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KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 26th March 2024

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Bill Armer
Councillor Andrew Cooper
Councillor Hannah McKerchar
Councillor Shabir Pandor

81 Membership of Committee

All Members of the Committee were in attendance.

**82 Minutes of Previous Meeting
Resolved -**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27th February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

83 Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

84 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

85 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

86 Financial Management - Capital and Borrowing

The Service Director – Finance, Isabel Brittain, shared a presentation in respect of capital and borrowing.

The following points were highlighted:

- The Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for Quarter 3 2023/24.
- The Council measured and managed its capital expenditure, borrowing and commercial and service investments with reference to the prudential indicators set out in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Prudential Code. The Code required that the indicators were reported on a quarterly basis.
- Detailed information under each of the following headings was provided:
 - Capital Expenditure
 - Capital Financing Requirement
 - Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement
 - Debt and the Authorised Limiting and Operational Boundary

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- Net Income from Commercial and Service Investments to Net Revenue Stream
- Proportion of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In response to a question in respect of the use of Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contracts, it was acknowledged that although PFI contracts may not be the first choice for the Council's financing in the future, they would not be ruled out without undertaking financial due diligence.
- It was suggested that consideration could be given to the use of Municipal Climate Bonds, which had been adopted by a number of other Local Authorities and had the benefit of keeping money within the local economy. It was acknowledged that the use of such bonds could be considered but the set-up and administration costs would need to be investigated further. This could be raised with the new Chief Finance Officer, coming into post in May, and consideration given to inclusion in next year's treasury strategy.
- It was noted that the Council's commercial income was relatively low due to the Council's current approach, but this could be subject to change through the Council's budget setting process for 2025/26.
- In respect of the approach and opportunities for income generation in the future, it was acknowledged that additional income streams could be considered but decisions would have to be underpinned by business cases, with a clear understanding of the potential risks and sensitivities for the Council.

Resolved –

That the Service Director – Finance be thanked for attending meetings of the Committee to provide updates on the Council's financial position.

87 Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan and Strategic Intelligence Assessment

A report was submitted which set out the high-level findings emerging from the annual refresh of Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment and the suggested priorities for the Communities Partnership Plan refresh for 2024-25. The report also highlighted the work that had taken place in 2023/2024, with a specific focus on serious violence, the Inclusive Communities Framework and drugs and alcohol.

The Service Director - Communities and Access Services, Jill Greenfield, introduced the item, explaining that the plan set out how all partners could and would work collaboratively to make Kirklees a safer place.

Sarah Mitchell, Head of Communities, gave a presentation which covered the following:

- The strategic themes in the Partnership Plan were developed using the findings from the partnership's Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA). The SIA provided an all-encompassing overview of what affected communities. It was refreshed annually and was used to make sure that the Partnership Plan themes remained valid and that any exceptions/areas of future focus were highlighted and actioned.

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- The Partnership Plan was overseen by the Communities Board. The Partnership Plan for 2024 was currently being revised and any feedback from the Committee would be reported to the Communities Board in May when the priorities for 2024/25 would be formalised.
- An overview was given in respect of the four strategic outcome themes and the approach taken by the Partnership. The themes had remained the same for the last couple of years.
- An overview of the priorities contained within each theme:
 - Serious Violence and Exploitation** - Serious violence, violence against women and girls, modern day slavery and human trafficking, and youth exploitation all remained categorised at amber RAG rating, however, domestic abuse had been increased to a red RAG rating, due to a high number of domestic homicide cases.
 - Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour** - Neighbourhood crime remained categorised at amber RAG rating and anti-social behaviour had been increased to a red RAG rating, despite some elements starting to decrease, due to the impact it had on communities.
 - Reducing Risk** - Road safety was prioritised as a red RAG rating, based on residents' concerns and numbers of fatalities.
 - Resilient and Inclusive Communities** - A review would be undertaken of what was contained within this theme, and how it worked, during 2024/25. The aim was to further develop the place-based response to the Communities Plan and have in view communities of higher risk and concern. In addition, it would include recognition of where good work had taken place in communities.

Chief Superintendent, Jim Griffiths of West Yorkshire Police, explained that all the partners had undertaken a significant amount of work and contributed a lot of data and intelligence so that a balanced decision could be taken on what the priorities needed to be under each theme.

District Commander, Dale Gardiner, from West Yorkshire Fire Service agreed with the Chief Superintendent, confirming that all partners fed into the plan and worked together on the outcomes.

Questions and comments were invited from the Committee Members, with the following issues being covered:

- In response to a concern about consistency in tackling speeding hot spots, (this was an issue that was raised consistently with Ward Councillors) it was stressed that the Neighbourhood Policing Teams did their best in terms of addressing issues associated with speeding traffic. The Police had links, and regular conversations with, the Road Safety Partnership to ensure that measures were in place to address these issues. It was also considered that the public may be unaware of the wide range of other priorities outlined in the Partnership Plan and the balance needed in allocating resources to respond to these. It was acknowledged that there was an issue associated with the perception of speed.

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- A question was asked regarding the recording of non-injury accidents, which could be useful in identifying locations where there were safety issues, and what actions could be taken to reduce the risk to the public. It was advised that the Police recording of non-injury accidents was in line with National Standards. West Yorkshire did undertake more recording, across all crime types, than most other forces.
- It was suggested that there should be an onus on other agencies, such as insurance companies, to consider how they could provide data on accidents and how that data could feed into the information the Police held.
- Lee Hamilton, Safer Kirklees Manager, Communities and Access Services, explained that the Road Safety Partnership was working alongside the data and intelligence team to build a wider data package. West Yorkshire Fire Service chaired the partnership and work had gone into prevention initiatives, such as working with local schools and the use of mobile speed devices, but it was acknowledged that there was a need for wider data collection.
- The Kirklees Partnership Plan Road Safety Strategy, aimed to continue reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads, but also to address the issue of perception of safety for all road users, which included anti-social driving/ parking.
- The Safety Rangers programme aimed to foster a sense of responsibility and community amongst school children. In response to a question about this approach it was advised that schools did opt-in but the team also tried to proactively target areas of concern. It was noted that participation did depend on the capacity of local schools.
- The Council had signed up to 'Vision Zero' but the budget for road safety appeared to be negligible; a budget was needed to deliver physical measures to curb speeding. Such preventative measures did work in improving safety and assisted with perception. The Police did target areas where issues were reported.
- A number of Local Authorities had undertaken pilot schemes to use Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to address/deter moving traffic violations. It was noted that ANPR was a sensitive area, but West Yorkshire Police and the Road Safety Partnership were leading the way through the use of 'Operation SNAP', which was a positive initiative which enabled members of the public to share footage from dash-cams to a portal, a high percentage of which resulted in enforcement action being pursued. It was acknowledged that increased awareness amongst the public would be beneficial.
- A question was asked how effective West Yorkshire Police was in tackling/ reducing crimes compared with other forces. It was noted that Kirklees statistics were compared to other boroughs, such as Peterborough, Newport, Wigan, Bolton and Tyneside. The Committee was advised that it was difficult to provide a meaningful comparison because forces recorded crimes differently. However, it was believed that Kirklees was a high- achieving area.
- There was a challenge in terms of interpreting data; to see what had made a difference, why, and what areas needed addressing. An example of this was 'cuckooing', although Kirklees recorded the second highest incidence in West Yorkshire this was likely to be due to strong awareness and reporting rather than there being a higher level of such exploitation in the district.

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- In terms of the level of data collection undertaken, there were certain national standards that had to be adhered to; digitalisation had been increased and it had been made as easy as possible for officers to do this whilst out within the community through the use of mobile devices. The data collected, and analysis of it, helped the service to improve and fed into the work of the partnership. It was noted that the dashboard used by the Communities Board was very useful to view how data fluctuated.
- The use of Artificial Intelligence was being considered. Algorithms were used, particularly for some categories of crime, and could assist in identifying hotspots to target the best place for deployment of resources.
- It was queried whether consideration was/had been given to any other priorities being included within the plan. It was explained that scanning of the range of information/data took place to try and identify any potential priorities, but maintenance of those currently set out was backed up by the data. In the future, it was anticipated that the data would be refreshed on a more regular basis (than annually) and any recommendations arising would be taken to the Communities Board.
- In respect of the 'tenancy ready training', which was delivered to care leavers about to enter their first tenancy with Homes and Neighbourhoods, it was asked if this support could be accessed by all care leavers. An assurance was given that this was currently being considered alongside Children's Services. No data was available in relation to tenancy outcomes, but this could be built in as it would be helpful in allowing an assessment of the impact of this initiative.
- In respect of the proposed review of Theme 3, Resilient and Inclusive Communities, the question was asked as to whether the Kirklees Cohesion Team would be integrated into the approach. In addition, was the Council engaging with Holocaust Centre North, in respect of hate crime, as they were keen to do more partnership working. The Committee was advised that all of the community facing teams would be involved in the review as well as key partners, and account would be taken of the emerging data from the performance and intelligence team and partners. There were strong links established with Holocaust North.
- Chris Walsh, Safer Kirklees Manager, advised that, in relation to hate crime, the strategy had a number of elements which included, awareness raising, encouragement of reporting, a focus on changing behaviour, place-based support; at home, in public spaces and online, and delivering in partnership across all partners in relation to highlighting the issue and collaborative working.
- The make-up of the Inclusive Communities Framework (ICF) Peer Review Group would be considered as part of the overview of the Resilient and Inclusive Communities Theme.
- It was noted that the name of the South Kirklees Interfaith Forum had now been changed to the South Kirklees Interfaith and Belief Forum, in order to be inclusive of people with non-religious beliefs.
- A question was asked regarding Theme 1, Serious Violence and Exploitation, noting that the number of recorded violent offences was lower than that recorded in 2022/23. It was advised that the level of seriousness of offences had reduced, alongside the reduction in actual numbers. It was considered that this reflected all the work undertaken by the Partnership.

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- An explanation was given in respect of which agencies were involved when a serious offence response took place. There would be a Police-led response and partners would work closely alongside, taking their lead from the Police. Council staff and Ward Councillors would be involved, along with other key stakeholders, community leaders and trusted partners to provide assurance within the community. The position would be monitored, with information shared as appropriate, and a longer-term engagement plan put in place.
- In respect of the approach and the key principles to prevent people from committing serious violence, including the provision of street marshals and the night safety bus; it was confirmed that this work did take place in centres other than Huddersfield, based on the evidence of need from the data. The Council relied on external funding and a longer-term solution was needed to fund the night safety bus. All the potential options for future funding were being pursued. It was noted that there was a town centre policing team with a proactive plan associated with the nighttime economy.
- A question was asked regarding the 240 'Safe Zones' that had been established across the district in 2023-24, which provided young people with a safe place to go should they fear crime or violence. This was acknowledged by the partnership as a positive scheme. It was noted that further promotion of the zones would be helpful and reviewing feedback from young people would be part of the work undertaken in 2024/25. Work was ongoing to assess such schemes to establish what was effective and what the insights were.
- In respect of the A&E Navigators, it was advised that they had been introduced at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary to deal with knife injuries. Knife injuries in North Kirklees would usually be directed to Pinderfields Hospital, which came under Wakefield district, and navigators were located there.
- In response to a question regarding the recording of whether drugs and alcohol had been an aggravating factor in a crime, and how this was measured to ensure that the drugs and alcohol strategies and interventions were sufficient, it was advised that the Police had powers to drug-test individuals coming into Police custody; this data was qualitative but provided an indication of the type of crimes involving drugs. A risk assessment was also provided to a person in custody regarding drug/alcohol usage and the support that may be required. It was suggested that this may be an area the Partnership could consider in the future. There was significant understanding of the influence of aggravating factors and the Partnership would continue to work with learning and the comprehensive data recorded to ensure that strategy and interventions were appropriate and sufficient. The importance of dual diagnosis was stressed.
- The positive outcomes in relation to mediation services for complex cases of anti-social behaviour was welcomed. In response to a query about whether the Council collected any data on the mediation process, to compare with other local authorities to ensure best practice, it was advised that further information could be provided to Members on this.

Resolved -

That the Committee:

- (1) Thanks officers and the representatives of partner organisations for attending the meeting and their contributions to the debate.
- (2) Endorses the themes and priorities set out in the Communities Partnership Plan.

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- (3) Considers that the lack of data/evidence in respect of non-injury road traffic accidents could impact on the ability to take action to reduce risk at locations of concern, and notes that this data may be accessible from other sources, such as insurance companies.
- (4) Welcomes the work by the Road Safety Partnership to build a wider package of data.
- (5) Requests that further information be provided to Members in respect of:
 - (a) the funding/budget available to support preventative work associated with road safety including that to address perceptions and to introduce physical measures to curb speed.
 - (b) Data in respect of the reasons why people had not engaged with the mediation service (for complex cases of anti-social behaviour) and a comparison with other local authorities in terms of best practice and success rates.
- (6) Would support efforts to increase awareness of Operation SNAP, as a positive initiative to assist in enforcement against driving offences.
- (7) Requests that baseline data be collated in respect of tenancy outcomes, to assess if the introduction of the 'tenancy ready' training is effective and supports the roll-out of this training to all care leavers.
- (8) Notes:
 - (a) the ongoing work to review and learn from the practice of the 'safe zones' initiative, including taking account of the views of young people, and the need for further promotion of this scheme.
 - (b) the work being undertaken to understand the influence of drugs and alcohol as aggravating factors in crime and disorder and to ensure that the strategies and interventions are appropriate and suggests that consideration be given to further data collection to assist in this.

88 **Lead Members' Updates**

Updates were submitted in respect of the work of the Children's Scrutiny Panel and Health & Adult Social Care Panels.

89 **Work Programme 2023-24**

The latest version of the Committee's Work Programme for 2023/24 was submitted for consideration.