

Contact Officer: Sheila Dykes

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Tuesday 9th November 2021

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Harpreet Uppal
Councillor Habiban Zaman

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Cooper

In attendance: Councillor Carole Pattison

31 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Cooper.

32 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 28th September 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chair provided updates as follows:

(i) Public Question Time (Minute 28)

The Operational Manager- Air Quality, Energy & Climate Change had provided a written response to the questions, as requested, and this had also been shared with Members of the Committee.

(ii) Climate Emergency and Net Zero Road Map (Minute 29)

The Air Quality Status Report had been written and submitted to DEFRA but had not yet been ratified. Once ratified and feedback provided an update would be provided to Scrutiny and the report would also be published on the Council's website.

(iii) Since the last meeting the Economy and Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Panel had undertaken a call-in, the decision for which had been published on the website. The report had been referred back to the Cabinet and would be considered at the meeting to be held on 16th November 2021.

33 Interests

During the meeting Councillor Smaje disclosed an interest, in that she was involved with a trust that had an asset transferred building.

34 Admission of the Public

All items were considered in public session.

35 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

36 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

37 Draft Strategic Intelligence Assessment for Kirklees and the Communities Partnership Plan

Jill Greenfield – Service Director, Customer and Communities presented a report providing:

- (i) An overview of the most up to date draft Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment for Kirklees.
- (ii) An overview of the emerging strategic priorities and themes informing the new Communities Partnership Plan.
- (iii) The opportunity to discuss and contribute to the emerging priorities, informing the new Communities Partnership Plan.
- (iv) Updates in respect of repeat victims, the approach to violence and the development of a new Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Councillor Carole Pattison - Cabinet Member and Portfolio Holder for Learning, Aspiration and Communities, Chief Inspector Alan Travis from West Yorkshire Police (WYP), Chani Mortimer – Service Manager, Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Partnerships and Chris Walsh – Performance Manager, Communities were also in attendance to hear Members’ comments and answer questions.

It was explained that the 2018-2021 Communities Partnership Plan was due to expire, with a new Plan being developed using insight, data and analysis from the most recent Partnership Strategic Intelligence Assessment (PSIA). The full Draft PSIA had been included at Appendix 1 of the report and an overview was given of the shared themes that had been identified.

The proposed strategic objectives for 2022-25 had been developed by the Community Partnership, taking account of the learning from the pandemic and the importance of these relationships in providing a strategic approach to the Plan. These were:

- Tackling Violence, Abuse and Exploitation,
- Reducing Re-offending, Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbourhood Crime,
- Building Resilient Communities, and
- Reducing Risk

The objectives were underpinned by the following principles:

- Prevention and Early Intervention
- Partnership Collaboration
- Lived Experience
- Tackling Inequality of Outcome
- Place Based
- Victim Centred

Beneath each objective there were a number of task groups and workstreams. The focus was on building on the partnership collaboration to avoid duplication, ensure

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best use of resources and to establish concrete implementation and action plans, supported by strategies.

Councillor Pattison expressed a hope that the new plan would fully reflect the new reinvigorated partnership working and life as experienced by Kirklees' communities. She was pleased to see the emphasis on the resilience of communities. She said that there was a need to identify the risks that communities faced and to reduce them. It was also necessary to look at repeat criminality and its fundamental causes and to reduce violence and abuse in society. The consideration of these issues in a cross-cutting way was welcomed.

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

- The focus on early intervention and prevention was very important. As a Ward Councillor there were concerns in respect of the response to incidents of serious violence, in terms of communication and being kept informed in the longer term. Currently it was not considered that the early intervention and prevention work was visible and it would be good to see this progress at grass-roots level. It was explained that the new duty in respect of serious violence was considered to provide an opportunity to embed the grass-roots approach. The concerns about communication and need for Ward Councillors to be kept informed would be taken on board and would be considered when the relevant strategy was developed.
- In response to a question, it was clarified that the Public Health approach to serious violence had been in place for some time and work was being undertaken to consider how this could be further embedded and reinvigorated. The new duty would assist in that. Work was ongoing in terms of establishing what was currently in place in Kirklees and how this could be connected, to ensure that the most was being made of the available resources.
- In terms of the figures for repeat incidences of domestic violence and how changes in operational and partnership working were working to reduce these figures. It was explained that the data was complex; research indicated that, in domestic abuse cases, it was highly likely that the first reported incident was not actually the first incidence. In addition, an increase in repeat numbers did not necessarily indicate that the position was getting worse but could reflect increased confidence on the part of victims in reporting. Local police had received recognition in respect of the efficiency of their crime reporting, in that each crime was recorded separately, this could also affect the figures. The local picture reflected a national concern around repeat incidents and it was believed that a strong partnership response was being provided; for example work was being undertaken with the Pennine Abuse Partnership to support victims through the process. This included a new initiative to support victims who may be wavering about continuing with criminal action or to assist them to pursue civil action. The detailed figures in respect of incidents could be provided to the Committee after the meeting.
- A tension monitoring document was received by Ward Councillors on a weekly basis but this did not provide information on how the data was being used and what actions were being taken to address the identified issues; it was suggested that it would be useful to include such information. Alan Travis explained that a weekly partnership meeting was held, chaired by WYP, which involved a wide

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range of partners and a standing item was community tensions. Attendees received a full briefing on each issue and discussed approach and actions. He undertook to take on board the comments made. He stressed that any significant concerns would lead to the setting up of a bespoke partnership meeting to focus on an individual issue and establish an action plan.

- There appeared to be a theme of Councillors not feeling involved and fully informed and it was questioned whether there was any structure in place to allow them to have an input to action plans for their area. It was explained that this issue had been raised with Jo Richmond – Head of Service, Communities and ways of increasing the involvement of Ward Councillors and improving lines of communication were being explored.
Councillor Pattison pointed out that the Communities Partnership Board had cross-party representation, albeit that this operated at a strategic level. The former Neighbourhood Management Groups had been very helpful in this respect and the Communities Service was considering what processes might be introduced to be able to take advantage of the valuable area-based knowledge of elected members.
- It was noted that Place Priorities from Place Standard work were mentioned in the report but some areas had not yet been through this process. The Neighbourhood Management Groups had allowed tasks and priorities to be set for an area as a whole.
- Quarterly briefings were undertaken with Ward Councillors by the Community Safety Officers and where there was intervention and challenge the service did try to involve elected members and their input was always taken into account where it was possible to do so.
- It was considered that there was a communications gap in terms of serious incidents and that, where they were geographically focused, Ward Councillors should be involved at an early stage. Ward Councillors had a good understanding of their communities and strong on-the-ground knowledge. It was known that other areas did undertake partnership meetings that including elected members and community leaders. Alan Travis said that he would feedback the points made.
- In response to questions, it was explained that the 'IQUANTA family' was a national benchmarking system which placed areas together based on socio-economic factors, to provide a like for like comparison (Leeds and Bradford, although direct neighbours, were significantly larger). It was acknowledged that cross-border issues were a key consideration and it was critical that the Kirklees partnership worked with surrounding areas to address them. The Committee were assured that cross-border working took place, from an investigative perspective. The point in relation to how the partnership plan interlinked and correlated with neighbouring district's plans would be taken on board.
- In respect of the 'Your Views' survey, which was distributed by the West Yorkshire Mayor's office on a regular basis to assist in establishing local priorities; this had previously been undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) office. In respect of use of the results for Kirklees, the PCC's office had sent out a quarterly update which gave an indication of the perceptions of the public and provided intelligence for use at a district level. It was understood that this was to be reintroduced. It was suggested that this should be circulated to elected members so that they were aware of any trends.

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- The figures in the report indicated an increase in the number of deaths related to alcohol misuse, and it was questioned how drug and alcohol related issues and the links with mental health were to be addressed across partners. It was explained that a multi-agency strategic partnership was currently being pulled together to focus on this issue and there was a wish to adopt the public health approach. The Partnership was acutely aware of the need for a focus on these issues post-pandemic and the interdependencies with other priorities. The underlying detail in relation to drugs and alcohol mortality could be provided for the Committee.
- The point was made that protest should be differentiated from threat from terrorism and it was agreed that this would be re-worded.
- The numbers related to modern day slavery were very small, and this could result in the figures being skewed. There had been some issues uncovered as a result of visits to businesses associated with Covid, but any spike (such as in December 2019) was almost certainly due to a specific planned targeted operation. Operations were undertaken using a partnership approach alongside statutory partners and charities able to provide support to victims and underpinned by a whole package of support via the national referral mechanism.
- It was suggested that reference to enforcement in respect of fly tipping should be strengthened within the plan.

RESOLVED -

(1) That account be taken of all the points raised by the Committee, in the development of the Communities Partnership Plan 2022-25, including:

- The importance of early intervention and prevention.
- The visibility of partnership working and early intervention and prevention at ward level.
- The need for improvements in the mechanisms to facilitate the involvement of Ward Councillors, to keep them informed and to engage them in respect of setting local priorities.
- Improvement in tension monitoring documents and involvement of and feedback to Ward Councillors in respect of incidents of serious violence.

(2) That results of the ‘Your Views’ survey be circulated to Elected Members

(3) That the following further detail be provided to Members:

- (i) Domestic abuse figures
- (ii) Underlying detail in respect of mortality related to alcohol and drugs

38 Development of Kirklees Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Investment Strategy

Noreen Abbas - Community Investment Manager presented a report which sought the Committee’s input in respect of the approach and work undertaken to develop a VCSE Investment Strategy for Kirklees,

Hilary Thompson the Chair of Kirklees Third Sector Leaders, Diane Sims – Engagement and Communications Lead for Democracy, Helen Orlic, the external consultant in respect of the strategy and Vina Randhawa - Active Citizens and Places Manager were also in attendance to answer questions.

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

- In respect of lesser involvement from certain areas in Kirklees in the development of the strategy, and the potential impact of this on ownership; whilst this point was accepted it was believed that the engagement and events had been open to a wide variety of people and organisations, although perhaps the timing had been an issue. The engagement was still ongoing and it was considered that people would become more involved as interest increased and this would help achieve wider ownership. It had been advertised through a number of channels, including the Third Sector Leaders (TSL), but the difficulties of including smaller organisations were acknowledged in terms of capacity and time to take part. Feedback had been provided to keep them up to date with the emerging themes.
- In relation to information on Council grant funding opportunities, this data was crucial and linked back to how success was measured. The data was currently being collated and the aim was to have all contracts and funding information before Christmas. In terms of the reach to BAME communities; a threefold engagement had been undertaken using TSL's contacts and social media, the Council's Community Directory links and the Third Sector Team's contacts. Contacts made through grant funding would also be used and contact made with local elected members. Work was also being undertaken on a Community Champions project which would achieve a wider reach into BAME communities and would help in informing the development of a network and how better connections could be ensured and support provided.
- It was stressed that there needed to be a better understanding of communities and a focus on building capacity and ensuring sustainability. It was confirmed that this was also the aim of the sector so that groups were not reliant on sources of grant funding.
- There needed to be a strong focus on, understanding if all demographics were covered and expanding reach among all communities across all sectors. Diversity of ownership was very important.
- The TSL Board involved a wide variety of people, including members of different communities and the Board played a role at West Yorkshire level in respect of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- In respect of external funding and achieving improvements to the levels coming into Kirklees, it was considered that knowledge of what was available, across communities at all levels, was critical alongside the capacity; time, resource, and skills, to apply particularly for the larger grants. Increasing the support to assist in writing bids would help; there was no shortage of ideas and the challenge fell in framing these to meet funders' requirements. Eventually it was anticipated that the skills and experience imparted to undertake such tasks would then transfer into the organisation.
- Councillors had been emailed in relation to the current survey but it was accepted that more proactive engagement was needed going forward. This could assist in identifying gaps in knowledge about organisations. Councillors would be briefed in advance of surveys going live and briefings had been offered to groups in respect of the development of the strategy to date.
- It was suggested that ongoing involvement of Ward Councillors to ensure coverage across Kirklees would be helpful.

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- Sustainability was a key consideration and a community building support network could be a source of information but also of peer support; leading to the sector helping itself and bringing in experts or specialists as and when needed to increase knowledge within the group; this would become self-sustaining.

RESOLVED -

That account be taken of the points raised by the Committee in the develop the Kirklees Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Investment Strategy including:

- Reach across communities.
- Better understanding of communities and covering all demographics.
- Communication and engagement with Ward Councillors.
- Understanding about funding and how people can find out what available
- Sustainability of the Strategy and actions.

39 Work Programme 2021-22

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme for 2021-22.

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 21st December 2021.

40 Any Other Business

The Chair reported an urgent officer delegated decision in respect of the Household Support Fund; this had been urgent due to the funding being needed for the provision of free school meals vouchers during the half term holiday. It would be reported to Cabinet on 16th November 2021.