
Meeting	Housing and Community Safety Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Date	28 October 2019
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Pavlovic (Vice-Chair), Mason, Vassie, Wells, Musson, D Taylor, and Webb
Apologies	Councillors Baker

1. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they may have in respect of business on this agenda.

Councillor Pavlovic confirmed that he has previously worked with the Interserve Justice Manager, Country Lines Lead (Probation Services).

2. Public Participation

It was noted that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

3. Safer York Partnership Bi-annual Report

The Head of Community Safety introduced the report, outlining the work that has been delivered against each of the Safer York Partnership's strategic priorities. She confirmed that a new strategy is due to be drafted for implementation in April 2020 and work is currently under way with partners to identify the priorities that will be included in the new strategy. She noted that North Yorkshire Police no longer supply crime figures directly to local authorities. Data sets are now obtained from national sources such as iQuanta.

The Chair highlighted the data presented in Annex 1 of the report as being very useful to the Committee and requested updated data be brought back to the Committee quarterly.

In response to member questions the Head of Community Safety and the Superintendent, Commander for York and Selby confirmed that:

- No longer receiving data directly from North Yorkshire Police, does not affect the Community Safety Hub as they have full access to police data. The Council's Business Intelligence Team access data about a month later through national sources than when they received directly from North Yorkshire Police;
- The Community Safety Strategy is drafted by the Safer York Partnership and the Executive Member Housing and Safer Neighbourhoods is a member of the partnership. Once the strategy is signed off it will be brought to this Committee so members are updated;
- Work is carried out with partners and the Counter Terrorism Unit to be prepared for Christmas events, with business and police training events taking place;
- Additional resources would be welcomed, however, the ambitions of the Community Safety Hub and the incorporating Blue Light Services were very positive steps in getting a maximum value out of the resources currently available;
- Police Crime Commissioner recognised the concerns about the lack of police presence in the city centre and has committed to recruitment and a higher police profile in key areas.

Members discussed why the funding of certain CCTV installations was done through Ward Councillors budgets. The Head of Community Safety noted that the Safer York Partnership cannot provide funding as it does not have a budget; the Superintendent confirmed support for having a partnership approach and offered to have conversations on funding outside of the meeting.

Resolved:

- i. That the content of the report and the associated annex be noted.

Reason: To update Members on the performance of the Safer York Partnership.

4. County Lines Update Report and Round Table Discussion

The Committee were joined by Councillors D. Taylor and Webb from the Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee, Superintendent, Commander for York and Selby, and the Interserve Justice Manager (probation service), County Lines Lead for the round table discussion.

The Head of Community Safety introduced the report, noting the impact of County Lines on York and that this is not a surprise due to York's strong transport links. The Safer York Partnership has a strong handle on the issue with the support of North Yorkshire Police and other partners. The Superintendent confirmed that County Lines based on Threat, Harm, and Risk is a number one priority for policing in York.

The Interserve Justice Manager stated that there had been a disappointing approach from National Government and resources are not sufficient. The number of drug workers and mental health workers operating in the county is insufficient to meet current demands. She confirmed that middle class cocaine use is York's main drug issue, and that it has been normalised. The Superintendent agreed that heroin and crack cocaine are the main drugs supplied. Members highlighted the need to raise awareness that heroin and crack cocaine use is not a victimless crime.

In response to Members' questions Officers confirmed that:

- Communications is part of the Safer York Partnerships action plan, in relation to the need to highlight the impact of purchasing heroin and crack cocaine has on vulnerable people;
- There is not one agency or partner that requires further training to spot hidden vulnerabilities, instead awareness training needs to be held with all partners;
- They did not have figures for convictions for crack cocaine use, so could not confirm if these were rising in time with the County Lines issue increasing. The Superintendent noted that she will share figures with Members after the meeting;
- A needs assessment was a very important early step. Public Health have skilled staff who work with data, however, this is niche data and might require taking up support that is on offer nationally;
- When looking to take out a Premise Closes Order a multiagency approach is taken, support needs are identified and support is put in place. With consideration taken for both the needs of the vulnerable individual and the local community.

The Chair raised in the Locality Review that national action should be not lead by police but by health and social care agencies. The Assistant Director Public Health noted that there is likely not a uniformed recognition of the County Lines issue within health and social cares remit, some areas of the health service are likely more engaged than others currently.

Resolved:

- i. That the content of the report and the associated annex be noted.
- ii. That another joint round table discussion on County Lines be agreed between the Chair and Officers, to come to a future meeting of the Committee.

Reason: To ensure that all opportunities for multi-agency engagement on County Lines are being fully exploited. And that both Committee's remain involved with the County Lines issue in York.

5. Social Rented Housing on New Developments - Referral from the Area Planning Sub Committee September 2019

Members considered a report about a referral from the 5 September 2019 Area Planning Sub-Committee meeting. Requesting that the Committee consider the impact of service charges, on the delivery of social rented housing by housing associations, through the planning gain process.

In response to Members questions, the Housing Development Officer confirmed that:

- The Commuter Sum paid by developers in cases where Housing Associations cannot take up dwellings, means that developers do not have a financial incentive to not provide onsite dwellings to Housing Associations;
- Commuter Sums are used by the Council to provide affordable housing, as well as roads, parks, and youth services;
- The competitive tender process for Housing Associations to purchase affordable housing from developers, can result in higher prices for Housing Associations. Alternative methods of setting prices and which association gets which dwellings, could be explored.

Members confirmed their interest in a scrutiny topic 'To better understand the current situation with regard to the delivery of affordable dwellings arising from new developments with planning permission.' The Chair stated that he would inform the Scrutiny Officer who from the Committee would be selected for the task group. The objectives of the review would be:

- To Investigate the delivery of homes for discounted sale resulting from the granting of planning permission for a new development;

- To investigate the council's working relationship with housing associations in relation to the allocation of properties for social rent resulting from the granting of planning permission for a new development;
- To Explore What barriers exist that make it difficult for housing associations to take up affordable housing contributions and what policy options could help to overcome any barriers.

Resolved:

- i. That a task group to review a scrutiny topic 'To better understand the current situation with regard to the delivery of affordable dwellings arising from new developments with planning permission.'

Reason: To comply with Scrutiny protocols and procedures.

6. Work Plan

The following were agreed as alternations and/or additions to the Work Plan for 2019/20.

November

- HMO Implementation Update, brought forward from January.
- Brief oral update on Temporary Accommodation- Street homeless, winter provision, for winter 2019/20 ahead of report in either January or February.

January

- Housing Standards in the Private Rental Sector, moved from November to January.

Councillor S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.01 pm and finished at 7.42 pm].