

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 **Council Chamber, County Hall, Durham** on **Thursday 9 September 2021** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor J Charlton (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors B Avery, V Andrews, P Atkinson, D Boyes, S Deinali, L Fenwick, C Hampson, P Heaviside, D McKenna, E Mavin, L Mavin (substitute for C Martin), D Nicholls, D Oliver, J Quinn, A Simpson and D Sutton-Lloyd

The Chair asked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Jonathan Slee to read a statement from Mr AJ Cooke, Co-opted Member thanking the Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Team for their support and in keeping him up-to-date with the work of the Committee.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Cairns, M McGaun, C Martin and M Wilson and Chief Fire Officer S Errington.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor L Mavin substituted for Councillor C Martin.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held 9 July 2021 and were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that questions had been raised relating to the Safe Durham Partnership and its structure, and flyposting with information to be shared with Members once received.

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 County Durham Youth Justice Service - Overview, Performance and Service Improvement Plan 2021/22

The Chair welcomed the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children, Martyn Stenton and the Youth Justice Service Manager, Dave Summers who were in attendance to provide the Committee with an overview presentation relating to the County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS), their performance and Service Improvement Plan 2021/22 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children explained that the CDYOS was statutory partnership, from the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and that the principal aim was to prevent offending by children and young people. He noted there were a number of statutory partners, including the Police, Probation Service, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as well as non-statutory partners which included the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (PCVC), Public Health, Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys (TEWV) NHS Foundation Trust, North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust (NTHFT), HFT and Humankind.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children noted information relating to out of court disposals, diverting young people from the criminal justice system, and the work undertaken in supporting the victims of crime and their families. Members were referred to governance arrangements, with a statutory, multiagency partnership board, with links to the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP), with the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children as the Chair of the CDYJS Management Board. The Committee were reminded of the Youth Justice Plan, which had recently been presented to Council in July 2021. It was explained there were 62 staff from the Council, alongside 12 staff seconded from partner organisations. The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children noted that there were 42 volunteers that also helped and worked with children, young people and their families.

Councillors learned as regards the voice of young people, families, victims and communities, structured feedback from all groups on the services delivered. Members were also informed as regards the national recognition the service had received, including Children and Young People Now awards for its Parenting Group and 'With Youth in Mind', and Investors in Children and Investors in Volunteers status.

The Youth Justice Service Manager referred Members to performance information and explained that it was pleasing to note the downward trend in relation to the rate of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System, with the Durham rate being lower than the England and North East regionally rates. He explained that the trend since 2014 had been a result of the work of the Council and partners in diverting young people away from the criminal justice system and permitting offences. He noted national measures, with the first time entrant rate being 179 per 100,000, the reoffending rate being 34.9 percent, down 8 percent year on year, and the custody rate per 1,000 being 0.24, up slightly and in line with the North East and national rates. It was noted this represented a small cohort of young people, eight this year.

In terms of local performance measures, the Youth Justice Service Manager noted 137 victims had been engaged with and 67 young victims had been supported. He explained that there had been 1,366 hours of reparations and with over £1,000 donated to charity through work such as garden ornaments, Christmas wreaths and "bling poppies" for the Royal British Legion. Members noted that 52 parents had also been supported.

The Committee were informed of the work undertaken in terms of the assessment of young people who offend, noting that around 80 percent had some level of speech, language and communication need. Members noted other issues included mental health and substance misuse. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted the interventions and risk management and the work undertaken with partners to support the young people in the service, who often had a range of vulnerabilities.

The Youth Justice Service Manager noted while performance was encouraging, the service was not complacent and the service had a number of areas as service improvement priorities for 2021/22, including: further improvements of assessments and plans; targeting resources on those offending the most; listening and responding to young people and their families; ensuring volunteering is a key component; and ensuring case management and administration provided the highest quality support for the work of the service, to the courts and for young people and our communities.

The Chair thanked the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children and the Youth Justice Service Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor D Boyes noted the positive report, however, he did not recognise the same in the streets within his ward. He noted that out of court disposals and Checkpoint had been very successful in terms of petty crime, however, he noted a hardcore minority that believed they were immune. He noted a large increase in incidents of arson, anti-social behaviour with off-road bikes, including drug/drink driving. He noted several incidents and noted his disappointment that the hardcore element, where interventions were not working, were not being addressed.

The Youth Justice Service Manager noted there was a relatively, in comparison to other areas in the country, hardcore element that offended at a significant rate and noted there was an 'enhanced programme', both intervention and punishment based. He noted that custody was an option, though seen as a last resort as it was evidenced that those that young people who had been in custody were much more likely to reoffend. He reiterated that the service was fully committed to try and work with that hardcore of young people, adding that the service had been out and about throughout lockdown, continuing with their work, similar to colleagues from Police, Children's Social Care and other organisations.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children noted the issues of anti-social behaviour and arson as raised by Councillor D Boyes and added there was ongoing work with Chief Superintendent A Green and Superintendent N Bickford from Durham Constabulary in that regard. He noted that a workshop was being planned and organised for a future date to bring together colleagues from the Police and the Council, including Early Help from within the Children and Young People's Service and from other areas of the Council dealing with community safety, looking at anti-social behaviour and also arson suppression. He added those issues were recognised across the partnership.

The Chair noted the rise in anti-social behaviour during the pandemic and asked if there was any information as regards whether it was due to a perception from those engaged in anti-social behaviour that there would be no retribution. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted there was a school of thought that the greater the impact of a punishment then the greater the likelihood they would be deterred from carrying out such activities. He explained that the reality was very different, with many young people not considering that they would get caught. He added that the greater communities and partners worked together to catch those young people early, the greater the chance of being able to tackle the levels of anti-social behaviour, having the greatest impact at that point.

Mr D Balls noted the report highlighted great improvements, however, in reference to reoffending rates, he felt that one in three young people going on to reoffend was not successful. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted that, while the figure was good compared to other areas, it was not a figure he was happy with. He added that Durham was one of the best areas in terms of preventing reoffending and the service was always looking to improve. He explained that the figures did not mean that 34 percent of the young people who were sentenced went on to reoffend, the way in which the data was collated by the Ministry of Justice was on a quarterly basis. He noted that if a young person reoffended in each quarter, that would count as four young people reoffending, rather than just one. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted that therefore an estimate of reoffending would be around 26-27 percent, with persistent offenders skewing the figures. He noted that even at one in four young people reoffending it was an area the service was committed to improve upon by targeting resources on those young people causing the most impact within communities. He added that the detection rate by Durham Constabulary was the highest in the country.

Councillor P Atkinson echoed the comments of Councillor D Boyes as regards a hardcore element and noted the perception was things were not being done. The Chair noted that unfortunately the representative from the Police was not in attendance and explained the Overview and Scrutiny Officer was looking into issue of Police attending the meeting. Councillor J Quinn noted he represented the same ward as Councillor P Atkinson and noted he had attended a recent meeting with Police as regards issues, including anti-social behaviour. He noted that from his understanding the Police had less powers to arrest young people and that in cases of anti-social behaviour Police were filling out 'misc' forms, with 77 having been issued in the last year in his ward, with 13 being for the same individual. He added that, as he understood, if cases were taken to court then Police would subsequently have the power to arrest and asked why therefore more cases were not being taken to court. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted that it was not an area for his service, in terms of looking to caution or prosecute, rather his service would become involved once a young person had gone through that process.

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd noted a similar situation in his ward, with the public being frustrated and Members receiving negative feedback in that there seemed to be little action taken by the Police or the Council. He noted some frustrations in terms of not being able to pursue prosecution.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children noted that comments of Members as regards issue in their areas. He noted that many of the cases referred to were those not significant enough to then come through to the CDYJS and reiterated as regards a workshop session with Police colleagues. He added that Neighbourhood Inspectors were attending Area Action Partnership (AAP) meetings and forum in which Local Members could have those discussions as regards their areas. He added he was happy to speak to Members after the meeting as regards issues as they could help inform him in terms of his discussions with colleagues from the Police, however, he suggested it may be appropriate for Overview and Scrutiny to have discussions with the Police in addition. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted that a lot of work was being undertaken with young people and he noted that Members were welcome to visit the service to see the work and the types of activities carried out.

Councillor B Avery noted the comments of his fellow Local Members and explained that it appeared to Councillors that very little was being done in terms of tackling the hardcore element, it having become radically worse over the last few years. He noted the issue had previously been looked at by the Committee and noted he did not know what the answer would be in terms of tackling anti-social behaviour. He added that the PCVC had attended a recent meeting of his local AAP and had received many comments as regards not seeing actions on the ground. He noted the hardcore element needed to be tackled and that element had not respect for the Police. The Chair noted there appeared to be an issue with a hardcore element in many Members areas and the issue was one that Police colleagues could respond to at a future meeting.

Councillor D Nicholls noted 80 percent of the young people going through the service had some form of speech, language or communication need and asked what the service was doing to help, working with schools and partners. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted ClearCut Communication, a part of the service, was a nationally recognised expert in terms of speech, language and communication need and had developed screening tools specifically for working with young people, much more young people and communication friendly. He explained that ClearCut Communications had developed a range of resources relating to speech, language and communication which, together with training, was provided across the country. The Youth Justice Service Manager explained that every young person coming into the service was screened for speech, language and communication needs and added that all staff were trained to be aware and recognise speech, language and communication needs and also to deliver interventions in a speech, language and communication friendly way. He noted lower-level needs could be dealt with by mainstream staff and explained that within the service's Health Team there were 2.5 full-time equivalent speech and language specialists that worked specifically to provide higher level interventions for those with the greatest need. He explained as regards work with schools and plans are developed with schools, post-16 providers or employers. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted that many young people had gone through the school system without those needs being identified, in some cases the young people are quiet and not troublesome and that could lead to vulnerabilities around exploitation. He added that for some young people the issue can be seen as 'problem behaviour' rather than an issue with communication and therefore work is undertaken with schools. He noted that County Durham was a country leader in the area of working with young people with speech, language and communication needs within the Criminal Justice System.

Councillor L Mavin asked as regards young people that may have autism or Asperger's Syndrome. The Youth Justice Service Manager noted that was another element within the screening process, linking to the health provision within the service, another area in which the service was country leading. He added the service was looking to develop further understanding and skills to be able to deal with at a lower-level, with specialists to focus at the high level, as it was considered that nationally it was an issue within the Criminal Justice System.

Resolved:

- (i) The contents of the report and the work of the service be noted.
- (ii) That the comments from the Committee are collated by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer and shared with the Safe Durham Partnership, the Head of Service and colleagues from Durham Constabulary.

7 Open Water Safety Update

The Chair welcomed the Occupational Health and Safety Manager, Kevin Lough who was in attendance to provide the Committee with an update presentation relating to Open Water Safety (for copy see file of minutes).

The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted he had been involved with the work around open water safety for the last 7-8 years and now led on the matter and worked with colleagues within the Council alongside various partners. He referred Members to slides setting out the governance arrangements with the SDP and the Durham City Safety Group and the County Durham Open Water Safety Group. He noted the Durham City Safety Group was chaired by the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, Alan Patrickson and included representation from the Council, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, University, Students' Union and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). He added that he chaired the County Durham Open Water Safety Group which included the Council, Police, Fire and Rescue Service, Northumbrian Water and RoSPA. He added the inclusion of RoSPA helped to ensure the group were meeting national best practice.

Members were informed that nationally 632 people had lost their lives in 2020 in connection with open water, with a significant number of those being suspected suicide. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted it was an issue that the groups in Durham were aware of and there were links to colleagues in Public Health that worked in relation to suicide prevention. He noted the increase in inland drownings and that it tended to be a male dominated issue, with those aged 20-24 years old being most at risk, with alcohol and drugs being a factor in some instances. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted the majority of those that entered the water had no intention of doing so and had simply been walking or running next to the water.

The Committee were referred to a table setting out the statistics for Durham from 2013/14 to 2020/21, with the city centre and the rest of County Durham (excluding the city centre) set out. Members were asked to note the spike in incidents in 2015, with several of the incidents relating to students, with alcohol and being alone late at night a factor in some of the cases. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted that views of the Coroner as regards what actions should be taken had been taken on board by the Durham City Safety Group and work with RoSPA was undertaken to independently assess the full river corridor. He noted that work led to a significant scheme of investment works, identifying issues in relation to lighting, footpaths, fencing, barriers and the installation of lifesaving equipment. It was added that works were delivered within nine months and that there was monitoring in place to ensure the physical interventions were in good repair. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager explained that the physical works were alongside education and awareness raising as regards the risks associated with open water, alcohol and cold water shock. He noted that the process of repeating the process of education, not just for the public but also with local licenced premises, door staff, emergency services and other groups.

The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted statistics and added that, since 2015, there had been a decreasing trend in terms of the number of fatalities, injuries and near-misses. He added that last year there had been one fatality within the city centre, and two in the wider county. Members were asked to note the data was taken from emergency services along with information from the Council in addition.

The Committee were referred to information relating to Durham City, working proactively with partners and also developers and site managers. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted the work undertaken in terms of inspections, adding that reports from members of the public and Elected Members was always welcomed so that any issues can be looked at and acted upon as quickly as possible. In reference to the wider county, Members were reminded of the 'Dying to be cool' cold water shock campaign, which began in 2016, which had been impacted in the last year by the pandemic. It was explained that in normal circumstances, the Authority had provided assembly talks for secondary schools, and some primary schools, as regards the danger of cold water shock, with around 6,000 – 7,000 pupils engaged with over the period leading up to the school summer holidays. Members noted the Council worked with Fiona Gosling, who had lost her son Cameron as a result of cold water shock. It was explained she was able to deliver a powerful message to young people as regards the dangers of cold water shock and the message was also augmented with posters, including on phone boxes, as well as on social media channels, including those of County Durham schools.

Members were asked to note the work undertaken in 2015-16 in relation to where the risks relating to open water were within the County, with around 260 locations of interest identified, for example those close to schools and parks. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager explained that those locations were assessed and schools in those locations were given information as regards those risks to pass on to their pupils. It was explained those assessments were reviewed annually and there was focus on the major hotspots, for example, Chester-le-Street riverside, Durham City and Hardwick Park. It was added the Council worked with landowners to help make them aware of the risks. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager referred to the revised 2021 'Dying to be cool' campaign, which had been delivered remotely as a result of the pandemic. He added it was timely as a national spike in incidents had been noted in July 2021 and it was important to maintain the high profile each year with new starters at schools, colleges and the University.

The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted several elements looking forward, including: further work with schools, colleges and the University; governance and the risk based approach; a new Action Plan for the City Centre, via the City Centre Safety Group; and increased education and awareness, including new initiatives to target the 16-20 age group, building on the national "Don't drink and drown" campaign. Members noted work with the Royal Life Saving Society and also with the Police and the Fire and Rescue Service as well as with Public Health in terms of identifying trends and looking at root causes.

The Occupational Health and Safety Manager concluded by noting future work with designers and developers in relation to being fit for purpose in terms of safety and the regular monitoring and inspection of city centre routes and control measures.

The Chair thanked the Occupational Health and Safety Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor D Boyes noted the success of the work that had been undertaken, in response to a number of incidents in 2014-15 with four young people within the city centre having lost their lives. He added it was heartening to see all of the safety equipment and prevention measures in place and the reduction in incidents, including across the wider county was a success and was a credit to all the people, partners and organisations involved. Councillor B Avery agreed with the comments from Councillor D Boyes, noted an incident that had been reported early that morning and asked as regards preventative design. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted there were a number of areas that had been identified as potential risks, and where possible work would be undertaken to make it more difficult to enter the water at those places. He reiterated that it was important to keep up the education and support as regards the issue to help prevent as many incidents as possible.

The Chair noted the work undertaken prior to school summer holidays and noted that with increasingly mild spring weather, a similar activity prior to the Easter holidays may also be beneficial. The Occupational Health and Safety Manager noted the work was resource intensive and the summer holidays were targeted annually, including through national campaigns such as the two national drowning prevention weeks, adding that some of that work was earlier in the year. He added he would look at the possibility of such activities prior to the school holidays earlier in the year.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Group Update 2021

The Chair welcomed the Public Health Strategic Manager – Living and Ageing Well, Jane Sunter who was in attendance to take Members through the Alcohol and Drug Harm Reduction Group Update 2021 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Public Health Strategic Manager thanked the Chair and Members and noted the report built upon the briefing session held for Members on the topic and linked to other areas of work across the Council and its partners, as highlighted by the previous two agenda items. She referred to statistics for County Durham and noted that for 2020-21 there had been one-fifth more deaths linked to alcohol harm than in 2019-20, a significant increase.

It was added that the North East average was significantly greater than the England average, and that the County Durham level was below the North East average. Members noted that most deaths were associated with long-term dependency, with liver disease accounting for around 80 percent with the bulk being within the most deprived areas. Members noted the number of seizures had reduced in 2020-21, however, admissions into hospital had increased since 2018-19, and therefore more work was needed with the County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) and the Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS) provider, Humankind.

In relation to drug harm, it was noted that there had been consistent numbers throughout the pandemic, with a hybrid/blended model being operated as a result of the pandemic. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that the North East figure of 9.9 deaths per 100,000 population was greater than the England figure of 5 per 100,000. It was noted the figure was 8.3 per 100,000 for County Durham, the second lowest in the region, however this was sometime misreported in the press as Durham had the highest number of deaths, albeit also with a large population.

The Committee were informed as regards work relating to Coronavirus vaccine and vulnerable clients, and while those attending the DARS were not classified as vulnerable by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), many of the service's client also fell within identified vulnerable groups such as those that were homeless. Members were reminded that the County Durham Alcohol and Drugs Harm Reduction Plan had been aligned with the SDP Plan and contained 86 actions, of which 61 had been completed, with 25 ongoing. It was added that the terms of reference and membership of the Alcohol and Drugs Harm Reduction Group (ADHRG) had been updated.

The Public Health Strategic Manager noted the continued work with Balance, the North East Alcohol Office, in relation to alcohol misuse and explained as regards the recent hard-hitting 'Alcohol - not the answer' campaign, relaunched in February 2021 in response to concerns as regards increasing alcohol consumption during the pandemic. She explained as regards other campaigns such as 'What's the harm?' launched in May 2021, aiming to help parents to understand the Chief Medical Officer's guidance around children and alcohol. Members learned as regards a successful bid for Contained Outbreak Management Funding of £30,000 to be used to help amplify the Balance alcohol campaigns at a local level and support people in being able to access the DARS. Councillors noted the continued work with Balance in respect of Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) for alcohol and the information on the positive MUP had in after introduction in Scotland over the last two years.

In respect of Licensing, it was explained that Public Health worked with the Licensing Teams and while there had been a reduction in terms of capacity during the pandemic, numbers had been increasing, with 63 requests for new, or changes to existing, alcohol licences since March 2021.

With reference to the Holistic Needs Assessment (HNA) for long term opiate users, the Public Health Strategic Manager explained as regards the ongoing work and the increased naloxone supply across the county to help reverse opioid overdose. Councillors were referred to paragraphs 38 and 39 of the report which related to Substance Misuse Related Deaths (SMRDs) and the statistics for the North East which highlighted an aging cohort for drug users in County Durham, with Humankind looking at the issue as well as targeting those users' wider health. The Committee learned of Public Health England Universal Funding, which would further enhance the capacity for naloxone provision.

The Public Health Strategic Manager explained as regards the performance of the DARS, noting good performance during the pandemic period, working on a hybrid model, though maintaining the one-to-one relationships for those at high risk. It was noted that for Quarter Four 2020-21 there had been 2,866 clients in treatment, a reduction of 149 year-on-year. Members were referred to the number of successful completions as set out at Table 2 within the report noting opiate and alcohol completions being around the national level, with non-opiate completions being better than the national average.

The Committee were reminded of the work carried out following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection rating of 'requires improvement' in February 2018 and noted a further inspection had been scheduled for March 2020, though that had been cancelled as a result of the pandemic. It was explained that monitoring continued with quarterly contract meeting and that the CQC reported to be happy with progress. Members were informed of the new DARS centre at Horden, following the closure of the centre at Ridgemount House, Peterlee. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted the work in relation to the Women's Recovery Academy Durham (WRAD), with soft launch having taken place in February 2020. The Committee noted funding in the sum of £545,000 relating to helping to reduce crime in relation to drug use in County Durham, with colleagues from the Office of the PCVC, Probation, Humankind, and Public Health all involved in the bid. It was added there was also a bid for funding from Public Health England's (PHE) 'rough sleeper fund', as well as bid to PHE by Durham County Council on behalf of the LA9 Authorities in respect of commissioning inpatient detoxification beds.

The Chair thanked the Public Health Strategic Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor B Avery noted the impact of drugs and anti-social behaviour in his ward, with Councillor E Mavin agreeing it was a major issue with Police noting they needed more information as regards networks.

Councillor D Boyes noted that the report reflected the good news story in terms of the progress made by the DARS since 2015 from being well below national averages to now being around on par with those averages. He highlighted that it was an example of where being able to target Public Health grant locally helped to maximise the benefit for the area.

He noted that the issue of substance misuse was an increasing problem and noted his concern as regards the work of the Public Health Strategic Manager and her team if the Public Health grant was cut. He added that the impact in terms of both health and crime meant that it must be protected and ringfenced. He noted that 'post-pandemic' statistics would be more useful now in being able to look forward in terms of the service. The Public Health Strategic Manager agreed as regards having the most up-to-date statistics, though noted there were issues in terms of the most up-to-date figures from sources such as PHE, the Fingertips Database, and Durham Insight and assured Members would be provided with those facts and figures once obtained.

The Chair asked as regards the number of beds for the DARS. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that was no longer the primary model, rather community detoxification was used, with staff visiting the clients. She added that for the most complex clients, there was a commissioning arrangement with a number of external providers, outside of the region. She explained that in the last year there had been five inpatient requests, and while some would choose to access private treatment, the service could commission and refer to inpatient if appropriate.

Councillor D Sutton-Lloyd repeated his previous points as regards how important it was to get the Police involved within communities to tackle what appeared to be a lack of action in terms of drugs as it was having the effect that people were not willing to come forward with information as they felt no action would be taken. Councillor J Quinn asked if there had been a reduction in drug supply. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted there had been anecdotal evidence of a reduction during the lockdowns, though statistics would need to come from Durham Constabulary. Councillor J Quinn asked as regards how to encourage more people to access the DARS, especially in terms of alcohol, as many people may not perceive that they had a problem with alcohol. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted there were a range of interventions, to encourage people to look at their own alcohol intake, including the work of Balance in awareness raising, including an alcohol intake check when having a health check with GPs, which could include referral to Humankind if appropriate. She explained to the Committee that there was still a need for an individual to want to access the service and added that there was a 'drip-drip' effect of educating children and young people of the dangers of alcohol. She noted there were a number of other interventions, with reference to an app that showed level of intake and could help fast track referrals.

Councillor J Quinn asked as regards localised numbers for drug and alcohol misuse. The Public Health Strategic Manager noted that alcohol misuse was the larger issue, with data showing clear links between deprivation and alcohol misuse and poorer health. She noted she would speak to colleagues in Public Health as regards where people accessing the DARS were from, noting having that information at a postcode level was what had helped identify the need in terms of relocating the DARS to Horden.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted the point raised by the Public Health Strategic Manager in relation to information available via Balance and Durham Insights and would circulate information to the Committee accordingly.

Resolved:

That the annual update on the progress of the Alcohol and Drugs Harm Reduction Group be noted.

9 Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny - Work Programme Update

The Chair asked the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to speak to Members in relation to an update on the Work Programme 2021/22 for the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (for copy see file of minutes).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members of the work programme as agreed at the July meeting of the Committee, noting that areas for consideration now had meeting dates aligned with the proposed items and was set out at Appendix 2 to the report. He noted issues included arson and anti-social behaviour, with work ongoing with Officers in those areas. It was added the work programme remained flexible to be able to accommodate any issues that may arise during the year.

Councillor J Quinn asked if, given the comments from Members at Committee, whether the issue of anti-social behaviour could be brought forward to the November meeting. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted he would speak with the relevant partners and Officers to check as regards availability and then speak with the Chair. The Chair noted there were many new Members and she felt additional briefing sessions would be beneficial in providing insight.

Resolved:

That the updated work programme for 2021/2022 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues be noted.