

## **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 **Monday 15 January 2018** at **9.30 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor D Boyes (Chairman)**

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

Councillors B Avery, J Charlton, J Considine, R Crute, C Hampson, H Liddle, J Maitland, E Mavin, J Nicholson, A Patterson, J Stephenson, D Stoker, K Thompson and J Turnbull

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

Mr A J Cooke

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

Chief Fire Officer S Errington

### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bainbridge, S Iveson, L Kennedy, C Wilson and Mr J Welch.

### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no Substitute Members. The Chairman reminded Members that wherever possible they should try to arrange for a substitute if they were unable to attend a meeting.

### **3 Minutes**

The Minutes of the meeting held 31 October 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Jonathan Slee noted information in terms of the item relating to the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) Strategic Assessment, a response on behalf of the Committee had been forwarded to the SDP. It was added that information had also been circulated regarding the call prevention scheme. Members were also advised that in relation to the Committee's work on Arson and Secondary Deliberate Fires, a letter containing views of Members had been sent to the Chair of the SDP and the Portfolio Holder, Councillor L Hovvels, with the Chairman, Councillor D Boyes attending the SDP meeting on 16 January 2018.

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

Councillors B Avery, D Stoker and J Turnbull declared an interest in Item 9, Integrated Risk Management Plan as Members of the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority.

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

Mr S Errington, Co-opted Member and Chief Fire Officer, County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service had submitted a report, set out at Item 9, relating to the Fire Authority's Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Three-Year Plan Consultation.

#### **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: almost 200 people arrested for drink or drug driving over the Christmas period, with over 4,000 tests administered; 3 cars destroyed in arson attacks at Horden; and linking to the 20mph and Road Safety items on the agenda, a local Author and students at St. Leonard's had worked to produce designs for road signage to encourage drivers to slow down.

#### **Resolved:**

That the presentation be noted.

#### **7 County Durham Road Safety Partnership**

The Chairman introduced the Council's Strategic Traffic Manager (and Chair of the County Durham Road Safety Partnership), Dave Wafer and the Road Safety Manager, Paul Watson to give a presentation to update Members on the work of the County Durham Road Safety Partnership throughout 2017/18 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Traffic Manager referred Members to the casualty statistics for 2006-2016 within his presentation and highlighted the total number of casualties had reduced by 40% over this period. He reminded Members that if you looked at figures going further back, there had been fatality figures of around 40 per annum, with figures now being around 20. Councillors noted the general decline in all injury collisions and that the majority of those involved were car occupants. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that there was often focus on pedestrians, cyclists and motorbikes as their groups were overrepresented in terms of incidents. It was noted in County Durham there had been a lot of good work in reduction through comprehensive road safety, accident investigation and prevention, alongside targeted engineering schemes. Members noted other work included: reactive and proactive police enforcement; offender retraining courses; partnership working with colleagues from the Police and Fire; and strong data analysis to identify areas of concern and similar road user behaviours.

The Committee noted that two areas of concern were child injuries and collisions involving young drivers.

The Road Safety Manager explained that there was a lot of work with Area Action Partnerships (AAPs) and referred to maps highlighting child casualties in the County. Members noted clusters within areas such as Consett and Stanley and also in the East of the County. It was highlighted that this data allowed a targeted approach looking to work with the relevant partners. The Road Safety Manager noted that many of these areas benefited from 20mph limits in some areas, to be discussed at a later agenda item. He referred Members to a similar map, showing the casualties within the County sustained by young drivers and their passengers.

The Road Safety Manager noted while figures showed a decrease in the number of injuries, there was still a lot of work being undertaken. It was noted that a new targeted approach for 2018 included work with the "Mini Police", with greater coordination between partners and sharing of resources to provide a consistent message. It was added that "Excelerate" had been revamped with: direct engagement with all of Durham and Darlington's Advance Driving Instructors (ADIs); encouragement to take up post-driving test training delivered by ADIs; and encouraging registration with the First Car Academy website.

The Road Safety Manager explained that as AAPs represented strong communities they provided a good opportunity for community engagement. It was added a pilot project had been established with the Mid-Durham AAP, identifying key road user groups and areas, with a number of "fail to look" incidents being identified. It was noted that there was use of social media and also a targeted approach to business engagement. Members were reminded of a Christmas road safety campaign by Road Safety Great Britain (RSGB) and that a video in respect of road fatalities would be harnessed to help raise awareness.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their presentation and asked Members of the Committee for their comments and questions.

Councillor K Thompson asked if an electronic copy of the presentation could be provided to Members of the Committee. It was noted this would be circulated after the meeting.

Councillor D Stoker asked if changes that had taken place since the figures for 2016 had been compiled, and the changes that were starting, for example the increase of 6,000 students in Durham with potential for large numbers to be using the narrow paths into the City at peak times. He asked what could be done in anticipation to try and mitigate any potential issues. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that the figures were only up to 2016, the 2017 figures in the process of being verified. He added that while there was a number of pedestrians in the City, the vehicle speeds in Durham were relatively slow and therefore usually safe. He noted that there were many planning applications that had been approved with the developments coming through, reflecting the masterplan for the University, and that the Council would work with the University and student as regards safety. Councillor D Stoker added that the impact would not be necessarily at the University itself, rather along the routes where the students would be coming from.

Councillor J Maitland noted an increase in the fatality and seriously injured figures for 2015 and asked if there was a specific reason. The Road Safety Manager noted that numbers can vary year-on-year and therefore it was often more useful to look at overall trends. He added a bus crash involving a number of children had contributed towards those figures.

Councillor K Thompson noted that some members of the public had a perception as regards the new LED street lights as being inferior and therefore asked if there was any statistics that looked at the number of casualties against those areas with the new street lighting. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that there was location data, and this could be looked at where any increase has been identified, though he noted not such increase at this time.

Mr AJ Cooke noted the fluctuations in figures over the years and asked if there were any specific reasons or schemes that may have impacted on the figures. The Strategic Traffic Manager reiterated that the figures did include a random element, therefore it was important to look at overall trends in terms of reducing road casualties.

Councillor J Stephenson noted that she was very interested as regards the work with the AAPs, and as Vice-Chair at the Stanley AAP would be interested in the timetable when working with an AAP. The Road Safety Manager explained that Mid-Durham AAP had contacted the Road Safety section in respect of their project and the first engagement with the Stanley and Consett (Derwent Valley) AAPs was due in February, looking at links to social media and local issues.

Councillor J Considine noted issues in terms of road traffic mirrors with the Department for Transport (DfT) recently stating that they are less safe and would not be installed and asked if there was any flexibility in terms of this issue. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that with most highways issues three are national standards that all Local Authorities would be required to adhere to, with placement of such mirrors only where there was a definitive blind spot, however, in terms of maintenance each mirror would need to be assessed on its own merits. The Traffic Asset Manager, Keith Jameson explained that the DfT did not recognise such mirrors as sign and there was evidence that drivers can fixate on the mirrors, potentially creating more issues than they resolve.

Councillor J Turnbull noted that at Meadowfield, a planning application had been approved however signage had not been put in place. He noted there was also an issue in terms of heavy goods vehicles being directed by their satellite navigation to the junction near to Meadowfield Club, and asked if the road at the industrial estate not being recognised was the problem. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted the road in question was not adopted, was a private road and there was ongoing public meetings as regards planning issues.

Councillor A Patterson noted within the Performance Report that the number of children killed or seriously injured had reduced year on year from 9 to 7, however asked if the age range was known, to see they were primary age and look at this against the 20mph limits that had been implemented. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that this analysis could be done, with child per head of population against number of car journeys. He added that the County performed poorly in comparison to the national figure and 20mph limits were a potential solution in the appropriate areas. Members noted that the Road Safety Manager was looking at incident within the AAP areas.

Councillor K Thompson noted that in cases where Members may look to find solutions from problem, they are told there are no accidents and asked if there was some filtering out of those with drug or alcohol involvement for example. The Chairman as if the Police had changed how they record such information.

The Strategic Traffic Manager noted a national system as regards recording and that within County Durham there had not been a significant change in terms of recording, some other areas experiencing significant changes. He added that drug and alcohol as a factor was included within the casualty figures, however in terms of fatalities it may not be known if these were factors.

The Chairman noted that as an ADI himself, he noted that those drivers that engaging with the scheme had a positive response and had increased awareness and coordination. He asked in terms of partners what appetite there was and also asked as regards links between deprivation and accidents and how this could be tackle, including use of 20mph limits. The Road Safety Manager noted a very strong County Durham Casualty Reduction Forum and there was a large appetite from its members. He noted work with the Mini-Police and the Police Cadets and also the work via the AAPs to help reach the more local level partners. The Strategic Traffic Manager added that in terms of deprived areas and child casualties, he noted that while not proven as the numbers involved were a small subset, young drivers from those areas were more likely to be involved in an accident. He added it needed to be ascertained whether this was an attitudinal issue, with AAPs perhaps having a role to play in looking to provide information on some of these issues locally.

Councillor H Liddle noted that the Police did not attend all road traffic accidents, and asked whether the Police, Fire Service and Council captured all crashes. The Strategic Traffic Manager noted that incidents with a casualty were recorded by the Police and areas of multiple occurrences in terms of incident where there was damage could be looked at.

**Resolved:**

That the report and presentation be noted.

## **8 20mph Speed Limits and Project Update**

The Chairman introduced the Council's Head of Technical Services, John Reed and Traffic Asset Manager, Keith Jameson to give a presentation on 20mph Speed Limits and a Project Update (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Technical Services reminded Members of the background to the 20mph limits, with Cabinet in December 2014 approving a 20mph part-time limits project, involving 33 schools, including those with the highest accident rates. Subsequently, Cabinet asked Overview and Scrutiny to look at the prioritisation criteria for any further schemes. It was explained that a Working Group had help develop a revised set of criteria and when an underspend was noted in terms of grant funding, the revised criteria was used to identify an additional 33 schemes for schools, which was approved by Cabinet in May 2016.

Members were reminded that 20mph part-time limits were advisory, "when lights show", and were at school start and finish times. It was noted these did not require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO), only required only sign in each direction and were used for main/distributor roads. Members were given details of the initial 33 and additional 33 schools, and also as regards some additional schemes as funded through Members' Neighbourhood Budgets.

The Traffic Asset Manager noted the target dates for completion of the last of the additional 33 schemes, and added that a further 10 schemes were being funded by Members; Neighbourhood Budgets, and 1 by a school, with a further 14 requests by schools being looked at.

The Head of Technical Services noted that changing of signage was not enough, there was a need for engagement with the schools and local communities around those schools in order to compliment the works being carried out. He added that this would include education for children and teachers, and also for parents and guardian, as well as social media messages and working with the Junior Road Safety Officers and Mini-Police. It was explained that this had also included working with theatre companies and young people to encourage people to slow down when driving and also in terms of also encouraging young people to walk and cycle to school safely.

The Head of Technical Services added that the evaluation of the 20mph schemes was carried out independently by The Centre for Health and Inequalities Research at Durham University looking at the wider health and wellbeing outcomes such as increased active travel and improved feelings of safety. He added that the review covered 10 study areas and collected data from 4 sources: school surveys; a case study; feedback from a Junior Road Safety Officer event; and a school census on active travel. It was highlighted that there had been shown to be a positive impact in terms of the health and wellbeing outcomes, however, due to the small sample data, it was too soon to know whether there was any impact upon road casualty figures.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Technical Services and the Traffic Asset Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor B Avery noted he was pleased to hear as regards the schemes and asked how he could look to use his Neighbourhood Budget in relation to schemes in his area. The Head of Technical services noted that the grant funding that had originally come from Public Health was now all allocated, however, further schemes could be developed where there was demand and funds found.

Councillor K Thompson noted a number of such zones in the Spennymoor area and that they appeared to be working, however, he asked where the Police came into the matter in terms of actually prosecuting people that did not slow down. The Head of Technical Services reiterated that the 20mph part-time limits were advisory, where there were no physical traffic calming measures. He added for 20mph zones within residential areas where there were physical calming measures, there should not be a need for enforcement as the physical measures should make it such that speeding was not possible. The Head of Technical Services added that in the cases of those limits at schools, there was in many cases an issue in terms of congestion and the speed in these areas was already below 20mph.

Councillor J Maitland asked as regards 20mph limits and zones. The Head of Technical Services noted the school advisory signs as described previously, and with very strict controls on zones in terms of signage and physical measures. The Traffic Asset Manager noted that those included those areas to be looked at having average speeds of below 24mph and also physical traffic calming measures would not be placed on main roads, else this could redirect traffic along other less suitable side and estate roads.

Mr AJ Cooke noted the 20mph Limits were advisory only and asked if there were no prosecution, could that lead to complacency in relation to the limits. The Head of Technical Services noted that DfT legislation only allowed for this choice, in terms of advisory limits. He added that in conjunction with the advisory limits there was a need for a package of works to help change behaviour, to ensure that most people would respect the 20mph signs. He added that most drivers were now aware of the schemes and they had been popular in localities with Members; Town and Parish Councils as well as interest groups.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the report and presentation be noted.
- (ii) That the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive a further update report in early 2019/20 once the project is completed.

## **9 Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Three-Year Plan Consultation**

The Chairman asked the Chief Fire Officer, S Errington to speak in relation to the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) Three-Year Plan Consultation for the County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Authority (for copy see file of minutes).

The Chief Fire Officer explained for the benefit of new Members that producing an IRMP was a statutory duty of the Fire and Rescue Authority, from the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004. He added that a national framework published in 2012 had set out the Government's priorities and expectations of Fire and Rescue Authorities.

Members were referred to the information within the report relating to the consultation required in terms of the IRMP and noted that the consultation ran up to 15 January, to be completed and reported back to the Fire Authority on 8 February 2018.

The Chief Fire Officer explained the Three-Year Plan was appended to the report and set out the achievements since the last plan update, performance data which showed accidental house fires had reduced by 54% and non-domestic building fires had reduced by 68% in the last 10 years. It was explained that the plan also set out information in terms of each of the 5 districts, namely: Darlington, Derwentside, Durham, Easington and Wear and Tees.

The Committee were asked to note the strategic focus of the Fire Service, with a vision: "We want to have the safest people and safest places". It was noted that underpinning this vision was 6 strategic priorities: emergency response; business fire safety; community safety; value for money; working together; and Our People, Our Way. It was noted that the values for the Service were known as PIE: Professional; Innovative; and Effective.

Members learned as regards the emergency response, with significant reviews having looked at all fire appliances, with consultation with Trade Unions and staff as regards changes for the 2018/19 Action Plan. Councillors were asked to recall the Fire Service's participation in a national trial in respect of Emergency Medical Response (EMR), with the North East Ambulance Service (NEAS) looking at funding beyond the trial.

The Chief Fire Officer explained the work undertaken in terms of community safety, noting the work undertaken with Overview and Scrutiny in terms of Arson. Members learned as regards the work associated with business fire safety and fire investigation, value for money and partnership working. It was highlighted that by 2019/20 the Service would be receiving a 59% reduction in Government grant.

The Chief Fire Officer concluded by noting that the final section of the Plan document set out 6 strategic questions and encouraged Members to look at the document online and respond to the consultation.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Fire Officer and noted the fantastic performance in the face of the reductions in Government grant.

Councillor E Mavin asked in terms of Residents' Association how would they work with the Fire Service, who to contact and liaise with. The Chief Fire Officer noted that usually those Members who were also representatives on the Fire Authority would bring forward details of Residents' Associations in their areas, however Members could approach the Fire Service as regards working together.

**Resolved:**

- (i) That the report be noted.
- (ii) That a response containing views of the Committee on the IRMP consultation be submitted to County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service.

**10 Quarter 2 2017/18 Performance Management Report**

The Chairman asked the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager, Tom Gorman to speak to Members in relation to the Quarter 2 2017/18 Performance Management Report for the Altogether Safer priority theme (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager highlighted that there had been a significant increase in reported crime, however it was noted as a national trend, with now all Forces reporting an increase, following compliance across forces in terms of national crime statistics and campaigns in terms of promoting the report of crimes, such as domestic violence. It was added that Durham was inspected and found to be outstanding, including in respect of its recording practises. Members noted and increased confidence in reporting of crimes, and an increase in theft offences had contributed to the increase.

Members were asked to note the sharp increase of 93% in cases of arson for the period April to September 2017 in comparison to 2016 and with a significant number in the east of the County. It was noted there had been a special meeting in relation to this and a report would be considered by the SDP at its next meeting.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager noted road safety statistics had been covered by previous report and added that a new national electronic system for recording road traffic collisions had changed the way casualty severity was recorded increasing the average reporting by around 20%.

The Chairman thanked the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager and asked Members for their comments and questions.

Councillor K Thompson asked if there was a record of “solved crimes”, the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager noted there was and this could be reported back to the Committee.

The Chairman noted that issues raised within the report were those that Overview and Scrutiny had become involved in: road safety; arson and secondary deliberate fires; drug and alcohol services.

**Resolved:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

## **11 Police and Crime Panel**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer gave a verbal update in respect of the last meeting of the Police and Crime Panel (PCP), the agenda papers for Committee having been dispatched prior to the Panel meeting.

Members were advised that the main item was the Police, Victims and Crime Commissioner’s (PCVC) precept consultation of a proposed increase of up to £12 per Council Tax Band D property, and the rationale behind the increase. It was noted that the Panel would be considering the PCVC’s precept at its meeting on 1 February 2018.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer added that the agenda for this meeting also included the Quarter 2 Performance Report and the PCVC’s Report on Police Community Engagement, which included the rationale for the review of Police and Communities Together (PACT) meetings and wider engagement through Community Cohesion Officers and community events supported by the Police.

**Resolved:**

That the verbal update be noted.

## **12 Overview and Scrutiny Review Update - Cybercrime**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted that following the conclusion of the Committee meeting, a meeting of the Working Group would look at the evidence gathered and the initial findings in order to assist Members in terms of finalising a draft report to come back to Committee for approval.

## **13 Safe Durham Partnership Update**

The Chairman asked the Strategic Manager – Policy, Planning and Partnerships, Andrea Petty to speak to Members as regards an update from the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) (for copy see file of minutes). It was noted that the next meeting of the SDP was tomorrow, Tuesday, 16 January 2018.

Members noted the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review Action Plan, which was produced following a peer review held 5 – 7 September 2017, looking at how the SDP works and makes a difference to local people. It was noted the key areas of focus were: “can the SDP involve communities more?”; “can the SDP do more to focus on preventative work?” and “provide advice in relation to progressing SDP priorities”.

It was explained that the SDP was found to be very strong in terms of its links to Overview and Scrutiny and AAPs. It was noted that areas for further work included: a joint Police, DCC and SDP marketing plan; better social media; better safeguarding in terms of adults, for example in terms of Cybercrime, finance and reporting fraud; hate crime, with the tension monitoring toolkit to be reviewed in 2018.

Councillors noted other topics discussed included: Transforming care in the North East and Cumbria: Criminal Justice Briefing; the finding from the Student Voice Survey, with the key messages being a third of primary schoolchildren did not feel safe in the classroom and around half of primary schoolchildren having social media accounts despite there being a age restriction of 13 years old. It was added that a quarter of secondary schoolchildren did not feel safe in the classroom and around 6% had been asked to send pictures or videos of themselves to people online.

The Strategic Manager – Policy, Planning and Partnerships concluded by noting the work of the Victims and Witness Group, a sub-group of the Cleveland and Durham Local Criminal Justice Partnership Board, with the group currently reviewing their overall aim of ensuring victims are fully supported through the criminal justice process.

The Chairman thanked the Strategic Manager – Policy, Planning and Partnerships for her update and noted that the statistics coming from the Student Survey were worrying and surprising and noted it could be an area for Overview and Scrutiny to look at.

Councillor J Charlton referred to the Victims and Witness Group item and asked Members to note that processes in terms Victim Personal Statements were not well explained and that the impact they could have on a case was not easy to understand and therefore this was an area that should be looked at.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.