

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in the **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 21 June 2016** at **9.30 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor D Boyes (Chairman)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Charlton, S Forster, J Gray, C Hampson, N Martin, T Nearney, K Shaw, P Stradling, F Tinsley and J Turnbull

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr A J Cooke and Mr J Welch

#### **Co-opted Employees/Officers:**

Chief Superintendent H McMillan

#### **Also Present:**

Councillors

#### **Apologies:**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Armstrong, M Hodgson, G Holland, S Iveson, H Liddle, J Maitland, C Wilson and Chief Fire Officer S Errington

### **1 Apologies For Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Armstrong, M Hodgson, G Holland, S Iveson, H Liddle, J Maitland, C Wilson and Chief Fire Officer S Errington.

### **2 Substitute Members**

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

### **3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held 23 March 2016 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the apologies for Councillor S Forster being recorded, and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman noted the Council had won a MJ Award for Excellence in Governance and Scrutiny and the thanked all Members, Co-opted Members and Officers for their hard work. The Chairman congratulated Deputy Chief Constable, Stephen Watson on behalf of the Committee, on his appointment to be Chief Constable at South Yorkshire Police.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Jonathan Slee explained that a response to the City Safety Group (CSG) had been passed from the Committee to the Corporate Director of Neighbourhood Services, Oliver Sherratt and there would be an update back to Committee in due course.

Councillors noted an upcoming meeting of the Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 3 June, with Safer and Stronger Communities Members invited to attend in respect of the item on Environmental Improvement Campaigns. It was added there was a Special Meeting of the Committee, 29 June, looking at the new drug and alcohol service, following the comments from Members in terms of the Quarter 3 Performance Management Report. It was explained that as there were cross-cutting issues, Members of the Adults, Wellbeing and Health and Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be invited to attend.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

#### **5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

#### **6 Media Relations**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the recent prominent articles and news stories relating to the remit of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes). The articles included: Durham Constabulary focusing on the issues of drinking and driving and anti-social behaviour, "issuing a red card warning" during the European Football Championship 2016; and "One Punch Can Kill" a campaign rolled out to Chester-le-Street. It was added that this campaign was headed by the Harm Reduction Unit (HRU) in terms of warning against the dangers of violence, with the mother of a victim having worked with the HRU and via Area Action Partnership funding to have promotional beer mats warning of the dangers distributed in the Chester-le-Street area. Members noted that further to the work of the 20mph Working Group and the Road Safety Team schoolchildren from Cestria Primary School and Park View Lower School had their artwork was added to 20mph signage.

#### **Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

#### **7 Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 Update**

The Chairman introduced Sergeant Jayne Freeman, Durham Constabulary who was in attendance to give an update presentation to Members in respect of the County Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (for copy see file of minutes).

Sergeant J Freeman referred Members to the report circulated with the agenda papers, adding she would cover the most salient points therein. Members noted the background to the "Prevent Duty" and that there had been strong progress in all elements, with the Safe Durham Partnership's (SDP) Contest Silver Group (CSG) having demonstrated strong leadership and partnership working. Members were reminded of the ongoing awareness sessions that had been carried out, thousands of professionals having noted the Prevent Duty, with Childcare professionals having been the latest people receiving the briefing. It was added that Dr D Sloggett, a national expert on Counter Terrorism, had spoken at four Prevent Seminars, to over 375 professionals across the SDP and Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS).

It was reiterated that all parties had a duty to raise awareness and were doing so well, and it explained that Durham County Council had in place a "Channel Panel", with the Council's Strategic Manager, County Durham Youth Offending Service (CDYOS), Gill Eshelby chairing the Panel. Members noted a referral programme for those aged 0-19 was being developed by the Council.

The Chairman thanked Sergeant J Freeman and asked Members for their questions on the report.

Councillor T Nearney asked whether community intelligence was key, noting that there had been a lot of work in briefing our professionals adding perhaps there was a need to look to brief community groups, and commented that perhaps far-right extremism was more of an issue than Islamic extremism in our region. Sergeant J Freeman noted that community intelligence was vital and that the Council's Community Safety Coordinator, Graham McArdle was working with his team on community projects. The Head of Planning and Service Strategy, Children and Adult Services, Peter Appleton explained that the Community Cohesion Toolkit could be used and built upon in terms of local intelligence and working with Elected Members. The Head of Planning and Service Strategy added that where there were tensions in communities, there was pro-active work taken in communities by the Council's Head of Partnership and Community Engagement, Gordon Elliott, working to promote community cohesion, utilising the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs).

The Chairman noted the recent tragic events in Yorkshire regarding Jo Cox MP and asked if there was any intelligence of an upsurge in far-right activity in our region. Sergeant J Freeman noted that there were no specific threats identified at this time, however, it was noted that far-right extremism was an issue that professionals looked at, not just a stereotypical view of an "Islamic extremist". Members were reminded of a plot in 2009 elsewhere in the county involving ricin and the importance of gathering intelligence, with the Prevent Duty having been portrayed in some parts of the media as spying.

Councillor F Tinsley asked if the speaker felt there were any gaps in the information sharing that was taking place and asked if the guidance referred to in paragraph 16 of the report had now been received. Sergeant J Freeman noted that the guidance to accompany the national Counter Extremism Strategy had not yet been received. Sergeant J Freeman added that there was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for all partners within the CSG and information is shared accordingly and there was no gaps in the information sharing perceived at this time.

Mr AJ Cooke noted recent tragic events in this country and abroad and asked if mental health issues were a factor that was considered. Sergeant J Freeman noted that mental health professionals were aware of the Prevent duty and would share information accordingly. Mr J Welch asked whether high profile events were being reviewed in the wake of recent incidents. Sergeant J Freeman noted that there would be a review and also specific events would have security arrangements in place and if any Members had concerns regarding an event they should speak to the Police. The Head of Planning and Service Strategy added that there was important work ongoing with schools, noting the use of risk assessment templates and that advice was available for schools as required.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**8 Quarter 4 2015/16 Performance Management Report**

The Chairman introduced the Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management, Keith Forster who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 4 2015/16 Performance Management Report for the Altogether Safer theme (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management referred Members to the report and noted key performance achievements, including: 91.4% of respondents to the Adult Social Care Survey noting the services they used made them feel safe and secure, against a target of 90%; increased performance in relation to Care Connect call responses; the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System being well within target.

Members recalled the discussion at the last meeting in terms of crime, reporting and recording and it was noted that tracker indicators showed while there was an increase in the number of crimes, the rate was lower than comparable force areas. It was added that anti-social behaviour (ASB) and ASB which was alcohol related had reduced, as had violent crime. It was noted that while there had been a slight increase in theft offences, the rate per 1,000 population was significantly better than the national average. Members recalled an item at a recent Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee that looked at the issue of fly-tipping, highlighting activities including Operation Stop It.

It was noted that the key performance issues included a further underperformance in respect of the number of people completing alcohol and drug treatment, noting the new provider, Lifeline, now had data for 6 months in terms of drug treatment and 12 months for Alcohol Treatment. Members noted Public Health and Commissioning were monitoring the service and a Performance Improvement Plan was in place with actions including: programmes to reduce the time in treatment; improved pathways for referrals; enhanced performance management of caseloads; and procurement of a new IT database. It was added that there would be a Special Meeting of the Committee looking at the drug and alcohol service, scheduled for 29 June 2016.

In respect of re-offending, it was noted that Durham's re-offending rate was 28.4% which was higher than the national average (26%). Members noted the success of the Checkpoint Phase 1 with 391 of 440 people having successfully completed the programme. It was added that Phase 2 would also contain randomised control sampling. Councillors were reminded that the number of children re-offending had reduced over the last few years, with the remaining cohort being those with the most challenging behaviours.

Members noted that number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents had increased and queries with Road Safety colleague had not highlighted any single significant cause.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor N Martin noted for the upcoming meeting looking at the drug and alcohol service it would be useful to not only have the percentage of those successfully completing alcohol treatment, but also information in terms of the demand upon the service, the number needing to access the service in comparison to those in treatment.

Councillor S Forster asked as regards successful "completions". For alcohol treatment, the Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management explained that completions were where clients had completed their planned treatment and left the service. In the case of successful drug treatments, clients must not re-present within 6 months of completing treatment to count as a success.

Councillor T Nearney asked as regards Checkpoint Phase 2 and whether the programme was being expanded. The Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management noted he would seek clarification from Police colleagues in this regard, with the Head of Planning and Service Strategy adding that following an independent evaluation of Phase 1 a decision on Phase 2 would be made. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that following the progress of the Checkpoint programme was set out within the Committee's Work Programme.

The Chairman noted the increasing figures in terms of those killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents and that the Council's Strategic Traffic Manager, Dave Wafer would be in attendance at the September meeting of the Committee with further information. The Chairman asked as regards how comparators were chosen in terms of performance data. The Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management explained that when looking regionally this was comparing to 11 neighbouring Local Authorities (LAs) and when considering similar areas, this would look at a group of approximately 15 LAs that were comparable to Durham.

The Chairman noted the actions taken against those fly-tipping, highlighting the fines issued and the effectiveness of the surveillance equipment used, some of which Members had contributed towards via their Neighbourhood Budgets. The Chairman asked whether the figures in relation to the number of young people re-offending had reached a plateau. The Strategic Manager - Performance and Information Management reiterated that the Strategic Manager, County Durham Youth Offending Service (CDYOS) had explained that over the last few years there had been a significant reduction in numbers, and enhanced interventions were continuing with the existing cohort to try and reduce re-offending further.

The Chairman noted this and asked whether there would need to be a change in the approach in order to tackle those complex issues.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **9 Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2015-2018**

The Chairman introduced the Public Health Practitioner, Public Health, Tammy Ross, who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy 2015-2018 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Public Health Practitioner reminded Members that following a governance review at the SDP the SDP Vulnerability Group was disbanded and the sexual violence agenda was incorporated into the Domestic Abuse Forum Executive Group. It was explained that the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy had 16 high level objectives based under 4 headings, and set out clear escalation routes for issues. It was added that the Strategy had been agreed by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group and had gone through the relevant management teams and had been considered and endorsed by the SDP Board.

The Committee learned that the high level objectives had been updated in January 2015, although it was noted that the definitions in terms of priority groups had not changed, and the vision had also remained unchanged. It was noted the document was attached to the agenda papers and Members were asked for any questions.

Councillor T Nearney noted from the report and strategy document that there was a lot of focus on multi-agency working, and the CVS in addition, and asked whether care was being taken to ensure that there was not too much being loaded onto the CVS. The Public Health Practitioner explained that CVS representatives attended the Operational Group and capacity issues would be taken into account. It was noted that Public Health were commissioners, and therefore work was undertaken together with other agencies and partners for the benefit of children, young people and families.

The Chairman asked if the role of alcohol in such cases was taken into account. The Public Health Practitioner noted that mental health issues, and alcohol or substance abuse formed the "toxic trio" and colleagues worked together with members of the HRU.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

## **10 Review of the Committee's Work Programme 2016-17**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to the report in the agenda papers relating to the Review of the Committee's Work Programme for 2016-17 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members noted the report set out the work programme for the year ahead and suggested topics for review, though Councillors were reminded of the upcoming elections in 2017 and the need to complete reviews in a timely fashion, prior to the purdah period. It was noted that Improved Home Safety had been highlighted by both Councillors J Armstrong and M Hodgson as a potential review topic and the CDDFRS had been keen to engage on this issue. Members noted other suggestions had included psychoactive substance misuse and road safety. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer suggested that two focussed sessions on the issues of psychoactive substance misuse and road safety could be held and that Improved Home Safety would be suitable as a review topic.

The Chairman noted the timescales in terms of leading into the next set of Council elections and added that should Improved Home Safety be agreed as the review topic, Councillor T Nearney would Chair that review. Members agreed.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer concluded by noting the upcoming meeting with the new drug and alcohol treatment provider, Lifeline in attendance and added that in terms of Checkpoint and the Reducing Reoffending Strategy, these issues would be picked up within the work programme for 2016-17.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the Work Programme at Appendix 2 to the report be agreed.
- (ii) That the review topic of Improved Home Safety be agreed.
- (iii) That arrangements be made for focussed meetings to be held on the issues of Psychoactive Substances and Road Safety for Young Drivers.

## **11 Overview and Scrutiny Review Update**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer explained that in terms of the 20mph Working Group, the report had been presented to Cabinet in May and that in terms of the Alcohol and the Demand on the Emergency Services Working Group, a meeting would be called in due course to discuss findings a draft recommendations prior to being considered by Members and Partners, with an aim to have the report of the Working Group on the agenda for the October meeting of Cabinet.

Councillors noted that, as agreed, the next Working Group of the Committee would be looking at Improving Safety in the Home and would aim to have its first meeting in September, dates to be circulated once arranged. It was added there would be information from the Local Authority and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service and on how the two organisations shared their information to help protect those vulnerable people in our communities.

The Vice-Chairman, Councillor T Nearney noted that the reason for the Alcohol and the Demand on the Emergency Services Report going to the October Cabinet rather than September was to ensure that all Partners involved in the review had been given the opportunity to input and provide feedback.

**Resolved:**

That the verbal update be noted.

## **12 Police and Crime Panel**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that the next meeting of the Police and Crime Panel would be its Annual General Meeting on 19 July with the main items of business would include the appointment of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Annual Report.

Members noted there would be a further update at the September meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### **Resolved:**

That the verbal update be noted.

## **13 Safe Durham Partnership Update**

The Chairman asked the Community Safety Manager, Caroline Duckworth to speak to Members as regards an update from the SDP (for copy see file of minutes).

Members noted one of the key issues discussed at the May meeting of the SDP Board had been Open Water Safety, with the improvements made as a consequence of the CSG having been noted and the work having been recognised as national best practice. It was noted that there would be ongoing regular meetings of the CSG and in terms of governance, together with the Open Water Safety Group (OWSG), would become a sub-group of the SDP. Members were informed of the "Dying to be cool" campaign aimed at teenagers and young people warning of the danger of cold water shock, especially in the summer months.

The Community Safety Manager noted that other issues discussed had included: the SDP Governance Review, with more information coming back to the Committee in September; Victim Care and Advice Service, offering support to all victims of crime and being better in terms of issues of age, social isolation, hate crime, disability and mental health needs; Checkpoint; the PREVENT duty, already discussed at Committee; and the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy again already discussed at Committee.

The Chairman thanked the Community Safety Manager for her update and noted the excellent work in terms of open water safety, now established as national best practice in this regard.

### **Resolved:**

That the report be noted.