

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT CRIME & DISORDER OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2020

A MEETING of the COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT CRIME & DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on WEDNESDAY, 12TH FEBRUARY, 2020 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Mark Houlbrook

Councillors Jane Cox, Nigel Cannings, David Hughes, Tosh McDonald and Sue Wilkinson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Superintendent Thomas, South Yorkshire Police
Bill Hotchkiss, Head of Service Community Safety
Pat Hagan, Head of Localities and Town Centre
Debbie McKinnie, Complex Lives Team Manager
Helen Conroy, Public Health Specialist

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Pearson

		<u>ACTION</u>
13.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None.	
14.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	Councillor Mark Houlbrook declared an interest in agenda item 6 specifically relating to the Crime in Prisons element and stood down from the Chair during discussion.	
15.	<u>MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THE 13TH FEBRUARY 2019</u>	
	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 th February, 2019 were agreed as a correct record.	

16.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
17.	<u>CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT</u>	
	<p>The Committee received a presentation from South Yorkshire Police, the Heads of Community Service and Localities and Town Centre and Public Health relating to the following areas, with questions being posed by the Committee following each section:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safer Stronger Doncaster Partnership priorities and performance overview; • Complex Lives; • Tackling Knife Crime; • Crime in Prisons; and • Child Criminal Exploitation. <p>The following areas were addressed:</p> <p><u>SAFER STRONGER DONCASTER PARTNERSHIP PRIORITIES AND PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW</u></p> <p><u>Off Road Bikes</u> – following a question relating to safeguarding parks and open space areas in Doncaster from damage caused by illegal off road bike activity, it was explained that area teams had undertaken a problem solving approach regularly addressing such issues in hot spot areas. For example, using design features including siting large boulders to stop access to particular areas, however, such solutions must not obstruct public rights of way.</p> <p>It was noted that gathering evidence was key to resolving the situation in problematic areas with local communities being essential in providing the information. In addition Members of the National trail riders association had been trained to identify possible illegal bikers and report this information to the local police force, who in turn provide resources in hot spot areas. Publicity was also used at key locations stating that if bikes were used illegally they would be ceased by the Police.</p> <p><u>4 x 4 vehicle nuisance</u> – Follow the above discussion, it was reported that reports of anti-social use of vehicles was much lower than for off road bikes however, they were responded to in the same way. It was noted that links had been made with car cruise organisations to assist the local Police with investigations.</p>	

Organised crime – following concern expressed that Doncaster had a larger problem than larger cities in the area, it was outlined that some Members of communities were more prevalent in this type of activity. It was not a result of mismanagement but more about the people who wished to be involved with such crimes and where they chose to live.

Organised crime was being mapped against the prison population in Doncaster which attributed to the high percentage due to their location. It was noted however, that when prisoners were released it would be wrong to suggest they remained in the local area and start/contribute to further organised criminality.

It was stressed that whilst organised crime had increased it was worth noting that overall crime in Doncaster had reduced compared to other areas in South Yorkshire.

Domestic Abuse – Members recognised and were disappointed that South Yorkshire Women’s Aid Doncaster had recently ceased operation. It was stressed that they had been a key partner for the Local Authority and the partnership was now ensuring that all referrals and victims were being supported and transferred to other groups in the area. It was hoped that funding for future provision could be sought.

Reporting crime – It was confirmed that Atlas Court in Sheffield centrally recorded the crime for South Yorkshire, and acknowledged that the reduction in crime in Doncaster was due effort by the Partnership rather than under reporting.

It was explained that if a member of the public did not wish to have a Police presence at their home, there were a number of methods to report crime, for example, through telephoning or emailing the Neighbourhood Teams, telephoning the 101 service, emailing the control room or crime stoppers to supply anonymous information to the Police.

Police 101 non-emergency number – in response to concerns that people using this service were continuing to hold for lengthy periods before calls were being answered, it was explained there had been a commitment to increase the number of staff to respond to demand. It was acknowledged that for calls to be answered immediately it would require intensive resources both in the call centre and for front line Police officers and a current challenge was to ensure the balance was right. Compared to previous years response times were improving with the average wait time reducing.

Organised Crime – With regard to for the Doncaster area, it was explained that each of the organised crime groups was scored in relation to the threat towards particular communities, therefore the highest scoring received more intensive resources with varying

degrees of support locally and regionally from a Neighbourhood Team to the Special Assets level.

Neighbourhood Policing – Following the Local Police Authority review into PCSO's and community consultation, it was agreed that the number of PCSOs be reduced with the saving being used towards increasing neighbourhood policing. It was also noted that Edlington Police Station would be reopened at the end of February, 2020.

Connect - IT System – Following South Yorkshire Police's review of IT, it was explained that the Connect system was purchased to replace the aging stand alone systems. The new system runs the command and control, communications centre and intelligence case building making daily operations and analytical capability more efficient and effective. It also allowed for certain partners, for example, the Probation Service access to certain information.

Sexual and Domestic Abuse – It was confirmed that there had been an increase in confidence to report this crime therefore the figures would increase but also a positive position in that people were seeking help. Additionally there had been two notable historical sexual abuse cases involving a high number of victims therefore having an impact on the reporting figures.

With regard to the Domestic Abuse Caseworker Service, it was acknowledged that there could be multiple referrals from the same victim but the crime was reported separately and treated individually, because the level of risk could have changed since being first reported.

It was acknowledged that there were still hard to reach communities that had a reluctance to report abuse and it was thought the reason was confidence in the partnership and support provided. The Partnership was undertaking work into finding such communities and established voluntary groups in these areas to promote support and services available. A perpetrator programme was also used to help offenders with behavioural change and was widely promoted.

Proceeds of crime – Within Doncaster it was noted that financial advisors were now aligned to Detectives therefore the seizure of goods and cash was a key feature in the investigation strategy. It was noted that a response would be made to the Committee following the meeting in relation to proceeds recovered.

Substance misuse support programmes – it was explained that there was both structured and unstructured support available. Structured support included support with needle exchange, 1-2-1 Counselling, substitute prescribing and residential rehabilitation out of area. This was suitable for people who were seeking positive change to their lifestyle.

Unreported crime – Following an example of unreported crime provided by a Member, it was noted that under reporting was not unique to Doncaster but a national problem. It was stressed that there were a number of methods that could be used to report a crime to assist the community's confidence. From a Police perspective using the 101 service was essential for them to collate evidence and its promotion would continue.

A piece of work was currently being undertaken to map areas with the lowest and highest confidence of crime reporting to enable future work to be undertaken in these communities. To assist the public with updates on reported crime, South Yorkshire Police use the "Alert" system to provide such information through their website.

In connection with the example provided by a Member, it was stressed that any crimes, particularly around the entrances to schools, then they must be reported to ensure proper investigation.

COMPLEX LIVES

Members supported the work being undertaken by the Complex Lives Team and were impressed with it's operation.

As explained in earlier discussion the community had been encouraged to report begging incidents in the town centre but it was noted there had been a reduction in the number of people begging. It was outlined that Doncaster continued to undertake assertive support and were currently managing 122 people who were rough sleeping in the town centre and since the introduction of the Complex Lives Programme approximately 200 people had been accommodated and were receiving support. The team had linked to the town centre team and when behaviour was unacceptable then enforcement was required however, the first approach was to help people find support.

The Real Help scheme had been introduced in Doncaster with the aim of encouraging and educating people not to give money to people on the street but to support in other positive ways.

The Committee congratulated the partnership on the positive work being undertaken by the Complex Lives Team and noted that nationally across agencies the work was well promoted. Doncaster had been identified as an exemplar authority by the Welsh Audit Office and other local authorities use the work undertaken as best practice attracting interest from other authorities wishing to learn from the Council's experience. It was recognised that the work being undertaken was receiving recognition nationally however, all local authorities were having to address complex lives in some way.

NOTE: At this point in the meeting the Vice-Chair assumed the Chair following Councillor Houlbrook's declaration of interest.

Knife Crime

It was clarified that the Police undertake regular proactive stop and search work where knives had been found. It was explained, for example, people carrying craft knives and multi-use knives being used for the correct purpose were not classed as offensive weapons if a person had a legitimate reason to carry them. It was recognised that a lot of preventative work was being undertaken with, for example, Scout Groups who may carry knives for specific activities and ensuring they knew of possible consequences if they continued to carry them once the activity had ceased.

Members were informed of the recently established Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel in Doncaster whose membership included members of the public. The Panel received information on operations and crime figures with feedback from this Panel being fed into how future operations were undertaken.

With regard to number of young people being referred to the EPIC programme, a response would be provided following the meeting.

Following queries relating to the loss of youth provision, the opinion was that there was no correlation between this and the increase in knife crime but more a social acceptance to carry knives. It was therefore important for the Government and Local Police to highlight the dangers of carrying knives. With regards to the media it was stressed that the Partnership should use it effectively to educate and promote messages that carrying a knife was wrong and the consequences of that, including you would be more likely to be a victim.

Crime in Prisons

Following the presentation there were no questions asked on this issue.

NOTE: At this point in the meeting, Councillor Houlbrook assumed the Chair.

Cuckooing – It was confirmed that this was a form of crime where drug dealers take control of a vulnerable person's home in order to use it as a base for dealing in drugs. Members were informed that in Doncaster there had been a small number of instances however, it was not a regular issue but staff were aware and appropriately trained to assist with any future problems. It was confirmed that victims of this crime had received wrap around support.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

	<p>With regard to preventative work to reduce the risk of this crime, it was explained that the EPIC Team responds to any identified individual or area to provide positive activities, education and support. A weekly partnership CCE meeting was held to ensure that any young person susceptible to this crime was provided with a support package.</p> <p>Again, the provision of youth services as a diversionary tool was raised and noted that research into young people without direction showed they were more vulnerable to exploitation. It was acknowledged that the additional youth provision could be used as a diversionary tactic.</p> <p>To conclude the Chair thanked the officers for their time and the interesting and informative information provided.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>a) The discussion be noted; and</p> <p>b) The following further information be provided by South Yorkshire Police:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of young people referred into EPIC in 2019 for knife crime; • The percentage of stop searches in Doncaster resulting in a knife being found; and • With regard to POCA (proceed of criminal act) and how much the PCC (Police and Crime Commissioner) received. 	
18.	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Chair outlined the areas covered by the Panel this year and asked that any issues for in-depth reviews for the 2020/21 period be forwarded to him for consideration.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>a) the discussion be noted; and</p> <p>b) the possibility of a visit to the 101 call centre at Atlas Court in Sheffield, be investigated.</p>	