

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 **Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham** on **Tuesday 6 January 2015** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor D Boyes (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Armstrong, P Conway, M Davinson, S Forster, J Gray, C Hampson, M Hodgson, G Holland, J Maitland, N Martin, J Measor, T Nearney, K Shaw, P Stradling, J Turnbull and C Wilson

Co-opted Members:

Mr J Welch

Co-opted Employees/Officers:

S Errington and Chief Superintendent G Hall

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr A J Cooke.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held 28 October 2014 and 13 November 2014 were agreed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Assistant Chief Executive's, Jonathan Slee noted that, in reference to the minutes, the preferred bidder for the Community Rehabilitation Company had been announced and was the ARCC (Achieving Real Change in Communities) Community Interest Company. It was added that a session was held with Members on 12 December 2014 to give information regarding the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Crime and Policing Act 2014, with Chief Superintendent Ivan Wood and several Officers from the Police, Council and partner organisations in attendance. Councillors noted that in relation to the Special Meeting held at the Fire Headquarters, the Committee's response to the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service's (CDDFRS) Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) had been forwarded to the Service.

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: a BBC News item in respect of 20mph limits, noting the Committee would form a Working Group to review topic; Domestic Abuse, linked to an item on the Agenda; and instances of fighting linked to alcohol abuse over the Christmas period.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

The Chairman agreed to take Agenda Item 9 as Item 7, with Agenda Items 7 and 8 becoming 8 and 9 respectively.

7 Multi-Agency Interventions Project

The Chairman thanked the Neighbourhood Protection Manager, Ian Hoult who was in attendance to speak to Members regarding progress in relation to the Multi-Agency interventions Project (for copy see file of minutes).

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager reminded Members that a review of Multi-Agency Interventions (MAI) had been undertaken, and that the process of piloting the new model for MAI was ongoing in Peterlee and had been rolled out to Seaham in December 2014. It was noted that the new model had a lead professional allocated, in a field most suitable to the incident, and they would then be supported by other professionals as required. It was added that the model had been developed in conjunction with partners with a communication plan being agreed, an information sharing protocol being developed, and IT support was in place. Members learned that the Neighbourhood Protection Manager would lead on the pilot implementation, report back to the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) on progress, and continue to work with the Council's Strategic Programme Manager, Jeanette Stephenson as appropriate.

The Committee noted that through an evaluation process across the County and with partner organisations, the old approach to MAI was found to be inconsistent and procedures were not being applied consistently, and information sharing issues had been highlighted. It was noted that the Strategic Programme Manager had developed a new MAI process that a Level 3 Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) had been developed and training was being delivered to enable new MAI approach.

It was added that there had been development in respect of case management, with secure storage of information for the new MAI process.

The Committee noted an example of an individual that had been helped through the new MAI process, with multiple issues including alcohol consumption, worklessness, mental health problems and issues with ASB. It was noted that good progress was being made and that was one example that evidenced how wider teams could work together well to provide good outcomes and reduce demand on the number of frontline staff across a number of agencies. Councillors learned that during the Peterlee pilot, there had been 29 cases in comparison to 24 in the whole of East Durham previously. It was explained that this greater number provided an opportunity to have a greater impact on issues, however, in the context of being able to carry out the necessary assessments within the resources available.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager explained that the Strategic Programme Manager was awaiting news relating to 2 funding bids, one regional and one local, to support delivery of interventions and Lead Professional support for the MAI.

The Chairman thanked the Neighbourhood Protection Manager and asked Members for their questions on the report.

The Committee asked questions in relation to: communication of information; where/who Members should refer people to; reducing demand; keeping interest groups up-to-date as regards those agencies providing services; the involvement of housing providers in helping with the MAI approach.

The Neighbourhood Protection Manager explained that communication via the ISA had involved “data champions” from the agencies involved and that Members would be given a summary on the process and if individuals are then taken on as a case, or otherwise, appropriate feedback would be given to the Member, within the context of appropriate information sharing. It was added that demand would be monitored and that cases were often complex and that ongoing review to be able to understand the impact of the work and the resources need was required. The Chairman noted that in East Durham there was a “directory” of agencies that was useful, albeit it was a “live document”. The Strategic Programme Manager noted that information on the new MAI process was shared at a Strategic Housing meeting and then fed back to individual housing organisations. It was added that only 2 housing providers had not yet signed up to the new process.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Update Report on Domestic Abuse Service Developments in 2014

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Programme Manager, Jeanette Stephenson who was in attendance to give Member an update in respect of Domestic Abuse Service Development in 2014 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Programme Manager noted the large amount of work that had been carried out by the SDP and with the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Councillor L Hovvels in working in partnership regarding Victim Support, especially with Durham Constabulary. It was explained that after a governance review the Domestic Abuse Executive Forum (DAFEG), a thematic group of the SDP, was noted as now encompassing issues of sexual violence. Accordingly, the terms of reference of the group were updated, with a joint action plan developed to be the delivery plan for the new group, now named the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG).

Councillors learned that in 2014, the SDP requested a simple referral pathway for disclosures of domestic abuse to ensure frontline practitioners could make appropriate referrals. It was explained that this was developed with the then DAFEG and resulted in the Domestic Abuse Referral Pathway (DARP) with an associated toolkit launched in September 2014 and an communication plan was developed to ensure that the use of DARP was embedded into all appropriate organisations. The Committee noted that a event was held in September 2014 to look at embedding the lessons learned from domestic homicide reviews with the event focussing on 3 main areas: information sharing and communication; impact of drugs, alcohol and mental health; and training and practice improvement.

The Strategic Programme Manager informed Members that in September 2014, funding from the public health budget was identified to support the development of a new domestic abuse service specification. It was added that the new specification would be considered by partner organisations when completed and arrangements be jointly funded from December 2016, with Durham University providing independent evaluation on the work. It was noted that Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was working in respect of Strategic Funding Group to involve all partners.

Members learned that a Joint Training Strategy was identified as an action within the SDP domestic homicide review action plan and was developed by the sexual violence implementation group, which reports into the DASVEG. It was explained that issues to be addressed included: creating safe environments to allow victims to disclose; how to deal with disclosures; how to support victims; impact upon children; and understanding and working with perpetrators.

The Committee were informed of work being led by Durham Constabulary on the development of a new brand for Domestic Abuse, the "Sorry Is Not Enough" campaign. Members were given a demonstration of the public-facing side of the webpage to allow victims to seek help and noted that there was a separate side to allow appropriate professionals to access important training information and policy materials. It was noted that the strong message was that domestic abuse in any form was wrong and that development of the brand would raise awareness of the issue and help provide encouragement to anyone wishing to seek help and let them know how to do so.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Programme Manager and asked Members for their questions on the report.

The Committee asked questions in relation to: how the success of the “Sorry Is Not Enough” campaign would be assessed; how processes in respect of domestic homicide would be reviewed; and which agencies were involve in tackling issues of exploitation.

The Strategic Programme Manager noted that the number of hits to the Sorry Is Not Enough website would be recorded as well as information in respect to referrals and feedback given would be used to evaluate the impact of the campaign.

It was added that the Home Office reviewed domestic homicides, and the SDP monitor the lessons learned and then use the action plans to try and prevent incidents in the future.

The Head of Planning and Service Strategy, Children and Adults Services, Peter Appleton noted that work was ongoing with regards issues of exploitation and that Cabinet had received an update report on Children’s Services. Further work is being progressed through the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Scrutiny Members will be kept up to date.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That a further update report is brought to the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 6 months’ time.

9 Safe Durham Partnership - Refresh of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2015/18

The Chairman thanked the Community Safety Manager, Caroline Duckworth and the Community Safety Coordinator, Graham McArdle who were in attendance to give a presentation on the Refresh of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2015/18 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Community Safety Manager explained the statutory requirement to produce a Partnership Plan and the need to carry out a Strategic Assessment in order to inform the development of a new Plan every 3 years. It was added that this would be in consultation with partners and through consultation with communities through many channels, including the Area Action Partnerships (AAPs). Members noted that the SDP Plan was a high level document and its strategic objectives would be signed off by the SDP Board, the Plan being aligned with the Council’s Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). Councillors noted that priorities would be identified by assessing achievements, challenges and risks.

The Committee noted that achievements included: a 20% reduction in crime since the formation of the SDP in 2009; an 81% reduction in the first time entrants to the youth justice system since 2007/8; a 65% fall in the rate of adult reoffending for the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) cohort; repeat cases of domestic violence being half that of the national target; and being in the top 20% in relation to turning around “troubled families”. Councillors noted challenges including: crime being up; criminal damage; the emerging issue of cybercrime; and managing public confidence, addressing concerns and perceptions about terrorism and extremism, speeding vehicles; dog fouling; rubbish and litter; and dangerous driving.

The Community Safety Coordinator explained that the first strategic priority for the SDP Plan 2015/18 was “Anti-Social Behaviour” as this was a key issue in terms of public confidence and criminal damage, albeit a low level crime, accounted for 20% of all recorded crime. Members noted “Protecting Vulnerable People From Harm” was another SDP Plan priority, noting examples being domestic abuse, hate crime and sexual violence. It was explained that this was a priority as they were key national priorities, underreported, and the number of incidents were increasing.

The Committee learned that “Reducing Reoffending” was a SDP Plan priority as the County’s reoffending rate was above the national average and that by targeting the most difficult, chaotic and persistent offenders, crime levels within areas could be positively impacted.

Councillors noted “Alcohol and Substance Misuse Harm Reduction” was a priority, with alcohol related harm being a cross-cutting issue that costs County Durham approximately £212 Million per year, and with drug misuse being an area of public concern. It was explained that “Embedding Think Family” was identified as a priority in line with the key criteria within the national “Troubled Families” programme. The Committee noted that “Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism” was another SDP Plan priority, to deliver on the national CONTEST strategy and to reduce the risks of radicalisation. It was added that the final SDP Plan priority was “Road Casualty Reduction”, the Committee being aware of the issues concerning fatalities and public concerns through work it had previously undertaken.

Members noted that next steps were to collate the feedback from stakeholders including AAPs, member agencies of the SDP and Overview and Scrutiny, update the refresh of the SDP Plan accordingly and then present the first draft of the Plan to the SDP Board in January 2015. It was noted that the associated Delivery Plan would be brought together by July 2015.

The Chairman thanked the Community Safety Manager and the Community Safety Coordinator and asked Members for their questions and comments on the presentation.

The Committee asked questions in relation to: alcohol misuse and minimum unit pricing (MUP) as a possible method of preventing harm; tackling “legal highs”; the approach of separate alcohol and drug treatment; instilling positive values via families; education of young people as a means of combating many of the issues emerging, such as extremism; and mental health issues.

The Chairman noted that an event was held 2 years ago with the Chief Executive of BALANCE, together with partners, including Durham Constabulary debating the issue of MUP and the Council had supported MUP and this had been communicated to Government, however the legislation did not come into effect. Councillor J Armstrong noted that the issue, as highlighted by Councillor N Martin, could be highlighted again perhaps by the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities. Chief Superintendent G Hall noted that all agencies were working together to minimise the impact of alcohol on our communities, however, the issue was a difficult one to tackle.

The Head of Planning and Service Strategy explained that the “Think Family” approach was a thread running through many strategies and partnerships arrangement, including the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Children and Families Strategy. It was added that the Head of Planning and Service Strategy would speak to the Portfolio Holder and the Director of Public Health as regards separate alcohol and drug treatment and the issue of “addictive behaviours”. Members were reminded that while the County did not experience issues of terrorism and extremism, there was always a chance of a “lone-wolf” extremist incident and that therefore there was a need to monitor and try to understand issues, indeed with Local Authorities having a duty under new legislation. The Head of Planning and Service Strategy noted that mental health issues were cross-cutting, however, they were identified within the Care Crisis Concordat and Health and Wellbeing Strategy, though were referenced within the SDP Plan.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That a response from the Chairman containing comments from the meeting be submitted to the Head of Planning and Service Strategy.

10 Quarter 2 2014/15 Performance Management Report

The Chairman introduced the Strategic Manager Performance and Information Management, Keith Forster and the Head of Performance, Durham Constabulary, Gillian Porter, who were in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 2 2014/15 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: increased performance in relation to the percentage agreeing that the council and Police deal with concerns of ASB; a slight increase in feedback from the adult social care user that noted the service made them feel safe and secure; and the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System was within target and an improved position in comparison to the same quarter last year.

It was noted that the key performance issues included a slight underperformance in respect of the number of people completing alcohol and drug treatment, noting the future provision of these services was under the process of review.

The Committee learned that tracker indicators linked to the Altogether Safer theme highlighted an overall increase in crime though levels were low when compared to statistical neighbours. The Strategic Manager Performance and Information Management, explained that figures had shown a reduction in ASB incidents, though it was noted there was an increase in victim-based crime and major or serious crimes. Members noted that number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents had increased from the last quarter and were higher than the previous year. Members noted a single incident where 2 school buses collided had impacted upon the figures, the incident having 9 serious injuries and 78 slight injuries.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Manager Performance and Information Management and the Head of Performance, Durham Constabulary noted that Durham Constabulary was had been given a “clean bill of health” from the HMIC in respect its reporting and recording of crime.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 Review of the Council Plan and Service Plans

The Chairman introduced the Corporate Improvement Manager, Assistant Chief Executive's, Tom Gorman to speak to Members in relation to the Review of the Council Plan and Service Plans (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Improvement Manager referred Members to the report highlighting the development of the “Altogether Safer” section of the Council Plan 2015-2018, including the draft aims and objectives and the associated proposed performance indicator set.

Members noted that the objectives as set out were the same as the current objectives, reflecting the SDP Plan, however with Road Casualty Reduction and Terrorism not included and with proposals to remove several indicators from the Altogether Safer basket, those being: building resilience to terrorism; percentage change in crime for offenders within the IOM cohort; rate of robberies; percentage survey respondents perceiving a high level of ASB in their area; recorded level of victim based crimes; the number of adult safeguarding referrals fully or partially substantiated; and the percentage of families where a successful intervention for crime/ASB is achieved.

Members noted the targets as set out in Appendix 3 to the report and noted the next steps would be for the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the Cabinet MTFP and Council Plan Report at its meeting on 23 January 2015, then for Cabinet to consider the Council Plan and Service Plans 2015/16 – 2017/18 at its meeting on 18 March 2015. It was added that subsequently the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee would consider Cabinet's report on the Council Plan at a meeting on 20 March 2015, with full Council to consider the Council Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18 at its meeting 1 April 2015.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Improvement Manager and asked Members for their questions on the report.

The Committee asked questions in relation to: reporting by exception in cases where the indicator was proposed for deletion; and the issues of road safety and terrorism and extremism.

Members were reassured that reporting by exception would be appropriate where performance was highlighted as an issue, and it was noted that the Committee had been reminded that the issues of Road Casualty Reduction and Counter Terrorism and Prevention of Violent Extremism were of public concern and identified as priorities within the SDP Plan.

Resolved:

- (i) That the updated position on the development of the Council Plan and the corporate performance indicator set be noted.
- (ii) That the draft objectives and outcomes framework be noted.
- (iii) That feedback from the meeting be provided to the service for consideration to be given to Road Safety being included as a priority area within the Council Plan and the indicator on counter terrorism remains within the performance report.

12 Overview and Scrutiny Review of Organised Crime

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that the Working Group undertaking a review of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) had met 3 times and at its first meeting had received an overview of how actions to tackle organised crime were developed via the Organised Crime Disruption and Intervention Panel.

It was noted that this Panel was led by Durham Constabulary, working in partnership with organisations including: the National Crime Agency (NCA); Local Authorities; CDDFRS; the Environment Agency and other partners as appropriate. Members noted that representatives from the NCA and Environment Agency had attended meeting to give information of how partnership working and community intelligence was utilised to tackle and disrupt OCGs.

The Committee noted the next meeting of the Working Group would be held 29 January 2015 and would have the Council's Chief Internal Auditor and Corporate Fraud Manager, Paul Bradley in attendance to speak as regards the risks of OCG activities to the Local Authority and DCI Victoria Fuller would speak to Members as regards emerging "Local Profiles".

Resolved:

That the verbal update be noted.

13 Police and Crime Panel

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that issues to be raised included: the WOW! Awards; consultation on the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) Police and Crime Plan, with Members to be provided a web-link to be able to feed into the process; and the outcome of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) inspections, Durham Constabulary being rated as "outstanding".

The Chairman asked if there were any questions. There were no questions raised.

Resolved:

That the verbal update be noted.

14 Safe Durham Partnership Update

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

Members noted the information as regards: cybercrime; improve public reassurance through development of a Communication and Marketing Plan, including better use of social media; the PCC passporting funding on several issues; the work ongoing in respect of Restorative Practices; Transforming Rehabilitation, with ARCC being the preferred bidder as previously mentioned; and DARP, as previously noted.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.