

CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel was held on Thursday 18 February 2021.

PRESENT: Councillors , L Lewis (Vice-Chair), R Arundale, C Dodds, L Mason, J Rostron and J Thompson

OFFICERS: S Bonner, D Metcalfe and M Walker

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors C McIntyre, J Goodchild and B Cooper

20/30 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest received at this point in the meeting.

20/31 **MINUTES - CULTURE AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL - 7 JANUARY 2021 AND 21 JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the Culture and Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 7 and 21 January 2021 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

20/32 **NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SERVICE - OVERVIEW**

As part of the Panel's review into the Neighbourhood Warden Service, the Head of Stronger Communities provided an overview of the Neighbourhood Safety Team and made the following points:

- There were 50 neighbourhood wardens who carried out a number of roles including supporting vulnerable people i.e. refer to and link them to specialist support services such as Homeless, Substance Misuse, Debt Management, Domestic Abuse, Routs to Employment/Work, Health services and Support victims of crime and antisocial behaviour.
- Wardens could also act as professional witnesses as they were all equipped with Body Cameras.
- Wardens were able to issue parking fines as well as offer advice and guidance for dog fouling.
- They were also responsible for enforcing the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in the TS1 area which covered a range of different contraventions. One of the main drivers of the PSPO was to change people's behaviour.
- An example of welfare visits carried out with vulnerable members of the community whereby an elderly person with mobility problems had been checked upon by the Warden Service whereby it was found they were unwell and got them medical help.
- The service also comprised four Environmental Neighbourhood Safety Wardens that, in addition to the aforementioned duties, dealt with fly tipping enforcement, abandoned vehicles and stray dogs.
- The service also comprised seven Neighbourhood Safety Officers who were responsible for developing multi-agency action plans and responding to community issues. They also worked closely with elected Members and other key partners in order to investigate complaints, anti-social behaviour and to develop prosecution packs were appropriate.
- In terms of partnership working, the Warden Service also comprised a town centre team whose expansion had been funded from the Tees Valley Combined Authority. The driver for this expansion was the need for increased support in the TS1 area.

- The funding also helped to provide two police officers who worked in the town centre and with the Neighbourhood Wardens and Neighbourhood Safety Officers.
- The town centre team also worked closely with local businesses.
- The Wardens had gained Police Accreditation from the Chief Constable of Cleveland Police which makes the Wardens a greater part of the wider police family.
- The Wardens had also taken part in COVID Marshalling in conjunction with Park Rangers and Community Hub staff.
- The Warden Service also formed part of the Locality Working model and worked closely with Selective Landlord Licensing.
- The Wardens also worked closely with Schools and community group to raise awareness of various crimes in the hope of reducing them.

A Member queried how the Warden Service was deployed around the town as it appeared that in some cases they were not present. It was clarified that given the funding from the Tees Valley Combined Authority it was intended for the TS1 area that this was where most of the Warden provision was focused. However, it was also confirmed that the service was patch orientated so Wardens could be deployed where they were needed.

A Member queried if the Wardens had been subjected to violent acts. It was confirmed that the Wardens had not, although there were examples of Wardens experiencing verbal abuse, but that this was fairly common. It was also confirmed that Wardens were trained in how to risk assess situations and to remove themselves from dangerous situations if required.

A Member queried if the Wardens were equipped with Body Cams and if there was a way they could approach communities to communicate their successes which may assist with reducing concerns of reporting issues.

It was confirmed that all Wardens were equipped with Body Cams which could be used to provide evidence in court cases. It was also confirmed that the Warden Service feedback to communities about issues that had been reported, which could include leaflet drops. The Head of Stronger Communities was open to suggestions from Members on how this could be improved.

A Member queried how many fines and fixed penalty notices had been issued in the last year. It was confirmed that the information would be provided to the Member separately.

The Chair queried if the Warden Service had been benchmarked against other authorities. It was confirmed that given the nature of the Warden Service and the fact that Councils had a great deal of flexibility in how they managed their own operations, it was difficult to benchmark against others. Examples of issues that were present in Middlesbrough but not present in many other areas was selective landlord licensing.

It was also confirmed that Middlesbrough's Warden Service regularly spoke to other Warden Services both in Teesside and further afield to understand best practice operations.

Service provision was also determined by identification of need, with the example of the Public Space Protection Order and Selective Landlord Licensing being cited.

The Head of Stronger Communities introduced the Council's new Senior Warden who was asked if he would be bringing anything new to his role at Middlesbrough.

Having previously worked at Stockton Council it was confirmed that the tools available to Warden Services were the same but that he would bring his experiences to use those tools in a way that suited Middlesbrough's communities.

It was commented that Middlesbrough had not made great use of Community Protection Orders and that the new Senior Warden had led on this during his tenure at Stockton Council. Members were made aware that Community Protection Orders could be used for a wide variety of reasons including waste accumulation on a private property or for persistent anti-social behaviour.

ORDERED:

- 1. That information about numbers of fixed penalty notices be provided to the Panel**
- 2. The information presented be noted.**

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COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Chair invited the Head of Stronger Communities to present her presentation on the Stronger Community Partnership.

During the presentation the following points were made:

- The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was a statutory partnership made up of key responsible authorities who had equal responsibility for reducing crime and anti-social behaviour under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Responsible authorities in this context included the Police, Health Services, Local Authorities, Fire and Rescue Authorities, Probation and Youth Offending Services.
- All such authorities worked collaboratively with other statutory and non-statutory organizations as well as the voluntary sector and local people to ensure the CSP's objectives were met.
- The CSP was required to produce the Strategic Intelligence Assessment every two years.
- Structurally, the CSP Executive Group had links with the Local Criminal Justice Board, the Health and Well-Being Board and with the Children's Trust.
- There were a number of themed groups such as PREVENT and domestic abuse groups and the MARAC. There were also operational groups such as the Multi Agency Case Conferencing group.
- The CSP had made important achievements including the creation of Task and Finish groups across the town that enabled effective targeting of specific issues. These groups fed back to Ward Members and the public on their progress.
- An example was Cottingham Drive in East Middlesbrough that had been targeted by youths taking part in Anti-Social Behaviour. The Task and Finish group helped install rapid CCTV cameras with joint patrols between Wardens, Thirteen Group and the Police.
- The CSP also had a statutory responsibility for reducing reoffending. The Council's Community Safety Partnership Officer began a multi-agency working group 2018 involving partners in Roseberry Park's in-patient team, Community Staff and the Police to reduce violence toward NHS staff. After being refreshed and moved into the wider community, this project has led to improved communication between the NHS and Police via non-urgent crime reporting tools and focussed training for police officers in how they could support NHS colleagues.
- This initiative was being progressed with the development of a training video for both the Police and NHS and included raising awareness of the Mental Health Act.
- There had also been successes with regards to reducing repeat offending in retail related crimes. A great deal of work had been done with the Town Centre team resulting in community impact statements as well as Nitrous Oxide Statement and Malicious Communications Statements. Such statements assisted in prosecutions as they detailed the negative effects those crimes had on communities.
- The reducing re-offending group had also reviewed its priorities which included a priority to reduce violence linked to malicious communications. Malicious communications was becoming a significant problem locally, and nationally, given the increased amount of people using online communications.

- An overarching reducing violence plan had also been provisionally drawn up that applied across the entire town that would include a multitude of partners.
- Other achievements included raising £8,000 to fund, install and monitor rapid deployment cameras at Pallister Park and Norfolk shops following anti-social behaviour as well as working with Thirteen Group following an issue with increased empty properties and drug dealing around the Eden Road area of Grove Hill. Following the development of close relationships with local residents a multi-agency approach was taken that led to the situation being dealt with.
- The Council also received Safer Streets Funding totalling £400,000 to reduce acquisitive crime. This project involved collaborative working with the Police and Crime Commissioner's office. The funding needed to be spent on a specific locality, and in this case was being delivered through the Locality Working Project in Newport Ward. The funding covered the installation of 12 new static CCTV cameras and 20 new lighting columns both of which helped to reduce acquisitive crime.
- An important subgroup of the CSP was the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership (DASP). An internal audit was undertaken with recommendations from that audit being carried out. The group's Terms of Reference had been reviewed and a domestic abuse strategy had been developed.
- One of the group's aims was to promote awareness. As part of this it coordinated five Domestic Homicide Reviews with most recent review published in July 2020 with the next one due in March 2021.
- A number of training sessions had also been delivered with adult and children's social care as well as health care professionals. The Council's Domestic Abuse lead oversaw the work and ensured that best practice was shared across the partnership. The partnership ensured that all key stakeholders were kept informed of latest developments in relation to domestic abuse and how victims could be supported via various communications plans.
- An important tool to reach potential victims of domestic abuse was the DASP website which contained helpful tools people could use to access services.
- Work was being carried out to ensure that Council, and relevant stakeholders across the Cleveland area were Domestic Abuse Bill ready and reviews were being carried out across the whole family system and to ensure the effectiveness of the MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference).
- Several initiatives were due to be launched from April 2021 including Room to Change which partnered with Harbour and North Star housing so dispersed accommodation could be provided to perpetrators to engage in meaningful behavioural change programmes meaning victims did not have to move out of their properties.
- All performance information relating to Domestic Homicide Reviews were uploaded into an electronic system so the Domestic Homicide Review performance groups has oversight of those measures and can be updated in real time.
- One of the more high profile achievements delivered by the CSP, in conjunction with the Police and Crime Commissioner was the Knife Angel installation that helped to raise the issue of violent crime in Middlesbrough.
- The CSP also produced the motorbike strategy in conjunction with the Police which led to the creation of 59 signs in key areas where motorbike mis-use was blighting the lives of residents.
- The CSP was also introducing Active Intelligence Mapping (AIM) to assist with combatting crime. A multi-agency hub was provided with analytical data from a wide range of sources and was able to plot that on a map or on graphs to provide trends. This provided teams with an overview of issues and what needed to be done to tackle the issue. This would also allow for more joined up approach to responses.

- AIM data could be used in a multitude of ways and could be targeted at Ward level or by incident type.
- The process of data collection and coordination had a second stage that focussed on validating the value of the AIM process. The main emphasis of the second stage is to monitor the actions and ensure that actions were SMART and to ensure that approaches remained collaborative.

A Member commented that part of the process to collect intelligence through AIM was a reliance on the 101 system. However, some residents had experienced problems with that service resulting in a loss of some important intelligence for AIM.

It was confirmed that the Council could not comment on the effectiveness of the 101 system as this was the responsibility of the Police. It was also commented that AIM was not only reliant on Police information and that while some people may have experienced difficulties reporting problems via 101, AIM was a collection of wider intelligence sources such as reports to the Warden Service or information provided by Ward Councillors, and so was still very accurate.

A Member queried if AIM was downloadable so Councillors could utilise it. It was confirmed that due to the sensitive nature of the data involved it was not although there were some potential development opportunities in this regard.

A Member thanked the Head of Stronger Communities for her department's work in resolving an issue with youths in his ward.

It was queried if the Safer Street Funding was deemed a success was there a possibility it could be rolled out to other locations in the town. It was confirmed that the funding available for Newport was prescriptive and time limited. It was also confirmed that funding for Safer Streets was available across the Cleveland area. However it was clarified that the Council intended to bid for future awards.

It was also queried if the Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership had any direct links with operation Phoenix that was led by the Police. It was clarified that each sub group was created in its own right and as the CSP was a strategic body direct links to individual operations may not exist.

ORDERED: That the information presented be noted.

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CHAIR'S OSB UPDATE

The Chair provided the Panel with an update on the last meeting of OSB which included an update on the Council's ongoing response to the Covid Pandemic from the Chief Executive and Public Health representatives; and an update from the Executive Member for Regeneration on the initiatives and activities within his portfolio.

The Democratic Services Officer advised the Panel to consider Terms of Reference for its review into the Neighbourhood Warden Service.

A Member requested that, as a new Member to the Panel that the Committee's work plan be sent to her for her consideration.

ORDERED:

- 1. That Members consider potential terms of reference of the Panel's review of the Warden Service.**
- 2. The Panel's work plan for 2020/21 be sent to the Panel's newest Member.**

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ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.

None.

