

Minutes of	Community and External Scrutiny Committee
Meeting date	Monday, 22 January 2024
Members present:	Councillors Angela Turner (Chair), Lou Jackson (Vice-Chair), Keith Martin, Lesley Pritchard and Jasmine Gleave
Officers:	Darren Cranshaw (Head of Democratic Services) and Ben Storey (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Guests:	Andy Pratt MBE (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire and Chair of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership), Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities and Leisure and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership) and Zaf Hussain (Sergeant – Lancashire Constabulary)
Other attendees:	Sarah Bullock (Deputy Chief Executive) and attending virtually, Councillors Karen Walton, Phil Smith, Hilary Bedford, Matthew Tomlinson and Kath Unsworth.
Public:	3

6 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Matt Campbell – substituted by Councillor Jasmine Gleave
- Councillor Colin Coulton
- Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman

7 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of any interests were made.

8 Minutes of meeting Monday, 27 November 2023 of Community and External Scrutiny Committee

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the last meeting, held on Monday 27 November 2023, were an accurate record for signing by the Chair.

9 Road Safety Partnership

The Chair welcomed Andy Pratt MBE, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner and Chair of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership to the meeting, inviting him to provide an introduction and overview of his role.

A number of questions were asked by the Committee, with responses outlined below:

(Q) Could you give an overview of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership?

(A) The Partnership was at first a camera partnership between Lancashire Police, Lancashire County Council and the other unitary authorities in the county. It has since developed into the Road Safety Partnership that currently comprises of:

- Lancashire Police
- Lancashire County Council and the other unitary authorities.
- Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service
- The Highways Authority
- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency
- North West Ambulance Service
- Parish/Town Council Representatives

The Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service undertake a lot of educational work in primary and secondary schools across the county, in addition to covering fire and water safety despite not having a statutory duty to do so.

The Partnership meet regularly to develop a strategic approach and co-ordinate multi-agency activities to ensure and promote safer roads across Lancashire.

(Q) As Chair of the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership how do you make sure it is effective and fit for purpose? How are you able to hold individual partners to account?

(A) It can be a challenge to manage individual partners who wish to maintain their own operational autonomy and have their own priorities and financial constraints. There is scope for more involvement of public health partners in the work of the Road Safety Partnership, particularly around the misuse of drugs and alcohol and treatment options available.

A recent success of the Partnership was a significant drink and drug campaign over the Christmas period, a period which saw 1 in 7 drivers randomly stopped arrested for either drink or drug offences.

(Q) What work does the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership do to make the roads and communities of South Ribble safer?

(A) The Police and Crime Commissioner's office had implemented a return to and an increased number of dedicated road policing units who undertook additional training and operated fully equipped high speed pursuit vehicles. Members of the Committee would be welcome to view the capabilities of these specialised vehicles.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue are delivering targeted lessons in primary and secondary schools and Lancashire County Council are commissioned by the Government to undertake bike safety lessons in primary schools.

In addition to static cameras, mobile camera vans are deployed strategically in areas where issues are identified with residents encouraged to report problems to the Police through their Speed Concern Portal. Despite over 80,000 speeding prosecutions across the county each year, this hasn't seen a reduction in casualty rates on our roads.

Northwest Ambulance Service are now delivering a programme of two hour intensive lifesaving sessions targeted towards job sectors that use our roads the most, namely delivery drivers, refuse collectors or taxi drivers who are most likely to be first to a scene of a collision. The council is encouraged to consider training its staff and councillors in lifesaving skills in the event of encountering an incident on the road.

(Q) How does the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership engage with district councils and councillors more widely?

(A) Attendance at meetings such as tonight is one example as are other meetings with elected councillors but there is more that can be done. The Community Safety Partnership is another means to raise awareness and issues around road safety and link in with highways officers at Lancashire County Council.

(Q) We are considering our Community Safety Partnership at the next item. How does the Lancashire Road Safety Partnership link with the Community Safety Partnerships in their statutory duty to reduce crime and disorder?

(A) The Road Safety Partnership links in with the Community Safety Partnership at a county level which is chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Q) When we speak with residents, speeding is a major issue – what more enforcement can be done by the Police to deal with repeat offenders?

(A) Mobile camera vans and officer deployments are directed by data and intelligence that is received which can be reported via the Speed Concern Portal. Enforcement has taken place in 20mph areas when reports of blatant and excessive speeding have been reported but there aren't a significant number of them, however the majority of complaints received in relation to speeding are in 20mph areas.

A number of road safety initiatives to tackle speeding are implemented, such as involving school children to support neighbourhood policing teams in stopping drivers and highlighting the dangers of speeding, members of the public are also invited to support the police in operating handheld speed cameras through the Community Road Watch scheme. Prohibition orders are also issued for a number of offences against drivers and allows vehicles to be seized.

Intelligence regarding persistent offenders is also analysed and a database links in with the network of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras that alerts road policy units to the location of offenders.

(Q) What is the current position with 20mph zones and are the existing ones enforceable?

(A) Lancashire Police operate on a model of targeting where there is the highest risk which tends to be excessive speed in rural areas where more serious collisions and injuries occur. As mentioned earlier deployments in 20 and 30mph areas are more likely as a targeted response to repeat offending.

(Q) The Council's licensing team was involved in Operation Vertebrae last year – was the Partnership involved and does it have any influence on similar operations in the future?

(A) Operation Vertebrae was co-ordinated by the DVSA along the M6 between Carlisle and Birmingham and involved a wide range of other organisations. The operation is a great example of the Partnership working together with the two week operation achieving its targets within a single day – another operation is planned for later in the year. Data on the number of prosecutions and types of offences could be made available to the Committee.

(Q) E-bikes and e-scooters are increasingly being used in criminal activity – are there any plans to change the current no-chase policy?

(A) There remains a policy not to pursue these vehicles due to concerns over safety in doing so, however if the owners of the vehicles can be identified then officers can visit their address and seize them.

(Q) Parking around schools is also a major area of concern – what is being done to tackle the issue?

(A) This is an issue around most schools across Lancashire and needs the co-operation of the school to tackle repeat offenders parking on yellow lines or zig-zags. There are examples where a letter from the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner's Office to parents outlining the law and what the penalties are for offences has had a positive impact on reducing the number of cars parking illegally. Members are welcome to contact the Police and Crime Commissioners' Office to highlight persistent issues at specific schools and arrange for letters to be sent to parents or a visit to speak to representatives from the school and/or the school council.

Operation Snap, which is a police videography and photography reporting process, is another means that can result in warning letters or if appropriate a prosecution.

(Q) What more can local communities do to help improve road safety?

(A) A cultural change amongst road users is needed nationally with behaviours generally since the pandemic having deteriorated, particularly with vehicles driving through red lights. There is a bigger ambition of turning drivers from liabilities to lifesavers as demonstrated by the Northwest Ambulance Services' training program. Collaboration between different organisations to better get messages out into the community is another area where improvements can be made.

Questions from Members of the Public

(Q) There has been a persistent problem with speeding for many years on the roads around Runshaw College – why would Lancashire County Council consider the area unsafe for a camera when mobile cameras are often located in other areas of Leyland?

(A) In 30mph areas it would need to be neighbourhood or road policing staff that make any prosecutions in that area. Mobile camera vans could be deployed but due to their size they can only be set up in certain locations where they can park safely and legally – the vans are deployed in different locations which are published on a monthly basis.

(Q) Is more awareness around drink and drug driving required nationally?

(A) Yes and is an issue where negotiations are ongoing with the Minister of Transport to highlight and advertise more widely in the media.

(Q) What level of first aid training do police officers have? And is the free lifesaving training just available to councillors or to the wider public?

(A) Police officers have different levels of first aid training, with road policing units receiving additional training due to the frequency in which they attend serious collisions. The Northwest Ambulance Service training discussed is free and open to members of the public.

It was subsequently

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Community and External Scrutiny Committee;

1. Thanks the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for attending and answering questions;
2. commends the outcome of the Christmas drink and drugs campaign;
3. would like to take up the offer of viewing the high speed road traffic response vehicle capabilities;
4. agreed to help promote the speed portal road safety and traffic reporting system among councillors and employees, including the community hubs;
5. asks the Council to consider training operational employees and councillors to be life savers in helping in the event of a vehicle collision or incident; and
6. welcomes the offer of data associated with Operation Vertebrae and warning letter template for parents and schools.

10 Community Safety Partnership Update

The Chair welcomed Jennifer Mullin, Director of Communities and Leisure and Chair of the Community Safety Partnership alongside Sergeant Zaf Hussain from Lancashire Police to the meeting and invited them to introduce and highlight key points of the report.

In addition to the report, the Committee heard about recent changes in the model operated by Lancashire Police with a move to the Target Operating Model (TOM) in 2023 – this had seen dedicated and specialised ‘Response Investigating Teams’ introduced, allowing front line officers more capacity to provide high visibility patrols and attend incidents.

On progress and successes in the last year, Members heard that there remained productive relationships between the partnership organisations, with regular meetings taking place. A number of funding streams had also been secured which had seen a positive impact around improving diversionary and educational activities for young people. Regular contact and weekly meetings with the police had ensured

that issues raised received a swift response. Work to tackle anti-social behaviour hotspots has been challenging in the last year with additional resources allocated to target offenders and address the issue.

With regards to the effectiveness of the Partnership, the Committee's attention was drawn to the crime statistics within the report, as well as other factors that are assessed in other areas such as the fear of crime. Other means to demonstrate effectiveness can be measured with performance of the Council's Corporate Strategy that considers how safe residents or visitors feel in South Ribble. On potential underreporting of incidents of anti-social behaviour, the Committee were reassured that in most cases offenders are known to the police and proactive steps are taken to tackle this issue which is often a blight on affected communities.

In response to a query whether councillors would be able to attend and observe any of the regular officer working group meetings it was advised that given the specific nature of the discussions this would not be possible. It was also confirmed that the British Transport Police were not involved in the Community Safety Partnership.

Members heard that the strategy included in the Partnership Plan is a result of the findings of a strategic needs assessment that is undertaken. The Strategic Needs Assessment is carried out every three years with the next one due to be presented in 2024. Furthermore, the Committee welcomed the offer to provide a copy of the Partnership Plan document.

The successes of the Integrated Offender Management review panel were noted, with further data agreed to be provided to the Committee after the meeting.

Operation Centurion has seen an increase in high visibility patrols in known anti-social behaviour hotspots, with officers dedicated to supporting the operation and not being called to other response incidents. These often on foot patrols can therefore maintain an active presence and deterrent to potential offenders across a number of locations in the borough.

Referencing pan Lancashire funding around domestic abuse victim support within the report, the Committee sought reassurance that South Ribble was receiving the support it needed. In response, all the Lancashire wide services are open to residents of South Ribble, however the Partnership funds specific support only available in this area, that being officers to support residents through the court system and wider wrap around support, a domestic abuse co-ordinator and the Sanctuary programme that aimed to make residents feel safer in their own homes.

Questions were asked about where referrals to the domestic abuse support service come from and what other reasons there may be for the 145 rejected cases highlighted in the report. Referrals came from a wide of partner organisations or in some cases are self-referred. On rejected cases, issues around consent or addresses were common reasons, or that other agencies were supporting the individual. A breakdown on the reasons for rejected cases was welcomed by Members.

Confidence was expressed in the outcomes of the Domestic Homicide Reviews given how thorough they are and that they are chaired and supported by independent members. Members heard that that lessons and areas for improvement are taken seriously by the Council and the Community Safety Partnership.

The Committee reflected on the work and successful outcomes of the South Ribble Integrated Team (SRIT). Many of the cases were now being supported by the council's new social prescribing team which had already seen lots of positive case studies around substances misuse, homelessness, hoarding behaviours, removing barriers to employment such as providing bikes or suitable clothes for job interviews. Cases were closed when the team were satisfied that the agreed support had been actioned and completed, though did not prohibit individuals accessing further support in the future.

Members of the public have a number of means in which to report crime, through ringing 101, in person at any police stations or via electronic means through the police website. In terms of reporting of crime, initiatives to deliver key messages to targeted groups at colleges or schools, often with support from victims of crime, was encouraged to highlight how to do so and the processes involved. In certain circumstances, using Crimestoppers was encouraged as another means to reporting crime, particularly where members of the public were concerned or anxious about protecting their anonymity.

Although figures within the report showed an overall reduction in crime, the Committee highlighted areas where serious crimes such as sexual offences, theft and possession of weapons had seen increases and sought assurances that the Partnership is taking steps to address this concern. In relation to cases of theft and burglaries, after extensive work, several significant arrests of prolific offenders had been made over the recent Christmas period which demonstrated a proactive approach to reducing crime and ensuring the safety of residents. The Committee were told about Operation Defender which sought to reduce the risk of re-offending in a particular area through high visibility reassurance patrols.

Questions were asked about additional diversionary activities that could be facilitated through the council's leisure centres. Current programmes such as the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) were already established at the leisure centres across the borough, other partners like Preston North End Football Club also delivered a number of sessions as well as other sports and social clubs supported by the different Community Hubs. Further funding was being sought through the council's Active Health team to provide more activities in parks and green spaces, particularly in Wither Grove with the new facilities there.

On differences and improvements when the committee consider the Community Safety Partnership next year, Members were provided with a commitment to achieving the priorities that had been set out, to place victims at the centre, to reduce crime, tackle anti-social behaviour and provide reassurance to residents.

It was subsequently

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the Community and External Scrutiny Committee;

1. Thanks the Chair of the Community Safety Partnership/Director together with the Police Sergeant for attending and answering questions;
2. welcomes the progress made by the Partnership of the last 12-months;

3. is grateful for the offer of a copy of the Partnership Plan;
4. suggests that consideration be given to the strategic needs assessment being produced more frequently to support and inform the work of the Partnership;
5. requests that further re-assurance be provided on the domestic violence victim support journey around rejected referrals;
6. would be grateful for future reports including crime detection rates and more specific information on what is being done to tackle these crimes; and
7. asks for more information on the plan to extend diversionary activities for young people to help tackle anti-social behaviour be provided to the committee.

11 Committee Matters

12 Lancashire County Council Health Scrutiny Committee Update

Councillor Lou Jackson, the Council's representative on Lancashire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee provided an update on discussions from recent meetings.

Updates were noted on the NHS recovery and transformation strategy and reconfiguration of the Integrated Care Boards, community care, dentistry, the New Hospitals Programme and ongoing assessment of buildings for RAAC concrete.

13 Task Group Update

The Chair of the Inequalities Scrutiny Review Task Group, Councillor Lesley Pritchard, provided an update on the establishment of the Task Group, which now had a remit looking at wider aspects affecting inequalities across the borough. Plans were underway to arrange a number of meetings and engagement activities with members, key stakeholders and partners in the coming months with a final report to be presented in January 2025.

14 Meetings and training attended by Scrutiny Committee members

No updates on training attended were reported.

15 Community and External Scrutiny Committee Forward Plan

The Committee noted the items scheduled for discussion at the last meeting of the Community and External Scrutiny Committee, to be held on Thursday 14 March 2024.

Chair

Date

