

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 2021

A MEETING of the COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the on THURSDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 2021, at 2.00 pm.

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Daniel Barwell
Vice-Chair - Councillor Nigel Cannings

Councillors James Church, Gemma Cobby, Julie Grace, Emma Muddiman-Rawlins, Glynis Smith and Gary Stapleton

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Bill Hotchkiss, Head of Service Community Safety
Rachael Long, Crime and Safer Doncaster Theme Manager
Mel Palin, South Yorkshire Police
Luke Shepherd, Probation Service

17 **Apologies for absence**

Councillor Debbie Hutchinson.

18 **To consider the extent to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.**

There were no items.

19 **Declarations of Interest, if any.**

There were no declarations of interest made.

20 **Minutes of the Community and Environment Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 11th October, 2021**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Community and Environment Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 11th October, be agreed as a correct record.

21 **Public Statements.**

There were no public statements.

22 **Community Safety Strategy 2022 - 25**

The Panel was presented with the Community Safety Strategy 2022-25, produced by Doncaster's Community Safety Partnership, prior to it being presented to Cabinet and Full Council. The Strategy and accompanying Deliver plan provided an overview of the

Partnership's key achievements and outcomes they were seeking to achieve for the people of Doncaster.

The Panel noted the strategic priorities reflected within the Strategy, as follows:

- Tackling domestic and sexual abuse;
- Reducing anti-social behaviour;
- Reducing crime and re-offending;
- Tackling serious and organised crime;
- Reducing substance and alcohol misuse; and
- Reducing violence and violent crime.

The Panel addressed the following areas in detail:

Supporting the Authority's corporate objectives: It was explained that the Strategy interconnected with every element of the Council's objectives and supported them in the following way:

Doncaster Working – addressed crime reduction and reoffending which in turn attracts new investment to the Borough, leading to increased employment within its communities, supporting local businesses and the economy;

Doncaster Living – work across the Doncaster theme groups supports Doncaster's communities to feel safe wherever they live;

Doncaster Learning – the partnership engaged with the youth Council, children and young people, schools and education providers;

Doncaster Caring – working towards improving safeguarding for victims and vulnerable people;

Connected Council – working as a partnership to provide prevention and a good response to criminal activities.

Consultation – it was noted that this was detailed within the report but in response to a question, it was explained that due to the current pandemic alternative methods of consultation had to be used and unfortunate that face to face consultation could not be undertaken. Through the Safer Stronger Doncaster partnership different faith organisations, the Youth Council, elected Members and media communications were used to gather feedback and bearing in mind the current health circumstances as much consultation as possible had been undertaken.

With regard to consultation responses by geographical area and age, it was explained that from the responses:

- a. Aged 45 – 65 majority of responses received followed by the 25 to 44 age group
- b. Post Code – Highest responses were received from DN3, DN4 and DN5 with decent representations from DN1 and DN2.

Detail from the consultation responses was set out within the delivery plan for each theme.

Homelessness and tackling aggressive town centre begging – it was stressed that this behaviour contributed to people feeling unsafe, not just in the town centre but in outlying towns within the Borough. It was noted that the partnership had been aware of the situation for some time and in Doncaster there was an integrated approach to tackle the situation. It was recognised that people who were begging generally had very complex lives and it was important that they were receiving the appropriate support, but this could take time and there was no quick fix.

A Member of the Panel raised that not all people begging were homeless but saw it as a means of additional income, to possibly feed an addiction. It was therefore stressed that these residents required appropriate support and that instead of passers-by handing over money, people needed to support the “Just Giving” campaign.

With regard to additional resources, it was explained that more could always be undertaken if more were available, particularly in respect of a longer term approach. However it was noted that Doncaster Council had been very forward thinking when this issue emerged and put resources in place to address and support people who needed help.

Reporting Crime – the lack of confidence in people to report crimes through the 101 number was raised by the Panel, and noted that it was also an area of concern highlighted through the consultation. It was explained that the confidence to report a crime through 101 had been addressed in detail when developing the Strategy and highlighted that perception wait times were sometimes higher than actual reality, however, it was an area being addressed by the Partnership.

The Panel noted the importance for communities to understand how information was recorded and fed back, as a longer term response could be required rather than immediate feedback, following evidence gathering. It was explained that a more sophisticated recording mechanism was being investigated through the Localities Model, to provide improved data collection and sharing at a local level.

It was stressed that all data currently collated was used at the local solutions meetings to pin point hotspots and provide a response and resources where they were most required.

Integrated Offender Management Service (IOMA) – in response to a query relating to the role it played in tackling prolific offenders it was explained that, again, it was a partnership approach with a strong focus on rehabilitation, but also swift use of consequences if there was a breach of conditions. It was noted that the system had just been the subject of a national strategic review. The results had created a three cohort model of Fixed, Flexed and Free individuals that the Probation Service and Police jointly target as the most prolific offenders:

Cohorts Include:

Fixed – certain neighbourhood crimes;

Flexed – priority cohort eg. high frequency shop lifting; and

Free – focus on domestic abuse, violence and youth offenders moving into the adult world.

Cases were managed through MACC (multi-agency case conferences) where individuals were discussed and plans developed to put interventions in place. The IOMA had strong links with the substance misuse and health services and as Covid diminished would be co-locating at the Probation Service to achieve maximum information sharing.

Gender based violence – the Panel made reference to recent drink spiking against females whilst enjoying a night out and questioned the Strategy’s focus for this issue. It was explained that the Partnership was developing strategies and action plans to best respond to violence in every form against women and girls. It was noted that funding had been received from the violence reduction unit to provide kits to prevent drink spiking directly into bottles. It was also explained that the Night-time economy group would be providing education for licensed premises staff to assist them with identifying and spotting the signs of someone who could have had their drinks spiked as they could look similar to someone who had just had too much to drink. Links would also be made with Area Managers to undertake a mapping exercise of incidents along with information sharing with neighbouring authorities. It was stressed that women need to feel safe in any area but particularly where there could be some intimidation.

Welcoming Refugees and Asylum seekers to Doncaster – The Panel was informed that the Council and its partners would be providing support to make Doncaster a welcoming place. It was noted that there were dedicated roles for staff within the Council who met with key providers regularly to ensure people were protected, supported and housed in appropriate locations.

Clear, Hold and Build Strategy – It was explained to the Panel that this was a Home Office initiative with a short, medium and long term structure to tackle serious and organised crime. Doncaster put itself forward to use the principles of Clear, Hold and Build to tackle issues within some of its communities where organised crime had become embedded. The Clear element was the enforcement approached led by the Police, for example gang injunctions against individuals. The Hold and Build elements were for the Partnership to work within communities, for example, using any available funding for forensic marking or CCTV installation.

Substance Misuse reduction – In response to a question it was outlined that there was a focus on a strong recovery community that was complementary and part of maintaining prevention and providing people with strong role models. There was also a suite of services available, from prevention, harm reduction and recovery that catered for the different needs of individuals, families and communities.

The Chair explained to the Panel that this issue had recently been addressed at OSMC and Members had met service users to discuss their experiences with support services provided.

Violent Crime - It was explained that this crime category cut across many areas that required addressing. The example of violent crime linked to the night-time economy was discussed and was generally created through alcohol consumption and substance misuse. It was stressed that it was a very complex arena where violent crime covers threatening behaviour to murder and manslaughter. It was recognised that the different elements of violent crime, from the night time economy to organised crime would be addressed differently to violence associated with domestic abuse.

With regard to prevention, it was emphasised that the Partnership theme groups addressed prevention and intervention. It was acknowledged, unfortunately, that violence could be a by-product of the night time economy and the Partnership group addresses prevention methods, including, educating licensees on how to stop serving people who have had too much to drink, door staff training, ensuring resources are deployed to developing situations and monitoring hotspots on cctv.

It was noted that Doncaster Police had a representative on the regional violence reduction unit where information and learning was shared.

Support for children and young people not in education due to exclusions – In response to a question it was explained that this issue was a massive concern and addressed through a local approach. Not all children and young people who were excluded from school would engage in anti-social behaviour, but some do and could become highly vulnerable. If this was the case then the approach would be to find out why and put mechanisms in place to get the child back into education and stop the offending.

It was stressed by a Member and echoed in discussion that if a child was not in school, for some it was their only safe space and not to have this was an area of great concern.

Performance targets – The Panel noted that the Strategy provided an overview of achievements from the previous Strategy, new priorities and what would be delivered. The SSDP was made up of a number of theme groups and each had a terms of reference, delivery plan and performance measures.

With regard to statistical targets and measures it was explained with such complex issues it was very difficult of set a target of, for example, reducing something by 10%. It was

highlighted that with regard to Domestic Abuse, violence and anti-social behaviour it does not look good that there was an increase in reporting, however, this would indicate there was more confidence to report crime.

Purple Flag – The status was being developed by the Night Time Economy group. It was noted that some aspects were linked to funding and a date when the group was hoping to achieve the Purple Flag status would be sought and circulated to the Panel.

Next steps – following approval of the Community Safety Strategy the theme group chairs and key partners would meet to revise the delivery plans based on the Strategy's priorities and feedback from the consultation. Once the plans were developed each group would report back to the Safer Doncaster Partnership Board with progress against actions in the Strategy.

Finally it was noted by Members that the Panel would be meeting on 9th February, 2022 as the Crime and Disorder Committee where it would address delivery of the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Community Safety Strategy, be supported.

23 Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan and Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Senior Governance Officer presented the Scrutiny Work Plan and Council's Forward Plan or Key Decisions to the Panel for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Scrutiny work Plan and Forward Plan of Key Decisions, be noted.

CHAIR: _____

DATE: _____