
COMMUNITIES AND WELLBEING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 15th March, 2023

Present: Councillor Loraine Cox (in the Chair),
Councillors Carole Haythornthwaite, Scott Brerton and Sajid Mahmood
(Vice Chair)

In Attendance: Inspector Peter Norris, Kirsten Burnett and Linda McCarthy

Apologies: Councillors Dominik Allen, Jenny Molineux, Bernadette Parkinson and
Colin McKenzie
Co-optees Jenny Molineux and Bernadette Parkinson

317 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

There were apologies from Councillors Dominik Allen and Colin McKenzie; and from Co-optees Bernadette Parkinson and Jenny Molineux.

318 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest or dispensations.

319 Minutes of Last Meeting

To receive the Minutes of the meeting of the Communities and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 14th December 2022 for approval as a correct record.

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

320 Responses of Cabinet to Reports of Overview and Scrutiny

The Chair Invited the Scrutiny and Policy Officer to present this report.

The Officer explained that when Overview and Scrutiny Committees submit reports or recommendations to Cabinet or Council, it is a requirement to report back the responses to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This report relates to recommendations reported to Cabinet in January 2023 regarding support for Citizens Advice Rossendale and Hyndburn. The recommendations are outlined in the report and pleasingly, were accepted by Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the Scrutiny and Policy Officer and Cabinet for accepting the recommendations.

321 Community Safety Partnership Update

The Chair said that due to the close relationship between agenda items 5 and 6 (Community Safety Partnership and Police Reports) these items should be considered

together. It was agreed that the Committee should hear both reports before asking questions.

Kirsten Burnett, Head of Policy and OD for Hyndburn Borough Council and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, presented the Community Safety Partnership Update.

The Partnership is made up of organisations who have a statutory duty for Community Safety and a number of other statutory, voluntary and community organisations. They work together to protect their local communities from crime, focusing on local issues and priorities. They reassess local crime priorities and develop community safety plans in consultation with partners and the local community. Kirsten drew attention to the following points of the report:

- The role of the Scrutiny Committee
- Hyndburn's CSP structure
- Priorities and how the CSP tackles them
- Serious violence duty
- Other related groups
- Domestic Homicide Reviews
- Crime and Disorder
- Lancashire Talking

Kirsten explained the close working relationship between the CSP and the Hyndburn Neighbourhood Policing Team which was a real benefit for the Borough.

Inspector Peter Norris, presented the report in agenda item 6, Police Report – Hyndburn District Yearly Overview. Inspector Norris explained his background. He is fairly new in post, but actually started his career in Hyndburn where he worked for 8 years. He explained the make-up of the neighbourhood policing team which he oversees and their roles in the community. The report covers the whole of policing activity in Hyndburn, not just the work of the Neighbourhood team which Inspector Norris oversees.

Inspector Norris asked that attention be drawn to the first page of the report, which was essentially a summary of the entire report. The page included the crime stats under numerous headings and these are outlined in detail in the report. Inspector Norris wished to elaborate in some of these areas:

Violence against the person – This involved several crimes, including serious assaults but also “non-contact crimes”. There is also overlap and double counting with domestic violence reporting.

Sexual Offences – This saw an increase of 43 offences. For context, this includes serious sexual assaults but also online/social media crime.

Hate crime – figures have reduced significantly which is pleasing to see. A lot of work has been carried out with schools and the faith sector which is likely a contributing factor to this.

Burglary – The way in which this data is reported has now changed, with burglary previously reported under numerous types (e.g. dwelling and non-dwelling) but now all falling under one category. However, burglary rates have reduced which is very pleasing.

Anti-Social Behaviour – This has seen a big decrease with 1100 fewer incidents. Inspector Norris said he is still aware there is a lot of ASB and the Police and the CSP actively target known hotspots.

Inspector Norris mentioned the Lancashire Talking section of the CSP report presented by Kirsten. Police Officers are actively encouraging people to sign up to this and he hoped that Councillors could help by also encouraging their residents to sign up. He noted that Great Harwood has a lower number of residents signed up than other areas.

Local Councillors should have had invites to meet with their Neighbourhood Policing Sergeants. Inspector Norris has also asked his team to focus on increasing Watch Associations which again Councillors may be able to assist with. The Police will provide support to establish new or reinvigorate existing watch associations.

The Chair thanked Inspector Norris and Kirsten for their reports. The Community Safety Manager, Linda McCarthy was also present at the meeting to respond to questions.

The Committee asked the following questions and answers were provided by a combination of Linda, Kirsten and Inspector Norris.

1. The road safety statistics in appendix 3 are concerning, with pedestrians killed or seriously injured much higher than the Lancashire average. Have any specific locations been identified where incidents are occurring? And what are the CSP or the agencies who make up the CSP doing to address this?

Linda McCarthy responded. Road safety sits with LCC under the Lancs Road Safety Partnership. It is only unitary authorities that hold this as a priority. The local CSP will work with local neighbourhood policing in supporting initiatives and undertake PR campaigns around road safety. As a local CSP we are involved by informing of specific locations of concern.

Kirsten Burnett added that as LCC lead on this, the Committee may wish to ask them for more information.

Inspector Norris referred to the Safer Roads Unit and a new role starting in East Lancashire, with all referrals for road safety concerns being filtered through one person. These will be scored against risk and the road safety unit may then act on this.

The Chair said that Councillors often have issues with reporting road safety concerns, with LCC often saying concerns are a Police issue and vice versa. Hopefully the new role in the safer roads unit will help with this.

2. Anti-social behaviour is a concern for many of our residents and an issue which often requires a multi-agency approach rather than just police intervention. What is being done by the CSP to try and steer young people away from anti-social behaviour?

Linda responded. Hyndburn holds a multi-agency youth panel that uses a staged process centred on the following action/ interventions that may include:

- A phone call to their Parent or Guardian- To explain that their child has been involved in ASB in the area, with the intention of preventing this behaviour from continuing etc.
- A visit by Early Intervention officer.
- A visit by local Police officer or PCSO.
- A joint visit with a key partner.
- A referral to the Youth Panel.

The crucial part of the above options is the referral to the Youth Panel.

The intention is that a maximum of 10 individuals are discussed at the youth panel, centred on key individuals, who could perhaps even be classed as ring leaders in an area. The Youth panel then discuss the young persons to:

- Identify which partners are already aware of the youth.
- Identify if any partners are already working with them, and highlight positive and negative engagement.
- Discuss any possible enforcement action, such as tenancy warning.
- Discuss diversionary activities to divert away from ASB.
- Create a wraparound support for vulnerable persons who have been drawn into ASB.

A plan is created for each of the cases that are raised, to ensure that there is a healthy mix of enforcement and diversionary work.

Inspector Norris added that this model is working very well.

3. Residents respond positively to seeing police on the streets. What visible neighbourhood policing initiatives are ongoing in the borough?

Inspector Norris responded. He said he has made it a priority for his team to be visible on the streets, and referred to several operations including Operation Rally, where one particular area is flooded with Officers for a day. This has been carried out in 3 areas so far and in the most recent, Oswaldtwistle, Councillors were invited. The operation has been very well received by locals and will continue in other areas.

The Chair referred to the Bright Spark Operation and said she had received lots of positive feedback in her ward. Inspector Norris said November/December usually sees a spike in ASB, but didn't this year and he thinks that is a result of this operation.

4. Vehicle crime is high compared to Lancashire. It is also very visible with constant reports on social media of people having their cars broken into. What is being done to tackle this?

Inspector Norris responded. He said that this stat covers a big category of crimes, usually committed by very different people. The stealing of cars is usually by organised crime groups. Stealing from cars is usually opportunistic. Criminal damage is also included.

There was a big increase in the stealing of cars, with a pattern of people entering the Borough on low loaders and dragging high end cars onto the back in broad daylight. These offences were committed by the same people and were significant in number. He tasked Officers with stopping these crimes, which they achieved but were unable to secure a prosecution, although some individuals are now on bail for offences linked to these crimes.

Stealing from cars is a very different issue, and there have been major problems in Oswaldtwistle, Clayton and Great Harwood. The Police identified and have prosecuted those responsible for the majority of these incidents in Oswaldtwistle and Clayton and have identified those responsible in Great Harwood. He said it is difficult to catch criminals as they target unlocked cars, therefore don't have hammers etc in their possession to break into the cars. Thefts from vehicles has also been included in operation rally.

5. Both domestic violence and sexual offences have shown significant increases. The increases are alarmingly higher than the East Lancs and Lancashire averages. Why is this and what is being done to address it?

Inspector Norris responded that this had been mostly responded to in the presentation. He also added that Domestic Violence is complex crime which nearly always happens behind closed doors. The proportion of arrests made is still low (not just in Hyndburn but nationally) but is increasing which is positive. The Police engage with the Domestic Violence forum. Kirsten Burnett added that there is a lot of work amongst numerous agencies across Lancashire, including locally between Hyndburn Borough Council and HARV. Linda McCarthy referred to the shared forum with Ribble Valley and the need to promote the use of Claire's Law more.

6. I've had numerous reports in my role as Councillor of assaults against taxi drivers. Is this a prevalent issue and if so is anything been done to tackle it?

Inspector Norris responded. He said he is not aware of this being a particularly prevalent issue although the police database doesn't allow for searches against the victim's occupation. However, he is aware of a couple of incidents and the Police have developed good links with taxi firms although he thinks these could be further improved. He said that most crimes will undoubtedly be linked to alcohol/drug use by the offender. Taxi firms may have provision which can help with investigations including recording of calls, in cab footage and tracking of vehicles.

Councillor Haythornthwaite followed up by asking about links between alcohol use and ASB. Inspector Norris said that although this data is recorded, he expects that in reality the rates are actually higher due to the way data is collected. He did however say licensed premises are rarely highlighted as significant locations for ASB.

7. Burglary and ASB statistics are showing big improvements in Hyndburn which is pleasing. What has been done to achieve this?

Inspector Norris said he was pleased that the Committee had chosen to ask about some positive aspects. Regarding burglary, he said that incidents can have dramatic increases by a single person being released from prison. Every reported burglary now gets a revisit from the team. There is also a dedicated team in the east of the county for burglary, who worked in Hyndburn recently to resolve an issue around the Sefton Farm area where a number of people have been charged. They also have a Sergeant who quality assures every burglary investigation.

Regarding ASB, he referred to work carried out and success working with Clayton Boxing Club, which it would be great to replicate in other areas.

Councillor Brerton said he wished to praise his local neighbourhood officer who is very engaging with the community. He also referred to Mounted Police being well received when on patrol in his town. He also invited Inspector Norris to attend a future CAG meeting in Great Harwood and will send an invite.

The Chair thanked those for attending the meeting. She also wanted to ensure her thanks was minuted to Inspector Norris and the Neighbourhood Policing Team, she said there has been a noticeable increase in police presence and engagement with the community in her ward and hoped that this would continue going forward.

322 Police Report - Hyndburn District Yearly Overview

The report and questions for this item were discussed under agenda item 5.

Signed:.....

Date:

Chair of the meeting
At which the minutes were confirmed