

## **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 5 November 2019 at 9.30 am**

**Present:**

**Councillor D Boyes in the Chair**

**Members of the Committee:**

Councillors B Avery, A Batey, D Hall, C Hampson, S Iveson, H Liddle, J Maitland, E Mavin, K Thompson, J Turnbull, C Wilson, P Jopling (substitute for J Charlton) and J Clark (substitute for L Kennedy)

**Co-opted Members:**

Mr D Balls and Mr A J Cooke

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bainbridge, J Charlton, R Crute, G Huntington, B Kellett, L Kennedy, D Stoker and Chief Fire Officer S Errington.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

Councillor P Jopling substituted for Councillor J Charlton and Councillor J Clark substituted for Councillor L Kennedy.

#### **3 Minutes of the Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer advised the Committee that a response was sent to David Orford regarding his new appointment of Deputy Chief Constable of Durham Constabulary. He added that a letter containing the views of members on arson and deliberate secondary fires within the east Durham area was considered by the Safe Durham Partnership and a response from the partnership was anticipated.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer noted in respect of the item relating to Media that the consultation on alcohol licensing in Durham City had been circulated to members of the committee and the closing date was 8 November 2019.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer mentioned in relation to the item on the Quarter One 2019/20 Performance Management Report he had sent Councillor Hampson's comments to the relevant Officers within Durham County Council and they had been actioned.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest, if any**

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.

Articles included "Speaking out against hate crime" relating to the Hate Crime Awareness Week that raised awareness of hate crime and encouraged people who witnessed or experienced it to report it. The article was related to item 9 on the Committee's agenda and would be presented by the Head of Policy and Communications, Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner.

The second article was "Youth re-offending service commended for impacting young people's lives" relating to the County Durham Youth Justice Service being presented with Investors in Children Status. The article related to item 7 on the Committee's agenda that would be presented by the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children and the Youth Justice Services Manager.

#### **Resolved**

That the presentation be noted.

#### **7 County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS) Youth Justice Plan 2019 - 2021**

The Chair introduced the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children and the Youth Justice Services Manager who jointly delivered a presentation that provided an update on the County Durham Youth Justice Service and the Youth Justice Plan 2019-2021 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children informed the committee that the County Durham Youth Justice Service was a statutory partnership between Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, National Probation Service and Clinical Commissioning Groups that worked with young people to help them not to reoffend who were under a statutory duty to submit a Youth Justice Plan.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children noted that after a consultation exercise the name of the service had changed to County Durham Youth Justice Service (CDYJS) to be more reflective of what the service offered and to remove the negative label placed on young people that used the service.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children told the committee that the Youth Justice Plan 2019-2021 had been presented to cabinet and full council and was also going to the Safe Durham Partnership Board. It highlighted some of the key achievements in reducing reoffending during 2018-19 and provided areas of improvement that the service would focus on within the next twelve months through a service improvement plan.

The Youth Justice Services Manager informed the committee that the focus of the service improvement plan was on:

- Communication being vital to the service as it was found that 85% of young people had speech and language difficulties making it hard for them to understand the process;
- Targeting resources to ensure that the means were used appropriately on young people and their families;
- Listening being fundamental to safeguard what young people said was heard and acted on;
- Restorative justice being central to everything the service does;
- Quality assurance guaranteeing that the service maintained high quality and all front-line staff were fully trained.
- Volunteering where volunteers offered mentoring services for young people and their families including both young victims and perpetrators being trained to become mentors and leaders.
- Support services being available for young people and their families.

The Youth Justice Services Manager noted that the County Durham Youth Justice Service had a substantive health team working within the partnership that included services from Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Speech and Language Therapy, Public Health, School Nurses, Substance misuse, mental health and wellbeing services to provide all the support young people and their families need. Members were advised that this approach had led to the achievement of the Investors in Children Status and the service was a finalist for two awards. It was added that the achievements of the service were on par with other organisations who offered the same service in the North East.

The Youth Justice Services Manager informed the committee that the health services were crucial when supporting young victims who were equally traumatised following crimes including burglary and the focus of support had concentrated on the adult. Members were also advised that special psychologist services helped to support young people and prevent repeat reoffending. He mentioned that the numbers of repeat offenders in County Durham was low with a total of 16 young people within County Durham who had committed six offences or more in the previous 12 months.

The Youth Justice Services Manager informed the committee that the Youth Justice Plan 2019-2021 had been submitted to the Youth Justice Board on 5 August 2019 with feedback stating that it was an excellent plan.

The Chair thanked the Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children and the Youth Justice Services Manager for their presentation and asked members of the committee for any questions and comments.

Mr Cooke congratulated the service on a very comprehensive report and asked if the service worked with families of reoffenders.

The Youth Justice Services Manager informed the Committee that the County Durham Youth Justice Service had specialist members of staff who worked with parents and families of reoffenders whereas many other organisations worked only with reoffenders.

Mr Cooke asked if parents accepted the County Durham Youth Justice Service working with their children.

The Youth Justice Services Manager explained that most parents were accepting of the County Durham Youth Justice Service working with their children but there were some challenges to engagement and there were certain powers that could be used to force parent involvement, but these were used sparingly. Members were informed of a group that was established for parents who had suffered abuse from their children. It was added that the group had been well received and had won an award for its work and for raising awareness to the negative element placed on parents of offenders.

Councillor D Boyes informed the group that there was a cohort of young people who committed anti social behaviour in his division that did not engage with the police. He stated that people were frightened to go out due to the gangs in the area that caused anti-social behaviour. Councillor Boyes requested clarity on what could be done to engage with young people in these situations.

The Youth Justice Services Manager notified the committee that the County Durham Youth Justice Service only worked with young people who had been through the formal court system. The service did not deal with lower levels of anti-social behaviour however it did work with police and anti-social behaviour officers if young people who were in the system were causing anti-social behaviour. The service could carry out interventions and staff provided positive activities throughout the year and during holiday periods to try to prevent negative behaviour. He informed the committee that the police were required to consult with the service before going through the anti-social behaviour legislation with regards to young people.

Councillor P Jopling asked if work had been undertaken regarding why young people were physically abusive towards their parents, why they were angry and if there were any statistics on this area.

The Youth Justice Services Manager informed the committee that statistics were collected on a range of areas of why young people offended. He advised the committee that the main reason for young people being abusive was because they felt angry and frustrated and did not fully understand an issue. It was added that many young people receiving support from the service had speech and language difficulties and whilst there was not one answer to rectify a situation, communication was vital.

The Youth Justice Services Manager noted that some incidents parents could also have an adverse effect on young people's behaviour and committing offences may be the consequence of them being neglected, ignored or suffered any traumatic experience early in their life.

The Youth Justice Services Manager used the simple act of smiling as an example that could be detrimental to a young person in the system. He informed the committee that research showed that smiling was a natural reaction when people were frightened or nervous. He explained to the committee that a young person standing in front of a judge in court smiling could be a reaction to not understanding what was going on and could be taken as them appearing arrogant of which could result in a more severe punishment being given out than if they looked sad and remorseful.

The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children informed the committee that wider work was being undertaken with the One Point service with parents and young people to see how they could work together to address anti-social behaviour.

Councillor J Clark commended all the hard work that had gone into introducing services for young people and asked how victim support services for young people were promoted. She was concerned that if a crime was committed against a young person that they may be reluctant to come forward and report it especially if they knew who carried out the offence and they were worried about repercussions.

The Youth Justice Services Manager notified the committee that they encountered difficulties with parents of young people who had been victims of crime not wanting their children to take part in restorative processes. He felt that parents thought they were protecting their children but teams work with families to link them into a whole range of services that offer support, so they feel more confident to report crimes.

Councillor D Hall raised concern to young people who were of primary school age in the villages within his division that caused issues and felt there was very little mandatory actions that could be taken to tackle the ring leaders that may alleviate these issues.

Councillor D Boyes responded that anti-social behaviour could be an area to be considered within the Committee's work programme.

Councillor J Turnbull asked if the service got involved with high levels of anti-social behaviour being carried out by young people between the ages of eight and ten years old who did not attend school.

The Youth Justice Services Manager informed the Committee that the service did not concentrate on incidents of young people causing anti-social behaviour unless the young people were already in the system. The Head of Early Help, Inclusion and Vulnerable Children stated that if children were not attending school, Durham County Council and partners could intervene under the school attendance legislation.

Mr Balls commented on appendix two within the report that showed a reduction in custodial sentences. He said that these were used as a last resort for young people, usually only for serious offences or where there had been several breaches of a community order. The numbers of custodial sentences were therefore quite small and variances from one period to the next could easily skew the presentation of performance.

### **Resolved**

That the report and presentation be noted.

That the plan be received.

## **8 Modern Slavery Overview Report**

The Chair introduced the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Business Manager who was in attendance to provide the committee with an overview of modern slavery and human trafficking. A report was circulated to outline the range of partnership activity that took place around modern slavery and human trafficking (for copy see file of minutes).

The SAB Business Manager informed the committee that the Modern Slavery Act was introduced in 2015. As best practice the Local Authority published a transparency statement prior to a change in the Act. The statement outlined the Council commitment to ensuring modern slavery does not exist in supply chains.

Modern slavery covered a range of issues that included sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, forced labour and criminal exploitation. Members were informed that Durham County Council had a role to raise awareness, however, levels of modern slavery were low in County Durham but had increased due to the increase in the widening awareness to the issue and training that had taken place.

The SAB Business Manager notified the committee that Section 52 of 'the act' placed a duty to notify on specific agencies when a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking is identified.

The committee were advised that an independent review had taken place that identified gaps in provision and of a national tendering exercise to explore areas of safety, 24-hour referrals, support services offering accommodation or outreach support, transport and translation services. On a national level there had been an increase in reported cases which may be attributed to heightened awareness and press coverage

The SAB Business Manager informed the committee that a Modern Slavery Charter had been created by the Council and was constantly being monitored. She noted that joint working was continual with the Council's Adult and Health Services along with Durham Council's Housing Solutions, Durham Constabulary, the Local Safeguarding Adults Board and the Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership. Members were advised that partners would be participating in an event during Safeguarding Week on 20 November 2019 that would raise awareness to tackling modern slavery.

The Chair thanked the SAB Business Manager for her overview of modern slavery and human trafficking and invited questions from members of the committee.

The Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner notified the committee that his team were involved in this work and they were trying to raise awareness. He noted there had been an increase in reported cases due to heightened awareness of the issue amongst the public and organisations and his team continued to support the cause.

Councillor P Jopling highlighted a recent media following the death of migrants found in a truck container in Essex as an example of people coming into England illegally and the appalling conditions they suffered for a potentially better life. Councillor P Jopling, raised concern to an increase in car washes, nail bars and barbers and asked if checks were undertaken to check they were legitimate businesses to ensure staff were not victims of modern slavery.

Councillor D Boyes informed the Committee that the Council dealt with this through licensing. Councillor A Batey notified the committee that the licensing committee members had received awareness training on child sexual exploitation and taxi drivers had been educated to identify any issues.

The SAB Business Manager informed the committee of the work of organisations such as the Gangmasters Labour and Abuse Authority and National Crime Agency of checking processes that could be undertaken. She informed of initiatives such as the introduction of kitemark schemes. She informed the committee that partnership working also took place with those agencies for example UK Visa and Immigration so that intelligence is shared to monitor and support prevention of instances. She noted that there was also a mobile app that had been launched "Safe car wash" where anyone could report concerns anonymously.

Councillor P Jopling was concerned that the public could not be solely relied upon to report incidents. Councillor D Boyes informed the committee that there were different teams involved with the initiative and there was a Councillors guide that should be circulated to all members.

Councillor J Clarke informed the committee that a breakfast seminar had been held on modern slavery for members that was presented by a police officer that included the 'safe car wash' app. Councillor Clarke felt that the presentation should be circulated to all members as it was interesting to note that there were more white British people that were being forced into slavery because of debt than foreign nationals. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer agreed to contact appropriate officers to seek authorisation to circulate the information as requested.

Mr Cooke felt that modern slavery took on many forms and was concerned that people came into this country by unlawful means in order to get jobs but did not expect to be fearful and therefore would not report their abusers in case they were caught and repatriated to their country.

The SAB Business Manager informed the committee that the service tried to support victims as much as possible and recognised there were often barriers to reporting for potential victims, sharing the example that often victims may have fled circumstances in another country and where they have been fearful of professionals and/or police and as a result they may have difficulty trusting in professionals/police here. She felt services and agencies were moving forward evident from national referral systems and support was provided to educate and train professionals and develop resources to support victims to feel safe.

Councillor J Turnbull gave an example of a person who was kept in a house against his will within his division despite residents in the vicinity complaining about the derelict house. Cllr Turnbull felt that more needed to be done when concerns were raised as there was a reluctance of the local authority, housing association or police to take action.

Councillor D Boyes informed the committee that work was being carried out under selected licensing under Cabinet member Councillor K Shaw with regards to empty houses and trying to bring them back into use.

The SAB Business Manager informed the committee that the police worked closely with housing and it was embedded into the wider training programme to help with these situations within the community.

## **Resolved**

That the report be noted and comments observed

## **9 County Durham and Darlington Hate Crime Action Group Update**

The Chair introduced the Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner (OPCVC) who was in attendance to update the Committee on the County Durham and Darlington Hate Crime Action Group (for copy see file of minutes).

The Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner informed the committee that the County Durham and Darlington Hate Crime Action Group was set up in 2013 by the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner to co-ordinate an action plan to target and reduce hate crime.

The Acting Chief Executive, OPCVC advised members of a table within the report that highlighted that hate incidents had increased by 20% since the group was established. He informed the committee that the increased number of cases reported may be due to terrorist acts being published in the media and the reclassification of certain types of anti-social behaviour that were now classed as a crime.

The Acting Chief Executive, OPCVC notified the committee that the joint plan was launched in October 2018 following a conference that was held in July 2018 that promoted diversity. The County Durham and Darlington Hate Crime Action Group was a multi-agency partnership that included members from the voluntary sector.

He noted that the priorities of the action plan focussed on:

- Multi agency communication - the hate hurt campaign was launched in March 2019 that had been adopted by the police as their brand. It stated that if hate crime was recognised it should be reported;
- Review of reporting mechanisms to ensure there were lots of ways in which hate crime could be reported and to identify gaps and put things in place to address them;
- Shared intelligence to ensure that all information is shared between organisations;
- Evidence to make sure that files transferred between organisations were done effectively so that cases were not delayed;
- Support victims to ensure that all victims of hate crime were supported. There were numerous organisations offering a wide range of support available to victims and a mapping exercise had commenced to address gaps in support.

The Acting Chief Executive, OPCVC informed the committee that future meetings would be arranged to continue the hard work. He noted that the tension monitoring kit devised by Durham County Council had been used to allow officers in different organisations to identify situations and make others aware of it in other organisations. He told the committee that data was held on a central database where police and organisations had access to and it was continually monitored.

He also noted that a performance monitoring framework would be developed for the joint hate crime action group.

The Chair thanked the Acting Chief Executive, OPCVC and asked members of the committee for any questions or comments.

Councillor D Boyes commented on an increase in hate crime incidents and political changes since 2016.

Councillor P Jopling sought clarification that if a person was called nasty names on social media whether that would be classed as hate crime.

The Acting Chief Executive, OPCVC informed the committee that this could constitute hate crime and should be reported to the police to investigate.

Councillor J Maitland requested clarification on what the difference was in terms of hate crime being an incident and a crime.

The Acting Chief Executive, OPCVC explained that an incident was anything that was reported to the police but was not classed in law as a crime and a crime was anything that was defined in the wording of the law as a crime.

Councillor J Clark commented that there was a list on the Durham County Council's website that gave a wide range of categories that were now classed in law as hate crime. Councillor J Clark added that she felt incidents were needed to be reported so the police were aware and could investigate and noted that hate crime was not all stereotypical focused on foreign nationals but could be anyone.

The Acting Chief Executive, Office of the Durham Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner noted that if the victim self-identified the offence as a hate crime then the police would investigate it as that.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted.

## **10 Police and Crime Panel**

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer gave a verbal update with regards to the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) meetings that were held on 20 September 2019 and 17 October 2019 (for copy see file of minutes).

Members were informed that it had been an unprecedented time with the appointment of the Acting Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner and the appointment of the Acting Chief Executive for the Office of the Police Crime and Victims Commissioner.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the committee that at its meeting in October, the PCP considered the Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner's Annual report and the Quarterly Performance report and would circulate these reports to Members.

**Resolved**

That the verbal update be noted.

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

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer gave a verbal update with regards to the Committee's overview and scrutiny reviews. Members were advised that the Children's Residential Care Homes report was scheduled to be presented at the next Cabinet meeting.

Members were informed the committee that there had been a Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Working Group held on 10 October 2019 to develop a County Durham Road Safety Strategy. Presentations at this meeting were delivered by the Data Analyst for North East Regional Road Safety Resource, Durham County Council's Road Safety Manager and the Casualty Reduction Coordinator for Durham Constabulary.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the group that the next steps for the group were to consider the draft strategy and the Overview and Scrutiny Officer was working closely with the Road Safety Manager to identify dates for future working groups meetings.

**Resolved**

That the verbal update be noted.