

DONCASER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
(In its capacity as the Crime and Disorder Committee)
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

19TH FEBRUARY, 2015

A MEETING of the COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER ON Thursday 19th February, 2015 at 1.00pm

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Jane Kidd

Councillors Iris Beech, Jane Nightingale, Kevin Rodgers and Yvonne Woodcock.

Also in Attendance:

Councillors John Mounsey and Paul Wray

Karen Johnson – Assistant Director of Communities
Bob Sanderson – Interim Domestic Abuse Strategic Lead
Nikeisha Bragger – Foundation 4 Change Project Manager
Nina Scott – Work experience
Bill Hotchkiss – Head of Service for Community Safety
Superintendent Peter Norman – South Yorkshire Police
Ian Jackson – Probation Service

Member of the Public: Ivan Stark, Doncaster resident

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mark Houlbrook and Deborah Hutchinson

- | | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| 6. <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</u> | |
| There were no declarations of interest made. | All to note. |
| 7. <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER, 2015</u> | |
| <u>RESOLVED:</u> the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. | All to note |

8. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

There were no public statements

All to note

9. CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3

The Panel considered a report relating to crime and anti-social behaviour performance information, in Doncaster.

Members noted that the information was based on the previous 12 month period and that the overall level of crime in Doncaster was 4% higher, but was similar to the overall South Yorkshire trend. However, it was noted that crime had reduced by 10% over a three year period.

Mr Stark, a Member of the public from Doncaster borough, at the invitation of the chair commented generally on crime and disorder issues throughout the meeting.

All to note

In response to Members' questions it was explained that serious acquisitive crime had increased with robbery generally being undertaken to feed drug habits.

Members noted the figures and were assured that robust action plans were produced and considered by a performance group, meeting monthly to address the latest trends. In turn, the Safer Stronger Executive Board holds the theme board accountable for delivery and improving performance.

Members expressed concern with regard to the current child sexual exploitation issues in Rotherham highlighting that parts of the borough, for example, Mexborough were geographically very close and questioned if any support work for victims and specific preventative work was being undertaken in such areas.

With regard to victims who were no longer children, Members expressed concern with regard to closure and support they were receiving, particularly when the perpetrator had deceased. It was noted that South Yorkshire Police were continuing to record historical crimes. It was also confirmed that the Local Authority

provides grant funding to DRASACS (Doncaster Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service) and refer victims to the organisation for support.

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Members were assured that a specific team had been established to address child sexual exploitation crime, with 15 extra staff being made available in Doncaster by South Yorkshire Police to support the dedicated response.

It was noted that South Yorkshire Police and partners were very aware of mistakes that had been made in the past and that all cold cases were being reviewed. It was also stressed that prevention work was being undertaken with children and vulnerable groups. For example, there was an active sexual theme group who worked with school children.

In response to Members concerns relating to crime performance figures being considered at Neighbourhood Management meetings, the Assistant Director for Communities said she would ensure that figures were reported on a regular basis. It was also explained that there was a central pool of analysts that assessed crime figures and hotspots and collated information trends within a 24 hours period. Members were also reminded of the PACT meetings where Police Community Support Officers were in regular attendance with up to date information on localised crime issues. Superintendent Norman also stated that he would address Members concerns raised at this meeting with local police officers.

Assistant Director
Communities

Superintendent
Norman, South
Yorkshire Police

The Panel received an update from the Probation Service on how the multi-disciplinary Impact team addressed first time and repeat offenders. For example, data was used to identify serial offenders with programmes developed to reconstruct their behaviour in a positive way. With regards to reducing burglary, for example, when statistics were assessed it may be that smarter choices needed to be made when working with repeat offenders.

The Panel recognised that there would always be opportunist thieves and noted that good work was being undertaken with local criminals to address their criminal nature. However, it was acknowledged that more sophisticated criminals would target specific areas across the borough to steal cars, for example. Members were assured that information was shared cross

boundary with other Police Forces.

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RESOLVED that:

- a) Improved crime statistics be provided at Neighbourhood Management meetings;
- b) Partners be encouraged to undertake work in areas that border the Rotherham area with regard to Child Sexual Exploitation; and
- c) Partners be asked to continue support for victims of Child Sexual Exploitation who were now adults.

Assistant Director
Communities

10. HIGH RISK DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS UPDATE

The Panel received and considered a comprehensive report providing progress on recommendations it made following a scrutiny review into domestic abuse, undertaken between January and March 2014.

It was noted that a lot of positive work was being undertaken, and acknowledged that further co-ordination work with partners was required. It was stressed that increased training was essential, as the signs indicating that domestic violence was an issue were not easy to pick up, but the right questioning could tease out underlying problems. It was also recognised that abuse was not just limited to physical abuse.

During discussion, Members addressed the following areas:

- 1080 staff had recently undertaken training within the Local Authority and partner organisations;
- Increased training for people who make regular visits to residents homes;
- Increase in awareness raising with teenagers, parents, GP's and pregnant women. Members highlighted the important role health visitors played following the birth of a child;
- Increased awareness training with black and minority ethnic groups and investigating how to best communicate with hard to reach groups, for example, elderly people;

- Increased preventative work with perpetrators;
- Relationship programme delivered through school nurses, the “Build and Bear” initiative;
- Positive work and support undertaken with all parties affected by the crime, including the victim, perpetrator and children. A tough stance was being taken with perpetrators, with reoffenders being addressed through the integrated offender management programme; and
- Use of university students/staff to analyse programmes and data to identify what schemes were working most effectively to ensure future resources were used correctly and have the greatest impact.

Members expressed concern with regard to hidden harm but were pleased to note that with increased awareness, referrals were being received from all age groups, even if it was a minor concern, including people with mental health issues. It was noted that there were many organisations that provided support, including Changing Lives and Women’s Aid who help victims to understand their choices and that what was happening is not correct behaviour.

It was also noted that domestic violence was a priority for the Health and Well-being Board.

With regard to the Council’s refuge service, it was noted that the facility does not operate in isolation and that St Leger Homes provided good high level support.

To conclude Members encouraged continued partnership working, particularly with the Children’s Trust to ensure full protection and support was available.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and an update be received at a future Crime and Disorder Committee All to note

11. **COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY REFRESH**

The Panel receive a presentation relating to the Community Safety Strategy 2014/17.

Members raised concern about the perception that there was an increase in armed robbery in the area and street beggars. In response it was explained that the issue relating to street beggars had been raised through

community consultation and was an area where possible interventions were being investigated.

The Panel was of the opinion that the Community Safety Strategy was fit for purpose but wished for a copy to be circulated to them, for final comments, prior to consideration by Cabinet and Full Council.

RESOLVED: that the Community Safety Strategy refresh be noted and be circulated to the Panel for any final comments prior to consideration by Cabinet and Full Council.

Head of Service
Community Safety

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