

Contact Officer: Sheila Dykes

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Monday 6th February 2023

Present: Councillor Elizabeth Smaje (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Jackie Ramsay
Councillor John Taylor

52 Membership of Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Yusra Hussain.

**53 Minutes of Previous Meeting
Resolved –**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20th December 2022 be agreed as a correct record.

The Chair updated the Committee as follows:

The final report of the Ad Hoc Scrutiny Panel on Residential Housing Stock Health and Safety Compliance, including the completed Action Plan, had been considered by Cabinet on 21st December 2022.

The seventeen recommendations made by the Panel had been accepted, subject to the amendment of recommendation twelve to reflect monthly reporting on no-access properties, rather than weekly.

A progress report on the implementation of the Panel's recommendations would be submitted to the Committee during the 2023/24 municipal year.

54 Interests

In the interests of openness and transparency, Councillor Marchington noted that a relative was a member of 'Cycle Kirklees'.

55 Admission of the Public

All items were heard in public session.

56 Deputations/Petitions

A deputation was received, on behalf of Cycle Kirklees, raising issues in relation to the report on the Strategic Intelligence Assessment and Communities Partnership Plan, in particular to the spotlight on road safety. This included, the impact of the public perception of safety on levels of cycling and walking, the approaches to reducing speeding traffic, long-term planning to assist in reducing car use and creating a safer environment; and targets for modal shift associated with climate change.

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57 Public Question Time

No questions were asked.

58 Leader's Priorities - Update

Councillor Shabir Pandor, the Leader of the Council, attended the meeting to give an update on his priorities for 2022-23. He was accompanied by Jacqui Gedman, the Chief Executive.

Councillor Pandor gave a presentation focussed on the following headings:

Economic Growth and Sustainability; building a strong economy to protect against future cost of living crises. This included moving forward with the plans to regenerate Huddersfield, Dewsbury and Batley town centres, along with plans for Cleckheaton, Heckmondwike and Holmfirth.

Inclusion and Diversity; ensuring action in relation to; the cost of living, including the Household Support Fund and the introduction of 'warm spaces'; support for young people to ensure no child gets left behind; and supporting older people and people with disabilities.

Cleaner, Greener, Safer; a Climate Change Action Plan was in place and the ambition was to be carbon neutral by 2028. A significant number of pothole repairs had been completed in 2022 and 99.7% bin collections achieved. Work had been successfully undertaken, in collaboration with West Yorkshire Police, to address issues of community safety.

Challenges for the next twelve months and beyond; including balancing the Council's budget and sustaining public services, the cost of living, the economy, pressures on health and social care, and climate change.

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

- In terms of work at a regional level, Councillor Pandor explained that he was the Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's (WYCA) Business, Economy and Innovation Committee, the remit of which was to support businesses throughout West Yorkshire.
- In response to a question about which priorities were specific to the Leader's portfolio, he explained that he considered that these were his priorities. The Cabinet had a collective responsibility and his role included ensuring that the budget was in place, lobbying for funding and supporting the Cabinet Members to deliver on all priorities.
- There was a desire for the authority to do what it could to support communities and ease the burden of the increases in the cost of living.
- In relation to supporting young people, concern about the lack of youth services was raised at ward level on a regular basis.
- The appropriate Cabinet Members would be able to provide a more specific update in respect of the work being undertaken to support young people in achieving their aspirations and ambitions. His aspirations included ensuring that every child was safeguarded, that provision for those with special needs and disabilities was good and that every child was given the best opportunities for a good start in life.

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- The introduction of 'warm spaces' and the work undertaken to repair the district's roads was welcomed, although it was regrettable that there was need to fill potholes rather than being able to undertake resurfacing.
- In relation to the challenges of recruiting and retaining a stable workforce, particularly associated with lower paid roles, assurance was given that priority would be given to client-facing caring roles despite the budget pressures.
- The budget would be agreed in March and the work was in progress to ensure that the major regeneration projects and climate change work could continue within the tighter financial constraints, whilst still delivering public services and making the necessary savings.
- He had undertaken work, at national level, with the Local Government Association, an example of which was in respect of the exclusion of leisure centres from the grant to ease pressures associated with higher energy bills for energy intensive uses.
- He led discussions with the Cabinet, on a daily basis, and there were strong links with the Council's Executive Team. Consideration was being given to how savings could be made without putting services at risk and to ensure sustainability. Residents of the district would be consulted. Some of the Council's reserves would be utilised.
- Stability was very important; the Council's staff were valued and that there was a need to ensure that they were retained and supported.
- It was important that there was a broader view across the organisation and the work of partners to ensure that there was no duplication and that budgets were efficiently and effectively utilised.
- In terms of the work being undertaken at regional level and how the voice of Kirklees was being heard, work was in progress in respect of improvements to bus and train travel and lobbying was to be undertaken to achieve a model that worked, alongside the commitment to achieve the carbon zero target by 2038.
- The Council's Climate Change Action Plan had been approved by the Council and could be shared with members of the Committee.
- It was noted that the improvement of bus services needed to include reliable provision at sufficient frequency and timings to meet residents' needs; there were issues with affordability.
- The introduction of an integrated transport strategy for the north of England was needed and would be welcomed.

59 Domestic Abuse in Kirklees - Update

A report was submitted which provided a detailed update on activity to tackle domestic abuse in Kirklees, in line with the strategic aims and priorities of the 2022-2027 Domestic Abuse Strategy.

Jill Greenfield - Service Director Customer and Communities, Jo Richmond - Head of Communities and Chani Mortimer - Service Manager for Domestic Abuse were in attendance to present the report and answer questions.

Councillor Carole Pattison, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities was also present, as well as representatives of partner organisations:

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Inspector Catherine Shackleton - West Yorkshire Police, Gwen Clyde-Evans – West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board, and Catherine McKenzie - Yorkshire Children's Centre (Perpetrators Programme).

It was explained that:

- The 2021 Domestic Abuse Act had introduced a new statutory requirement for local authorities to support victims of domestic abuse and their children in safe accommodation.
- Associated grant funding, in the region of £900,000 per annum, was expected to be available for the period 2021/22 to 2024/25.
- The necessary arrangements to meet the statutory requirements had been established.
- The Strategy had been endorsed by Cabinet on 17th January 2023 and the contribution of the Committee in its development was acknowledged.
- An overview of the delivery/outcomes to date in respect of each of the commitments in the strategy was included in the report.
- The Strategy was designed to encompass all domestic abuse related activity and included the stated priorities of:
 - A whole family approach to domestic abuse,
 - Supporting perpetrators to change behaviour,
 - Partnership response to victims with multiple needs and/or protected characteristics,
 - Supporting victims to maintain or access safe and stable housing,
 - Multi-agency working arrangements,with the focus being placed on activity under the first two within the first year.

Gwen Clyde-Evans explained the Integrated Care Board's approach and the work being done to identify victims, and children of victims, of domestic abuse through emergency departments and the work of the independent domestic abuse advocates. Work was also ongoing to increase the awareness and recognition of people who may have suffered trauma through experiencing, witnessing or perpetrating domestic abuse, to manage the associated risks and to identify services that could provide support to victims and perpetrators.

Catherine Shackleton explained the work being undertaken alongside the Domestic Abuse Community Engagement Team on a project which aimed to raise awareness of domestic abuse with people working in the hair and beauty industry, including providing advice on how to respond. A website was in development that would facilitate signposting to different support agencies. The Police were also involved with the 'Safezones' partnership initiative which aimed to establish places in the district where advice, support and help could be sought. Training had been provided to significant numbers of staff from different organisations to assist them in identifying domestic abuse and how to signpost people to appropriate support. Many businesses were engaged with the scheme and over 100 locations were now registered. Quarterly newsletters were circulated to maintain knowledge and awareness.

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Catherine McKenzie outlined a long-term partnership behaviour change programme that was being provided for perpetrators which included an aim to amplify the voices of children. A pilot scheme had included sharing the work of local children, that explored and expressed the impact of domestic abuse through the mediums of art and poems, with perpetrators and had proved to be a very powerful and positive element in helping to educate them on the impacts of domestic abuse. This was to be further expanded and delivered for the children of perpetrators.

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

- The work being undertaken across the partnership was evident and was very positive; the work around prevention with perpetrators and children was welcomed.
- In terms of the place-based approach, domestic abuse had been identified as a priority for the previous 'Place Partnerships' initiative and the associated funding had allowed the trial of a different approach to engaging with local communities. This approach had now shifted to a focus on the Primary Care Networks and there were good links with colleagues in health.
- The grant funding had been focussed on key areas such as the impact of domestic abuse on children and victims with complex needs. It had been utilised for a number of specialist support initiatives, the vast majority of provision being through third sector organisations. All work had been informed by a needs assessment undertaken in collaboration with partners.
- Benchmarking against other local authorities in respect of the conversion rate of calls made to the Police could be provided for Members.
- The significant increase in reports of coercive controlling behaviour was partly due to increased awareness of this crime
- The 'safezone' scheme was broader than the 'safe spaces' scheme, providing somewhere for anyone who felt unsafe to go and access support; and there was an awareness of the need to minimise any confusion between the two. All libraries had signed up to the safezone scheme and training would be offered to staff. Targeted work would be undertaken to widen the provision of safezones, particularly in the rural and Batley and Spen areas.
- The national recognition of the significant impact of domestic abuse on children and young people was welcomed and the project to share the voice of young people with perpetrators was interesting.
- It was now compulsory for schools to address the issues of the development of healthy and positive relationships with young people and to foster and encourage appropriate attitudes. There was a working group on healthy relationships group which focussed on these issues and positive work was being undertaken in the district's schools. The Community Engagement Team had worked on a pilot project at a school in Dewsbury and the aim was to train the Designated Safeguarding Leads within all high schools to deliver this. Consideration was also being given to a similar age-appropriate package for primary schools.

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- The Place Partnerships funding had provided the opportunity to prove the value of community interventions and had also highlighted the importance of community resilience. A new approach to commissioning was being developed to enable more effective use of resources and this would include consideration of funding for place-based, community-based work on domestic abuse. The learning from this work would also be shared with other teams such as Community Plus and build into the core service.
- The project with hair and beauty industry would include training on how to offer support and signpost in a discrete manner.
- There was a dedicated team working across all the hospital sites to identify individuals who may need support and significant work and training being undertaken to improve awareness across the wider workforce.
- It was queried whether this service was mirrored in adjacent trusts as constituents on the edge of the district may cross the borders to attend their nearest hospital.
- The key issue was considered to be having a workforce that was skilled to recognise domestic abuse and communicate/link back to GPs where appropriate.
- In response to a question to Yorkshire Children's Centre, about whether the level of need for the behaviour change programme was being met, it was explained that this was very difficult to assess. It had taken a while to build the momentum of referrals and engagement. One of the challenges was that individuals who took part had to be willing to engage, have accepted some accountability and be motivated to change.
- An established working group was proactively looking at the issues of sustainable and safe accommodation. Work was being undertaken alongside third sector partners to help people stay safe in their own homes. It was acknowledged that there were no easy solutions in respect of access to stable housing but best practice in other areas was being examined and discussions undertaken with partners.
- The timescales for the community engagement activity were included within the delivery plan, as recommended by the Committee in March 2022.

Councillor Pattison stressed the importance of this work and welcomed the additional funding that had facilitated additional work and the adoption of a more detailed approach in terms of early intervention, as well as supporting victims, their families and the wider community.

Resolved -

- (1) That the officers and representatives of partners be thanked for their presentations.
- (2) That it be noted that work is to be undertaken to widen the provision of 'safezones', particularly in the Rural and Batley and Spen areas.
- (3) That further information be provided for Members in relation to:
 - (a) benchmarking against other local authorities in respect of the incident/crime conversion rate for reports made to the Police; and
 - (b) the approach being taken on a wider scale, in terms of the adjacent NHS Trusts that Kirklees residents may access due to their location towards the edges of the district.

60 Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment and the Communities Partnership Plan

A report was submitted which set out the findings emerging from the annual refresh of the Kirklees Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA), including a spotlight on road safety and serious violence.

Jill Greenfield - Service Director Customer and Communities, Jo Richmond - Head of Communities, Chris Walsh and Lee Hamilton – Safer Kirklees Managers and Jaqui Theaker – Data and Insight Enablement Lead were in attendance to present the report and answer questions.

Councillor Carole Pattison, the Cabinet Member for Learning, Aspiration and Communities was also present, as well as representatives of partner organisations; Superintendent Helen Brear from West Yorkshire Police and Chris Bell from West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue who was the Chair of the Road Safety Partnership Group.

It was explained that the refresh of the SIA was undertaken on an annual basis to ensure that the themes within the Partnership Plan remained valid and to highlight any exceptions, trends or potential areas for future focus. A full review was undertaken every three years.

The SIA was subject to discussion with partners and theme groups prior to being finalised. The recommendation was that the existing themes should be retained with a continued focus on the existing priorities listed below:

- Violence and Exploitation;
including implementation of the new Serious Violence Duty and the response to the West Yorkshire Violence against Women and Girls Strategy; prevention of young people becoming involved in Urban Street Gangs and a focus on understanding the levels of repeat incidents of domestic abuse.
- Neighbourhood Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour;
Including the development of the Action Plan to supplement the Police response through a place lens.
- Inclusive and Resilient Communities;
Including ensuring robust and supportive services to meet needs and mitigate impact in respect of migration and asylum and prevention work associated with hate crime,
- Reducing Risk;
Including the establishment of a partnership body to steer delivery and oversight of effective prevention, treatment, recovery and enforcement in relation to drugs.

The report included the key findings from the refresh of the SIA with a specific focus on road safety, as a top priority for local people in respect of community safety, and serious violence, which was a key priority for the partnership.

In respect of road safety, the focus was on reducing the numbers of people killed or seriously injured and improving the perceptions of road safety associated with speeding vehicles and inconsiderate or dangerous parking.

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Chris Bell explained that the Partnership Road Safety Strategy and Action Plan aligned with the strategic aims of the Kirklees strategy and the Police and Crime Plan for West Yorkshire including 'Vision Zero' with the stated aim of reducing killed and seriously injured by 50% by 2030. Partners included Safer Kirklees, West Yorkshire Police, Highways, Health, the Safety Camera Partnership and Parking Enforcement and a range of different initiatives and engagement activity was being undertaken with local communities to reduce the risk and challenge the perceptions about the safety risk. A data-driven response was used to ensure that efforts and resources were focussed where they were most needed.

In respect of serious violence, the approach was based on prevention, early intervention, disruption and enforcement using data and intelligence to work with partners with a focus on identified wards.

Helen Brear assured the Committee that serious violence and road safety remained key priorities. Helen presented the statistics relevant to overall crime in the district, which included a reduction in the figures for incidents of serious violence and anti-social behaviour in Kirklees. There had been an increase in possession of weapons offences due to targeted activity.

She explained that the approach was intelligence-led policing involving collaborative and innovative working with partners and communities on specific projects and details were given of a number of initiatives that were yielding positive results.

In respect of road safety the aim was to produce a dataset intelligence document to inform the approach, along with consideration of national and regional good practice. The four main issues in terms of road safety were excessive speed, using a mobile phone whilst driving, driving without a seatbelt and drink driving.

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

Road Safety:

- Speeding was anti-social behaviour and should be recognised as such. Road safety was the issue that was consistently raised as a concern by residents. The Police online reporting system did not allow people to report speeding as a crime; this had been pointed out previously but not resolved. Superintendent Brear assured Members that road safety was a priority for West Yorkshire Police and undertook to consider and respond to the issue raised about reporting speeding via the website. She outlined other ways that issues could be reported, such as using the 101 telephone number and via the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. If a road safety problem was identified this would be dealt with by the police and partners through enforcement and education measures.
- As mentioned in the deputation, people's concerns about safety affects their willingness to walk and cycle. If analysis of the data gathered by devices to measure speed indicated that the 85th percentile speed was over the speed limit, then this was reality not perception.
- Work was undertaken with the Highways department and reference to traffic surveys to determine whether the issue was one of perception and would be followed-up by engagement with local communities about the findings.

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- It was queried how the data gathered from the Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) was used.
- Collisions and damage to property from vehicles, in a particular location, on a regular basis, indicated a road safety issue and increased risk. The understanding was that the data on non-injury incidents could be extracted but this would be confirmed and an update provided for the Committee.
- The Road Safety Partnership Group was developing an intelligence package that would provide a wider picture than just data on collisions.
- The data from the SIDs would be analysed by Highways and implementation of appropriate measures prioritised according to the level of risk across the district.
- Work was being undertaken at regional level to identify those areas in priority need of works, intervention and education.
- Those who travelled at excessive speed were in the minority but enforcement was needed.
- Although the numbers were small and were reducing the data indicated that almost half of those killed or seriously injured were cyclists and it was questioned what was being done to address this.
- Further detail was given in respect of the statistics involving cyclists. The police were working closely with partners on this issue including promoting awareness of the new legislation, which afforded greater safeguarding for cyclists, and undertaking enforcement.
- The good work being undertaken by the partnership was acknowledged.
- The triangulation of the information and data was important and welcomed as it may be that some communities were not raising road safety issues due to other concerns being more of a priority.

Serious Violence

- It was interesting to hear the statistics were reducing significantly as there were perceptions about the numbers of young people carrying of knives. Perception of the level of serious crime could impact on people's confidence to go out.
- In respect of the numbers of people in treatment associated with drugs and alcohol, this was a complex area. A Drugs and Alcohol Strategy was in development and local providers were making significant efforts to ensure that there were more accessible points for entry into services. There had been a period when access to treatment had become more difficult and the pandemic had impacted people's ability to access services. Treatment and recovery provision were being built up and there were strong links with the housing, domestic abuse and other teams.
- The reasons for young people becoming involved in gangs were complicated and there were many different factors. Engagement was being undertaken by partners, including the third sector, to capture the voices of young people and to aim to deliver the services that they say they need.
- The work being undertaken with schools was welcomed. Young people should be provided with information on how to report issues if they felt unsafe and then be part of the solution.
- The Police were working alongside the voluntary sector and education partners to build the trust needed to be able to better engage with young people.

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- In respect of the involvement of ward councillors, the Safer Kirklees briefings were a source of information for local councillors on the issues in the ward including those in respect of serious violence or road safety and provided a forum to allow discussion of the priorities and proposed actions in each area.
- The Road Safety Partnership aimed to involve all partners where possible including engagement in specific areas where appropriate.
- In terms of police activities funded by particular wards a report on outcomes would be provided to the local councillors and the local communities. Such tailored initiatives were available to any other wards in the district. There was a need to ensure that the results and learning from such initiatives were fed back to the partnership to take forward.
- The figures for serious violence for Kirklees indicated that it was a safe place and it was acknowledged that there was a need to improve upon positive communication to improve perceptions, in a sensitive manner, and to promote the positive work being undertaken.

Resolved -

- (1) That the officers and representatives of partners be thanked for their presentations.
- (2) That it be noted that the issue raised in respect of not being able to report speed using the West Yorkshire Police online crime reporting portal is to be considered and an update provided.
- (3) That it is recommended that the importance of working and engaging with Ward Councillors on issues in their areas be embraced by all parties.
- (4) That further information be provided for Members in relation to:
 - (i) the responses made/action taken in response to the data gathered from speed indication devices and how this is shared with partners.
 - (ii) how data in respect of collisions not involving injury is collated and utilised.

61 Lead Members' Updates

Councillor Andrew Marchington, the Lead Member for the Children's Scrutiny Panel updated the Committee on the work being undertaken by this Panel and Councillor Jackie Ramsey provided an update on the work of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Panel.

The updates were noted.

62 Work Programme 2022/23

The current version of the Committee's Work programme for 2022-23 was submitted for Members' consideration and was noted.