

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 27 October 2015** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor D Boyes (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

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

Co-opted Members:

Mr A J Cooke

Co-opted Employees/Officers:

Chief Superintendent G Hall

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Charlton, C Hampson, S Iveson, H Liddle, J Measor, F Tinsley and Acting Chief Fire Officer S Errington and Mr J Welch.

2 Substitute Members

No notification of Substitute Members had been received.

3 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held 22 September 2015 were agreed as a correct record, subject to the inclusion of Mr AJ Cooke's apologies being recorded, and were signed by the Chairman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Jonathan Slee noted that an update report regarding the work of the City Safety Group was scheduled for the March 2016 meeting, and that the comments of the Committee in terms of the County Durham Road Casualty Reduction Forum had been passed on to the Forum. Members were reminded of the upcoming Wisedrive event and Safety Carousel, and that the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods and Local Partnerships, Councillor B Stephens had responded in terms of the Neighbourhood Wardens update. It was added that the Head of Children's Services, Carole Payne had been contacted as regards the success of the Stronger Families Programme.

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 having been judged as the most efficient police force in the country, with an overall outstanding rating; promotion of the 20mph schemes across the county, the first in Chester-le-Street and the second being developed at Bishop Auckland; and linking to the agenda item in respect of secondary fires, the annual campaign in relation to Bonfire Night, highlighting the dangers associated with fireworks and making bonfires together with the benefits of attending an organised firework display.

Councillor N Martin noted that the Home Secretary had made reference to diversity within police forces, with Durham Constabulary having been mentioned as a force with no black Officers. The Chief of Staff of the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Alan Reiss explained that Durham Constabulary did have a black Officer, working in the Consett area. Members were informed that when comparing the proportion of Black and Minority Ethnic (BMEs) people within the population within County Durham to the proportion within Durham Constabulary, it could be shown that Durham Constabulary was the most representative police force in the country.

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

7 Checkpoint

The Chairman thanked the Chief of Staff (PCC), Alan Reiss who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to the work of Checkpoint (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chief of Staff (PCC) thanked Members for the opportunity to explain the Checkpoint programme, noting that it was an innovative and bold initiative, with the potential to change how reoffending and crime were tackled.

Members learned that evidence had shown that: 40% of people coming through custody received a caution or other out of court disposal; only 3% of people who appear at Magistrates' Court receive a prison sentence; 40% of offenders would re-offend within 6 months; and that intervention methods had been shown to work much more effectively than prison.

Councillors were referred to a graph highlighting the prevalence of reoffending over time, with it being noted that 40% reoffend within 6 months, 50% within 12 months and 60% within 24 months, and the rate levelled off at around 60-70% after that. It was added that therefore it was important to be able to target early interventions to try to prevent a cycle of reoffending.

The Committee learned that Checkpoint is a partnership programme, with a wide contribution from many agencies. It was explained that Checkpoint was a “voluntary adult offender scheme which will result in an exit from the Criminal Justice System if they comply”. Members noted that the programme was designed to identify “critical pathways” and to intervene in an offender’s early behaviour in order to reduce or stop further offending. Councillors were informed that there was the use of out of court disposals such as cautions, fixed penalty notices (FPNs) and Restorative Approaches (RAs) and a deferred prosecution of 4 months.

The Chief of Staff (PCC) explained that the programme worked such that once the investigative process was finalised, the offender would be released with an appointment to meet a “Navigator” within 24 to 72 hours. It was added that the trained Navigators were not Police Officers and that the Navigators would carry out an in-depth assessment and agree a 4 month contract with the offender. The offender needs to consent to undertake the contract, with work involved looking to address the root causes of the offending.

Members were informed that the five points included within a 4 month contract were:

1. No re-offending within a time period.
2. Participate in RAs if appropriate.
3. Attend sessions re. critical pathway.
4. Attend sessions re. critical pathway.
5. Community/voluntary work and Global Positioning System (GPS) tag.

It was noted that the option of a GPS tag could be useful in helping offenders resist peer pressure in terms of reoffending, for example if they were asked to go with others to commit further offences, they could decline, citing the GPS tag as a reason. It was noted that critical pathways included: alcohol dependency; substance misuse; mental or physical health; accommodation; finances; employment; relationships and support; and attitudes and behaviour. Members learned that the deferred prosecution offered good motivation for offenders, and gave a fall-back position should the offender not fulfil their contract. The Committee was reminded that the majority of crime was carried out by a small number of offenders and therefore working with those offenders and tackling their critical pathways was key in helping to reduce crime and reoffending. The Chief of Staff (PCC) noted that for an offender to be eligible for the Checkpoint programme they must admit their guilt, or there must be sufficient evidence that they have committed the offence (in the case of “no-reply”). It was noted that Checkpoint was not a “soft option” and that a lot of effort was required by an offender to fulfil their 4 month contract.

Councillors were referred to the offender eligibility criteria which were: the arrested person must be over 18 years of age; they must live within County Durham or Darlington; the offence must be deemed low or medium level; the offender must not be already on probation, court bail or court order; they must have admitted the crime of there be sufficient evidence to charge; and the person must agree to go on to the programme. It was explained that low and medium referred to the Crime Harm Index, and that the offence must be one of those listed.

Members were referred to a diagram showing offences that could be considered, noting that some appeared to be controversial, including assault and cruelty or neglect to children, however, it was reiterated that these must be at a low or medium level as referred to on the Crime Harm Index.

Councillors noted that should an offender not comply with their contract, they would then be referred back to court to consider the original offence, and any other potential offences, with a report as regards their participation in Checkpoint being submitted to the court. The Chief of Staff (PCC) noted the current figures in relation to the performance of the Checkpoint programme with:

- 367 offenders on Checkpoint since 1 April 2015;
- 5.2% having failed;
- 94.8% complying with their contract;
- 17.4% have already successfully completed their contract;
- Approximately 42% of the offences committed have a victim.

Members learned that the first person to complete the programme in August 2015 had managed to bring their problems with alcohol under control, had trained and reskilled, secured a job and also undertook a RA with the victim of the offence.

The Chief of Staff (PCC) explained that a new approach was the use of a “forecasting model” which was being developed by Cambridge University working closely with Durham Constabulary. Members noted that Professor Geoffrey Barnes of the University of Pennsylvania had used the forecasting model to good effect in connection with probation in the United States. It was added that the model would indicate and grade an offender according to their propensity to commit crime. It was explained that a randomised control trial would be undertaken to provide evidence of the success of the programme. Members noted the trial would be undertaken in December 2015/January 2016, with half the participants undergoing the Checkpoint programme, half going through the existing processes.

The Committee noted the governance structure for the Checkpoint Programme, with a Governance Board having representatives from all partner agencies, and having links to: the Safe Durham Partnership Board; Darlington Community Safety Partnership Board; Durham Constabulary Executive; Durham and Darlington Reducing Reoffending Group; and the Local Criminal Justice Board Out of Court Scrutiny Panel. It was added that there was a Quality Assurance Group that reported back to the Board on the details and elements of the programme.

Members were referred to 2 cases studies, showing how working with partners was able to affect positive changes, utilising partner agencies such as Lifeline, to help to address issues such as alcohol and substance misuse. It was added that there was weekly newsletter that highlighted the activities of the Checkpoint programme and spread the news of the good work being undertaken in this regard.

The Chairman thanked the Chief of Staff (PCC), noted the positive work of the programme even at this early stage and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor N Martin noted he was very interested in the programme and thought that he felt this was how we should be dealing with offenders, identifying issues they may face and helping to reduce reoffending.

Councillor N Martin asked if therefore any capacity issues with partners involved in supporting the critical pathways had been identified or any issue in the timeliness of accessing the pathways, especially given the short timescale of the 4 month contract period. The Chief of Staff (PCC) noted that all the relevant agencies were represented on the Governance Board and none of the partners, as yet, had reported any capacity issues. It was added that the programme was relatively new and that it would be monitored as regards capacity over time.

Mr AJ Cooke noted he was impressed with the results of the programme thus far and asked whether the committee would receive a further update in 12 months' time. Chief Superintendent G Hall reiterated that there was the weekly newsletter and the Chairman confirmed that this would be circulated to Members of the Committee for their information.

Councillor C Wilson noted she too was impressed with the work of the programme to date and asked what work was being undertaken in terms of cases where there were issues with an offender and their wider family. The Chief of Staff (PCC) explained that in cases of multiple offences, the offender having already committed 3 previous offences; then they would not be eligible for Checkpoint. It was pointed out however, that there were other schemes and initiatives under the "Think Family" agenda that would look to support those individuals in the type of cases as mentioned.

Councillor J Maitland asked why Cambridge University had been chosen in respect of the programme. The Chief of Staff (PCC) noted that there were several reasons, including: the high academic standing of the university; the work they were already undertaking in this respect; the existing links to Durham Constabulary with several Officers having undertaken postgraduate courses in criminology provided by the university; and the University had offered to carry out the work free of charge.

Councillor M Hodgson noted the statistics associated with the forecaster model and asked as regards the 66% accuracy and also noted concern as regards the types of crime being included within the eligibility for the programme, most notably child cruelty and neglect. The Chief of Staff (PCC) noted that the 66% was not the reoffending rate of those on the programme, rather the accuracy of the forecasting model in determining those that were likely to reoffend. It was reiterated that, in terms of some offences that may appear to be unsuitable, it was the severity of the offence that was taken into account and only those at a low or medium level would be deemed as eligible. The Chief of Staff (PCC) explained that using the example of child cruelty and neglect, the Act defined the crime as such, however, if there was an element of cruelty, or the neglect was of a serious level then the offender would not be eligible for the programme. Members were given an example of neglect where a mother with alcohol misuse issues had been able to engage with partners and gain support for her situation where she had not been able to do so previously. It was added that engaging with the Checkpoint programme did not preclude the involvement of the relevant agencies such as Social Services. It was added that the Governance Board had noted such concerns and work with Child Protection Teams to maintain the safeguarding of children as the top priority.

Councillor G Holland referred to the case studies provided to Members and noted parallels with many individuals that find themselves in difficulty with the law through a complex range of issues including social, financial, lack of employment and job prospects, and deterioration of physical and mental health.

Councillor G Holland wondered whether there could be any benefit in group therapy being used to help those within the Checkpoint programme, giving an example of a person that had successfully completed the programme perhaps becoming a mentor to 20 or 30 other people. The Chief of Staff (PCC) noted that he was not aware of group therapy having been looked at in conjunction with the Checkpoint programme, however, the suggestion was noted.

Chief Superintendent G Hall asked whether, given the recent changes to the Probation Service, that there had been assurance from Government as regards avoiding duplication of service. The Chief of Staff (PCC) explained that the offenders dealt with by Checkpoint were not the same as those dealt with by the Probation service and therefore there would not be duplication. It was added that there were representatives from both the National Probation Service (NPS) and the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) on the Checkpoint Governance Board, also providing Navigators to the Checkpoint programme.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive an update report in 12 months' time as regards progress of the Checkpoint programme.

8 Reducing the Number of Secondary Deliberate Fires

The Chairman thanked the Community Protection and Prevention Manager, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS), Colin Davis who was in attendance to speak to Members in relation to reducing the number of secondary deliberate fires (for copy see file of minutes).

The Committee were reminded that there were two main periods of increased activity in respect of secondary deliberate fires, Easter and the period around Bonfire Night. It was added that Members would be given information in respect of the activity undertaken in 2014, and given information to raise awareness of the partnership approach for the 2015 campaign. Councillors noted that the information linked to the Safe Durham Partnership Plan objective to "Reduce anti-social behaviour – including low level crime and secondary fires".

Members noted that, in terms of the Fire Service, County Durham and Darlington was split into 6 districts, with the "Easington" district being the busiest, with 25% of all secondary fires being within this area. It was noted that secondary fires had a significant impact upon resources and service provision and that accordingly, partnership work was essential in being able to tackle such issues. It was noted that throughout 2014/15 there had been 1,973 secondary fires attended, with 1,154 recorded as being deliberate or "cause not known".

Members noted that the issues associated with the Bonfire Night period included: an increase in deliberate fires; and increase in criminal damage; and increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB); and increase in violence against staff, both verbal and physical; and opportunist fly-tipping. Councillors were given statistics in relation to secondary fires over the last 4 years by "station ground", with Peterlee and Darlington having the highest numbers in 2014. It was added that by working in partnership it was possible to identify key hotspot areas for deliberate secondary fires, ASB and criminal damage.

The Committee noted that there were agency specific and multi-agency plans in place, together with identified lead persons within partner organisations for the purpose of coordination and support of activities, with devolved working at the local level involving with the Local Authority and Local Police Inspectors. It was added that at the end of each year information was evaluated and used to inform future strategy.

The Community Protection and Prevention Manager noted that activity for 2014 had included:

- Education, with multi-agency talks in high risk wards.
- Awareness campaigns.
- Social Media.
- Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs).
- Removal of “potential fuel”, with the Local Authority also helping in this regard.
- Increased visibility, for example use of a Targeted Response Vehicle (TRV) with Firefighters and a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) being present in high risk areas at peak times such as Bonfire Night.
- Trading Standards, working to target issues such as illegal fireworks.

It was added that in 2014 there had been 24 secondary deliberate fire incidents on Bonfire Night, which compared very favourably nationally, and it was hoped through the continuation of the hard work undertaken by the Fire Service and partners that 2015 will build upon the successes of 2014.

The Chairman thanked the Community Protection and Prevention Manager and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor S Forster asked if there was information as regards the number of people injured over the peak times, such as Bonfire Night, and therefore an indication how much secondary deliberate fires impacted upon the National Health Service (NHS). The Community Protection and Prevention Manager noted that the figures for accidents and dwelling fires were reported as Performance Indicators (PIs) and therefore was available. It was added that there had been a number of fires in 2014 and while no one had been injured, there had been the potential for harm, for example a large fire at a skatepark in the east of the County had the potential for injury with around 25 young people being in the vicinity. The Director of Commissioning and Development, NHS, North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Michael Houghton noted he would look to see if figures were available in this respect.

Councillor C Wilson noted a recent initiative whereby a pre-emptive action had been taken to show potential offenders the local Police and Fire Stations, setting out what the consequences would be in respect of setting fires, the repercussions in terms of the offender and any victims, as well as highlighting the burden placed on to the emergency services. Councillor C Wilson felt that this, along with other education programmes, was vital in being able to effectively engage and communicate with potential offenders. The Community Protection and Prevention Manager noted that it was important to work in partnership, understanding what each partner can bring in terms of working towards solutions. It was added that a voluntary researcher was looking to identify the types and times of fires, to help in planning responses.

Councillor T Nearney asked questions in respect of fly-tipping, empty buildings and industrial units in terms of potential fuel and fire risk. The Community Protection and Prevention Manager noted that there was engagement with the business community in respect of securing waste and properties in terms of potential fuel and fire.

Councillor J Turnbull noted the issue of wheelie bins used as fuel for fires and the potential for injury from such use and asked what education initiatives were in place to highlight this issue. The Community Protection and Prevention Manager noted that advice was given as regards how to store wheelie bins, when to put them out and bring them back in, how to avoid issues and information as regards equipment such as wheelie bin locks to deter people from stealing the bins to use as fuel. Councillor M Hodgson noted there had been a number of recent safety messages in this regard and noted there was a leaflet available and it may be possible to circulate for Members' information.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat Local Action Plan Update

The Chairman thanked the Director of Commissioning and Development, NHS, North Durham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Michael Houghton who was in attendance to give an update for Members in respect of the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat Action Plan (for copy see file of minutes).

The Director of Commissioning and Development reminded Members that the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat Action Plan was within the Health and Wellbeing and Safe Durham Partnership agendas and that there was two parts, a national element involving all lead agencies, and a local concordat involving statutory agencies such as the Police, Fire, Local Authorities and the NHS. Members noted that there was a local coordination group, under the Mental Health Partnership Board.

The Committee noted that there had been an update report from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) in terms of the local Action Plan from March 2015, and that there had been some updates accordingly. It was explained that the aim was to support people in real difficulty, and that mental health crisis should be considered in the same way as physical crisis. Councillors noted there was an aim to reduce the number of people detained under the Mental Health Act and to reduce the number of people detained in Police custody where mental health issues were identified. It was noted that "places of safety" were developed to allow mental health assessments to be carried out by mental health professionals in places other than custody. The Committee noted that this was hoped to be able to provide a smooth handover between Police and mental health professionals and to reduce burden on the Police.

The Director of Commissioning and Development explained that two key areas presenting a challenge were: ambulance response times; and policies/protocols in terms of data sharing. It was noted that in terms of a 999 emergency response, the national target for a mental health crisis was 30 minutes, and as this was not being met a workshop to look at the issue was scheduled for December.

Members noted that while there were data sharing protocols in place, it was early days and there would be a process of learning how to work in practice, with hopefully improvements been seen in the coming weeks and months.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Commissioning and Development and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor M Hodgson noted mental health issues linked to many other issues and that cuts to funding across public sector organisations that deal with such issues was disappointing with the Police seeming to “bear the brunt”. Councillor M Hodgson noted she felt there was a need for more of the “safe places”, as mentioned, and for more mental health professionals to cope with the demand. Chief Superintendent G Hall noted that, 18 months ago, if you had asked what the main drain on Police resources was, then the response would have been the time spent helping people with mental health issues and the knock-on effect to the Police of the ambulance response times. Chief Superintendent G Hall added that there had been improvements since that time and it was encouraging in terms of the Action Plan and measures being put in place. Members noted that ambulance response times remained a concern and that further support was needed to help improve those response times.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That the progress made in relation to the Mental Health Concordat Local Action Plan be noted.
- (iii) To note that the Action Plan will be refreshed to take into account of actions and recommendations published by the Department of Health and Care Quality Commission.
- (iv) To note that a refreshed action plan will be send to MIND for uploading on the national website by the end of October 2015.

10 Overview and Scrutiny Activity - Service Review of Drug Treatment Centres

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer updated Members as regards the Service Review of Drug Treatment Centres (for copy see file of minutes).

Members were reminded that in June 2014, the Committee had considered a presentation concerning the service review of drug treatment centres and that consequently a Scrutiny Review group was established to carry out work to input into the service review. Councillors noted that the initial meeting in July 2014 gave the review group the opportunity to see the rationale behind the service review, the LEAN methodology being applied and understood the budgetary pressures faced. It was noted that the new model for delivery of treatment services was for drug and alcohol treatment to be combined, and that shortly after that meeting, the procurement process began, based upon the new specification.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded Members that there had been a pause while the procurement process took place, and that once the new provider, Lifeline, had been appointed, a visit to one of the new treatment centres at Peterlee was arranged for July 2015.

It was explained that the Public Health Consultant, Lynn Wilson and the Area Manager, Lifeline, Kim Michelle had provided an update for the review group, detailing the new model being operated and gave tour of the facility allowing Members the opportunity to see the centre first hand.

It was noted that the review group acknowledged the valuable work in terms of the new integrated treatment centres and the issue was incorporated into the work programme for the Committee for 2016/17, with an update to be provided at a future meeting.

The Chairman had noted that, prior to the service review, Members had been frustrated in the lack of progress in terms of the completions of drug and alcohol treatment programmes. The Chairman added that he felt the new scheme was streamlined and that the provider would be able to give further information on progress once the new model has been in operating for a period of time. Councillor M Hodgson asked if there was a list of where the treatment centres would be. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that Appendix 2 to the report set out the 6 locations: Derwentside; Dales; Peterlee; Sedgfield; Seaham; and Durham. It was added that all operated the new model as described, with the latter 3 also having the "RAD" provision, a quasi-residential facility to aid recovery.

Resolved:

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That a progress report on implementation of the integrated service from the Service Provider, Lifeline, be presented to a future meeting of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

11 Overview and Scrutiny Review Updates

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer updated Members as regards Reducing Alcohol Harm and the 20mph Working Group.

It was noted that Scrutiny Officers were working to develop a scoping document for the Reducing Alcohol Harm Review and that Members would receive information as regards dates and the draft scope in due course. The Vice-Chairman, Councillor T Nearney noted that the review would be a focused piece of work and would not look to simply reiterate the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, but look to drill down into issues and be outcome driven.

It was explained that the 20mph Working Group had recently met and had looked at the draft overall policy in terms of 20mph limits and received an update as regards Phase 1 progress. Members noted that a visit to the completed scheme at Bishop Auckland was arranged for the Working Group for 24 November 2015, coinciding with National Road Safety Week

Resolved:

That the verbal update be noted.

12 Police and Crime Panel

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) had not met before the agenda papers had been dispatched for today's meeting, however, the main issues discussed at the last PCP meeting, 20 October 2015 had included:

- The update of the Police and Crime Plan.
- The Quarter 1 Performance update.
- An update on the Checkpoint Programme.
- An update on work in respect of Mental Health issues.

Members also noted a report from the Committee for Standards in Public Life had been received by the Panel and that while the report had made a number of recommendations, it was noted that the PCP was already operating these practices.

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 Safer Durham Partnership (SDP).

Members noted that the Committee's Organised Crime review had been presented to the Safe Durham Partnership Board by the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor D Boyes, and that an update had been provided to the Board in respect of the development of Local Profiles. It was added that Local Profiles would inform the SDP Strategic Assessment which in turn would inform the SDP Plan and that there would be consultation with key stakeholders on the SDP Plan, including the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillors noted that work was ongoing with Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) in respect of increasing the reporting of community intelligence, with the Principal AAP Coordinator with thematic responsibility for Community Safety to take the issue forward.

The Community Safety Manager noted that other issues discussed at the SDP meeting included: the County Durham Transformation Plan for Children and Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience 2015 – 2020; the regular 6 monthly update on the work of the AAPs; the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2015 – 2020, now signed off and live; an updated Fire Fatality Protocol, noting around 2,500 staff having been trained in helping to identify those vulnerable people at risk from fire; and a report on work of the Transforming Rehabilitation Task and Finish Group.

Members noted that there would be a community safety themed workshop at the Health and Wellbeing "Big Tent" event to held on 4 November 2015, providing an opportunity for consultation on the refresh of the SDP Plan 2016/19, along with additional consultation involving AAPs and the Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted the Committee would be consulted in February 2016, with a report back to the SDP Board in March 2015.

The Chairman thanked the Community Safety Manager for her update and asked Members for their questions.

Councillor N Martin noted the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy update and acknowledged that while the strategy had been recently signed off by the SDP Board, he felt it was the actions that would follow that would be important. The Community Safety Manager noted that the Action Plan would follow and be sub-divided by themes. Councillor T Nearney reiterated that the Overview and Scrutiny Review looking at Alcohol Harm would be a focused piece of work and would not look to reiterate the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, but look to drill down into issues and be outcome driven. Councillor N Martin suggested that late night drinking in Durham City was a longstanding issue. Councillor M Hodgson reminded the Committee of the excellent presentation and discussions with Balance as regards Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) as a way of tackling alcohol harm. Councillor M Hodgson added that Members had been disappointed after so many Local Authorities and alcohol charities had supported the MUP approach only for Central Government to abandon its plans to introduce MUP.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.