

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT CRIME AND DISORDER
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY, 2021

A MEETING of the COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held by MICROSOFT TEAMS - VIRTUAL MEETING on WEDNESDAY, 10TH FEBRUARY, 2021 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Mark Houlbrook

Councillors Nigel Cannings, Mick Cooper, Martin Greenhalgh, David Hughes, Tosh McDonald and Sue Wilkinson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

External;

- Superintendent Thomas, South Yorkshire Police
- Chief Superintendent Melanie Palin, South Yorkshire Police

DMBC;

- Bill Hotchkiss, Head of Service Community Safety
- Helen Conroy, Public Health Specialist
- Tim Staniforth, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse Theme Manager
- Rachel Long, Crime and Safer Doncaster Theme Manager

		<u>ACTION</u>
19.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.</u>	
	There were no apologies of absence made.	
20.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None.	
21.	<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.	
22.	<u>MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT CRIME AND</u>	

	<u>DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THE 12TH FEBRUARY 2020 AND COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THE 22ND OCTOBER 2020</u>	
	<p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th February, 2019 were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October, 2020 were agreed with the inclusion that the report considered also covered the Section 19 report.</p>	
23.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
24.	<u>CRIME AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PERFORMANCE REPORT</u>	
	<p>The Committee received a presentation from the South Yorkshire Police, the Heads of Community Service and Public Health in relation to the following Stronger Doncaster Partnership (SSDP) priorities and performance overview, including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic;</p> <p>The following discussions took place under each priority heading;</p> <p>Priority 1 - Reducing Crime and Reoffending</p> <p>It was explained that during 2020, there had been a decrease in reported crime, which could possibly be linked to Covid-19 and the restrictions in place. It was noted that with more people working from home or advised to stay at home, that burglaries and residential dwelling crime had decreased.</p> <p>In respect of other crimes impacted by the pandemic, it was reported that there had been increases in incidents of domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, online fraud (due to increased online work) and finally, crime towards the vulnerable (for example, by individuals masquerading as NHS workers).</p> <p>It was clarified that incidents were reviewed on a daily basis and rag-rated with the appropriate response identified. It was explained that the police was keen to maintain a core response with plans to scale up and scale down accordingly. In terms of Covid-19, it was reported that the police had to adapt accordingly and that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was now routine.</p> <p>The Chair thanked South Yorkshire Police for the work undertaken on the frontline and recognised the contingencies that had been put in place</p>	

In reference to the increase in crime during September 2020, it was explained that this was a reaction to the enforced lockdown and that some small increases that had occurred.

In terms of Neighbourhood Policing, Members were informed that this would be delivered gradually and rolled out as part of the Chief and forces plan from an uplift of officers through policing. It was explained that this was about building on those neighbourhood teams already in place with the aim to become fully staffed over a 12-18 month period. It was clarified that there were a total of 3 Inspectors, 9 Sergeants and 52 Police Officers with a contingency of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was added that South Yorkshire Police was presently in a dialogue with St Leger Housing Doncaster to utilise their housing stock to enable a greater police presence within communities that would also provide increased flexibility.

In terms what this new model would mean to existing PCSOs, it was explained that many PCSO'S were transferring over to the police and that others had wanted to remain within the neighbourhood police. It was requested that clarification be provided on the number of PCSOs there were in Doncaster that were part of the Neighbourhood Policing teams.

Members welcomed the prospect of increased visibility in policing and hoped that it would help to reassure residents and deter crime.

Priority 2 - Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour

Concerns were raised around negative perceptions/categorisation off-road bikes. It was explained that the police was bound by the home office and nickel list although such issues raised were being taken on board.

It was noted that local farmers and landowners had suffered deliberate damage to gates and fences with the intention of gaining access. It was continued that reports had come in from both the public and Councillors that quad bikes had been causing issues. Members were assured that this was being responded to and that work was being undertaken with off-road teams.

It was reported that Doncaster had seen an increase of 10.9% of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) that had included off road bikes and Covid related neighbour disputes during the last 12 months.

Concern was raised about 'rowdy and inconsiderate behaviour' being grouped as one sub-group category. A brief explanation was provided about the main categories and sub-groups and it was noted that this terminology used before the nickel list had been retained by the Home Office to fine tune what areas of Anti-Social Behaviour were being considered. It was recognised that there could be a distinction

between 'rowdy' and 'inconsideration behaviour' but that this was bound by accounting rules of home office.

Regarding increased fly-tipping in the countryside and rural areas of the Borough, it was acknowledged that the rural crime agenda had increased over the last couple of years. It was outlined that a rural crime team has been established during the last 12 months, which had received significant investment and was made-up of dedicated officers that were directly dealing with such issues whilst increasing the level of engagement and interaction with landowners and farmers in Doncaster. It was added that the rural crime officers also worked closely with the Council and with the off road bike team reaching into rural areas and observing behaviours. It was explained that recently a joint operation had taken place that involved both teams and worked very well covering a multitude of issues including rural crime. It was commented that it was positive that South Yorkshire Police had recognised its value and had invested well in the team.

Regarding CCTV, it was explained that Doncaster as a whole had benefited from an excellent CCTV service in the Doncaster Town Centre, areas of Mexborough and Thorne and Moorends, which had a public realm system that was fixed. It was explained that many other communities were looking to develop systems to deploy cameras to other areas that would have a wider benefit and could cover the main routes as well as providing reassurance. It was clarified that part of the bid was about renewing the deployable network capability, so those cameras could be moved around, therefore if there was a problem in a particular area, the cameras could be deployed accordingly. Members were informed that steps were being taken to identify opportunities for future funding and stated that the Council's CCTV team would be happy to work with local community groups and their CCTV plans. It was acknowledged that not all cameras could be monitored back at the Civic Office although this is something that the Council would wish to do more of where feasible.

Concern was raised around vehicle nuisance such as lorries and appropriate uses of CCTV in hotspot areas.

It was clarified that part of the capital bid was in relation to fly-tipping, and acknowledged that cameras could be used in different ways, for example. those that were battery operated. Members were informed that work was being undertaken closely with Environment Enforcement to look at purchasing more cameras if funding was to enable that.

It was reported that begging incidents had decreased by 38%, despite high volumes remaining in Town Centre. It was explained that a great deal of work was being undertaken through the Complex Lives Team to move individuals into suitable accommodation and support them during the pandemic. It was recognised that this had led to a decrease in numbers (also due to a reduced footfall and therefore less reporting). It

was acknowledged that this should not detract from the huge amount of work being undertaken by the Complex Lives Team as part of a partnership approach with the Police and St Leger Homes. It was commented that with a number of retail and businesses closing down had enabled the Council and its partners to take a more intelligence led approach in providing the correct support. It was continued that there had also been increased engagement with businesses that supported a problem solving approach to be taken. It was acknowledged that those plans would be amended accordingly as businesses began to open up.

Priority 3 - Protecting Vulnerable People

Funding from external sources were welcomed to address domestic abuse that would help provide much needed support. It was explained that the Chief Officer Strategic Board recognised that the issue had been around for a long time and would be developing a new strategy in the future. It was continued that this might help to identify new work streams that could be funded as long-term funding was considered as a major issue going forward.

In response to a query whether there had been a reduction in powers within the 2004 Domestic Abuse Act, Officers were unaware that that had been the case. There was a brief overview of the process regarding the arrest of perpetrators and it was acknowledged that there was a raft of legislation in place.

In relation to Operation Encompass, concern was raised that a number of primary schools, secondary schools and a special school had not signed up to it. Members were informed that this would be scrutinised very closely as part of the work of the strategic board as it was recognised as important to deliver that training to the staff in those schools. Members were told that there was confidence in that by the end of April, all Doncaster schools would have signed up to it.

In terms of domestic abuse offenders, it was explained that cases were often repeat incidents made up of a medium and standard risk. It was noted that the Safe Lives charity (that supported domestic abuse services nationwide) had reported that statistically a victim would experience domestic abuse 50 times before they sought proper help. It was added that in terms of the perpetrator, that even though it might be the first time they were made known, that it was highly likely the offence was not their first time.

It was noted that there was recognition how domestic abuse was not just about violence but also about other forms of abuse such as coercive control. A Member requested a breakdown of men who had suffered from domestic abuse.

Priority 4 – Tackling Serious and Organised Crime

The Chair acknowledged the good work undertaken in keeping communities' safe and building greater confidence in the police.

Concerns were raised about drug activity in place around the Town Ward where young people had become involved in delivering drugs and using different types of transport such as electric bikes and scooters. It was acknowledged that individuals had become very resourceful within this area and would use different methods. Members were assured that intelligence on how groups were operating was passed onto the police who would tactically respond to it.

It was noted that intelligence may relate to a particular location or building (of any description) in terms of activity. In this event, work would be undertaken with the Police to address that and liaise with the landlord of that property where required.

It was requested that information on successful operations be brought as part of the next annual Communities and Environment Crime and Disorder Committee 2022 Overview and Scrutiny meeting.

Priority 5 - Reducing Substance and Alcohol Misuse

Members were informed that there was a 10% baseline prior to the pandemic with 10% of drinkers in the system resulting in 90% unmet need. It was explained that the increase in referrals at the front door would result in a decrease in that unmet need because they were new people into the treatment centre who had not previously engaged in the process. It was commented that this increase at the front door was pleasing as it would increase the number of people in treatment and therefore the ratio would be favourable.

A Member raised a question around foetal alcohol syndrome in Doncaster. It was noted that it formed part of the safeguarding work undertaken by children's services with affected families working with women who drank during pregnancy and offered that this information would be provided outside of the meeting.

It was acknowledged that there was a link with substance misuse and domestic abuse and recognised that partnership working was key. Reference was made of the challenges when both substance misuse, domestic abuse was combined with mental health, which could potentially result in significant problems.

A Member commented that it was good to know that all these departments and partners were working closely together.

On a separate note, it was requested that information be provided on the number of officers within South Yorkshire Police that were trained in wildlife and the country act (and also who oversees that area).

	<p>Finally, the Doncaster District Commander Chief Superintendent Mel Palin introduced herself to the Committee, commented on the positive value of the meeting and welcomed Members involvement in wider engagement opportunities.</p> <p>The Chair commended the work undertaken and thanked officers and partners attending.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:</p> <p>a) The discussion be noted; and b) The following further information be provided by South Yorkshire Police and DMBC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority 1 - Reducing Crime and Reoffending – Number of PCSOs there are in Doncaster as part of the Neighbourhood Policing teams? • Priority 3 - Protecting Vulnerable People - Breakdown of men who have suffered from domestic abuse? • Priority 4 – Tackling Serious and Organised Crime – further information on successful operations to be brought as part of the next annual report/meeting 2022. • Priority 5 - Reducing Substance and Alcohol Misuse – cases of Foetal alcohol syndrome in Doncaster? • Number of officers in South Yorkshire Police that are trained in wildlife and country act (and oversees that area)? 	
25.	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Senior Governance Officer presented the Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan report for the 2020/2021 municipal year.</p> <p>RESOLVED that:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Overview and Scrutiny Work Plan for 2020/2021 be approved; and 2. The Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted. 	