
COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 17th March, 2021

Present: Councillor Glen Harrison (in the Chair),
Councillors Bernadette Parkinson (Vice Chair), Judith Addison,
June Harrison, Kath Pratt and Tim O'Kane

In Attendance: Councillor Jenny Molineux (Hyndburn Borough Council),
Kirsten Burnett (Head of Policy & Organisational Development),
Inspector Steve Rides (Lancashire Constabulary)
Lancashire Constabulary Police Analyst

Apologies: Mr. Doug Hayes and Kate Walsh

162 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Kate Walsh and Co-optee Doug Hayes.

Councillor Tim O'Kane acted as substitute representative for Councillor Kate Walsh.

163 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no interests or dispensations declared at the meeting.

164 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25th November 2020 were submitted for approval as a correct record.

Resolved - That the Minutes be received and approved as a correct record.

165 Community Safety and Police and Crime Update

Councillor Jenny Molineux, Portfolio Holder for Health and Communities, reported on the work of the Community Safety Partnership. She reported on measures implemented by the Community Safety Partnership to tackle crime and reduce re-offending. She referred to the importance of the Police, Council and relevant partners working together and pointed out that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) aimed to ensure that the right people were brought together to work effectively and that their focus was on environmental crime, violent crime, inquisitive crime and youth related crime. She expressed gratitude for the Police's attendance today and indicated that the questions submitted in advance to the meeting by the Committee would be responded to in detail. She placed on record, her thanks to all those who had contributed to the CSP and also noted the valuable contribution that the late Councillor Tony Dobson had made during his time as Chair.

The Chair read out the Committee's advanced questions, submitted prior to the meeting, and responses were provided as below:

How does the CSP choose its priorities?

Kirsten Burnett, Head of Policy and Organisational Development, reported that priorities were chosen through a variety of ways including local surveys, Lancashire Talking, feedback from Councillors, contributions from the members of the Community Safety Partnership and from the Police themselves. She provided examples of the different types of crimes they focussed upon.

Referring to the number of Police Officers and PSCOs in Hyndburn –

- a) How does the number of Officers now compare with previous years?
Inspector Steve Rides (Hyndburn Police Inspector) and the Lancashire Constabulary Analyst referred to changes in policing as a result of the modernisation programme introduced a few years ago. Inspector Rides pointed out that Officer numbers were consistent and there were no plans to change this at the moment.
- b) Are there any vacancies to be filled in Hyndburn?
Inspector Rides reported that there were PCSO vacancies and there was an ongoing recruitment campaign.
- c) How will the national drive to recruit more Officers be reflected locally?
Inspector Rides reported that this was a question more relevant for the PCC Office and Chief Constable and would circulate a response after the meeting.
- d) Will this recruitment drive lead to any restructuring of neighbourhood policing in Hyndburn?
Issues on recruitment would be for the PCC Office and the Chief Constable to consider, however, there were no plans to change the number of Officers in Hyndburn in respect of the Neighbourhood Policing Team and the recruitment of any new Officers would be spread across different portfolios.

3. A reduction in crime numbers in most categories.

- a) Why do you think this is?
The Police Analyst reported that there had been a reduction in crime due, in part, to the pandemic and that this was reflective both nationally and locally. She reported that the reason for this was because there had been less opportunity for some crime types as people had remained in their homes (during lockdown). There had been less vehicle crime (more vehicles had been left at home rather than parked on the street during working hours), less business and economic crime (less shop lifting because of shop closures etc.) and impact on violent crime (less night time economy). Peaks and troughs in crime were regularly reported to the Police and Partners and were dealt with as appropriate.
- b) Could a reduction in crime be linked to the public being less likely to report crime?
and c) What are the Police/CSP doing to encourage the public to report crime?
Inspector Rides referred to the different ways in which crime could be reported including Lancashire Talking, online reporting and via Police visible on the streets. He indicated that there had been no obvious sign that people were more reluctant to report crime.

4. Why had there been less crime data on certain areas in Hyndburn than in others?

The Police Analyst reported that the data supplied was an example of the data used to inform the CSP and provide interventions. Areas of greatest crime risk and threat were prioritised. All areas were included and if rises were seen in an area they would be looked at and prioritised accordingly. Inspector Rides pointed out that crime levels were monitored and he would direct resources into areas of risk.

5 Has Accrington Town Centre Crime reduced since the Police Station moved to Broadway?

Inspector Rides referred to the difficulties of quantifying if the Police Station moving to the Town Centre had had an effect on crime levels. He pointed out, though, that it was likely that the increased visibility of the Police in the Town Centre had had an impact on crime, particularly on shop lifting and in assisting the effectiveness of Operation Broadway. He also referred to a number of ways the Police could reduce crime in the Town Centre.

6. There have been big increases in Anti-Social Behaviour

a) What are the Police doing to tackle ASB in the problem areas mentioned?

Inspector Rides reported that anti-social behaviour would feature in their 'repeats' list and would be added to a weekly patrol plan. He reported that this was also an area that the Youth Panel would focus upon and initiate Outreach work. He pointed out that the location of these buildings were an attraction for anti-social behaviour but they would put people in the right places to engage with youths. He also referred to work with Lancashire Talking.

b) What do the Police do to address anti-social behaviour issues in more obscure areas such as Jackhouse Nature Reserve?

Inspector Rides referred to problems of anti-social behaviour around Jackhouse Nature Reserve last Summer and detailed enforcement action implemented to deal with these problems as well as work in educating youths in the dangers associated with these areas (such as water) and in the prevention of littering.

7. What has the public response been to the In the Know system? How are you promoting this to the public?

Inspector Rides reported that 'In the Know' had been around for a number of years but Lancashire Talking was a bolt on to this. This was the biggest change in how the Police engaged with people and the public response had been good. It had been piloted in Hyndburn for 12 months and the information gained from this would be used to identify issues and locations.

8. What, if anything is happening with PACT meeting? Are there plans to revive these once lockdown restrictions are lifted?

These meetings had been around for a long time and Lancashire Talking was a new ways of engaging with people and way of people talking to the Police about issues in their area. He indicated that if enough people were interested in attending PACT meetings and they would be of a benefit to an area then he would support the reintroduction of them.

Additional questions were submitted from the following Members of the Committee:

Councillor Judith Addison – how did Police and Council responsibilities interact in respect of fly tipping. She referred to a number of instances of fly tipping that had been posted on social media. She wanted clarification of when offences were deemed civil or criminal. In

addition she referred to parking issues in back streets of terraced properties. She pointed out that there were often issues of obstruction caused by vehicles which may be blocking access for vehicles such as bin wagons or emergency vehicles due to shortage of parking and again requested clarity on whether the Police or the Council were responsible for enforcement. Inspector Rides reported that this would be likely to be a Council issue although the Police would work with the Council on issues such as identifying vehicles owners. The Head of Policy and Organisational Development reported that the Council were looking at environmental issues strategically and mapping out interventions the Community Safety Partnership could contribute to.

Councillor Judith Addison – Do we know how many fixed penalty notices for fly tipping the Council had received in the last 12 months and were the relatively small fines handed out enough to deter future offences. The Head of Policy and Organisational Development reported that this was an operational issue and could feed through to the Task and Finish Group but was unable to provide an answer on these issues.

Councillor Tim O’Kane – he referred to the PACT meetings and suggested that fewer people attending these meetings should not be a deterrent for having them. He indicated that any information was valuable and residents would appreciate knowing that their concerns had been fed back to police at these meetings. Inspector Rides clarified that he had been referring to the value of the meeting as opposed to the numbers turning up at the meetings. He pointed out that Lancashire Talking would provide residents with a similar opportunity. He also outlined other ways in which the Police had provided opportunities to communicate with the public.

Councillor O’Kane referred to problems in communicating with Police using the Lancashire Talking forum in that data sharing was a problem and could be restrictive which could hold back feedback to the Police. He asked how verification was made of suspects over 18 years of age. The Police Analyst referred to ways in which data was analysed and explained that questions of this type would have to be referred back to those carrying out analysis.

The Chair referred to the importance of the presence of the Police and expressed concern that numbers of Police had not returned to previous levels and that any additional officers had been situated in other parts of the country. Inspector Rides referred to the distribution of new Officers directed to Lancashire and pointed out that this would be the responsibility of the Chief Constable and the PCC. He pointed out that there would be an increase in Officers in East Division some of which covered Hyndburn and there would be an increase of those patrolling Hyndburn as well as carrying out other duties.

Resolved

- (1) That the presentation and comments be noted; and**
- (2) That the Committee expressed their gratitude to the representatives from Lancashire Police, the Head of Policy and Organisational Development and Councillor Molineux for their attendance and contribution to the meeting.**

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed