented to me as the Council's Armed Forces Community Champion at an online Ceremony held on Friday 13th November 2020.

1.4.7 The event was presented by Major Michael Collie and the WM RFCA Chief Executive Richard Maybury, and feature 1* Royal Navy, Army and RAF representation and a special video from David Williams, HR Director at Jaguar Land Rover. Twenty Five organisations from across the West Midland Reserve Forces and Cadets Association's (West Midland RFCA) region were also recognised by the Ministry of Defence for their support to the Armed Forces, including Solihull College.

1.4.8 Registrar Services

1.4.9 Staff at the Register Office pulled out all the stops again at the start of the second lockdown, contacting all those getting married or attending a citizenship ceremony during November. They managed to sort out new dates or arrange a refund for those choosing to cancel. This included changing the date of a ceremony for a couple who had already cancelled their ceremony once before and asked if they could bring it forward before lockdown started. The team managed to find a free slot on 3rd November and with the help of part time staff rearranging their working days, they managed to conduct the ceremony.

1.4.10 Communities & Partnerships

1.4.11 On Wednesday 18 November 2020, I attended a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Solihull Carers Trust who was extremely complementary about the engagement and support received from the various Communities & Partnerships teams – to quote 'fabulous'.

1.4.12 The Council's Community Development Team have been busy supporting a number of groups and initiatives across the borough:

(a) They have successfully worked with four organisations and groups to secure £17,300 additional funding and a portakabin to support a range of local activity including community music sessions, delivery of hot meals to older and vulnerable adults, astronomy and gardening projects, additional help and support through a local social supermarket. This has been supplemented by work with Morrison's supermarket to provide stationary items to young people being supported via the SMBC Family Support Team.

(b) They have helped to establish a new Solihull foodbank network. The new network brings together VCS groups and organisations involved in the provision of food and support to local communities to share resources, food, volunteers and donations. This approach will also improve communication and referrals ensuring that people needing additional help from a foodbank can access it from multiple places in the Borough.

- (c) From furlough to new social enterprise owner – they have support the development of a new Community Interest Company has been created delivering food for vulnerable people across the Borough. The owner set up Essentials Delivery after they were furloughed at the start of the pandemic and with support from the team, they have been able to access business start-up help, Lottery funding and to formally register the new enterprise as a Community Interest Company. Essentials Delivery is also now a member of the Solihull Foodbank Network and part of the Borough wide response to the pandemic and supplying food and food parcels to vulnerable people and households.
- (d) Working with a local resident, has connected with a local campaign to collect Christmas present donations for families to the local food bank network and social workers, to provide presents to some of the most vulnerable families and households in the Borough this Christmas.

1.4.13 Regulation and Enforcement

1.4.14 The Regulation and Enforcement team successful served a COVID 3 closure notice on a takeaway business in Shirley as they failed to properly manage customers congregating within the premises.

1.4.15 Following an investigation by Solihull Trading Standards, on 5th October 2020 a local pizza company was fined for falsely advertising a level 5 on the Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The company was fined £1500, and made to pay £150 in costs and £150 victims surcharge. The owner was fined £150 and made to pay £150 costs.

1.4.16 A vehicle check was carried out at the NEC in February 2020 at which a vehicle was weighed by Trading Standards and found to be 20% overloaded on the rear axle and 27% overloaded on the gross weight. The case went to court on 21st October 2020 and resulted in a fine for the company of £2,500 with an order for costs of £400 and £190 victims' surcharge. The driver was fined £440 and was ordered to pay £400 costs and £44 victims' surcharge.

1.4.17 Earlier this year the Council approved a motion promoting the sale of quieter fireworks in acknowledgement of the effect loud fireworks have on some animals and vulnerable people. To further this motion I led a task and finish group that developed some campaign materials: letters for retailers, posters, stickers which could be used by retailers to identify quieter fireworks and a pro forma letter people could use to notify neighbours of an upcoming fireworks event. In the run up to 5th November Trading Standards Officers carried out visits to fireworks retailers in order to ensure compliance with fireworks safety legislation and to promote the sale of quieter fireworks. The scheme was generally well received with some retailers reporting that people were requesting quieter fireworks.

1.4.18 Safeguarding Board's Development Day

On 17 November, I attended a Safeguarding Board's Development Day. This brought together members of the Safeguarding Adults Board, Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership to review its priorities for the coming year. All members recognised the tremendous work carried out by services and our communities to support vulnerable people but recognised the impact of lockdown and the need to work closely together going forward around an agreed set of shared priorities.

1.5 Future Decisions

1.5.1 At my future decision making session on the 21 January 2021, I will be considering the report on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Fees.