

**CRIME AND DISORDER POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

(Council Chamber - Port Talbot Civic Centre)

Members Present:

26 April 2016

Chairperson: Councillor D.W.Davies

Vice Chairperson: Councillor A.Jenkins

Councillors: A.Carter, M.Harvey, Mrs.L.H.James,
Mrs.D.Jones, Mrs.K.Pearson, L.M.Purcell and
I.D.Williams

**Officers In
Attendance** Supt.L.Bartlett, Mrs.K.Jones, Ms.S.Morris and
Ms.C.Gadd

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.H.Thomas and P.A.Rees

1. **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Resolved that, on this occasion, in line with the Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006, Committee act as the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST FROM MEMBERS**

The following Members made declarations of interest at the commencement of the meeting.

Councillor Mrs.L.M.Purcell Presentation of the Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership and Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Community Safety Team Report Card, as she is a candidate in the Police and Crime Commissioner election.

Councillor M.Harvey Presentation of the Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership

and Report of the Head of Corporate Strategy and Democratic Services re: Community Safety Team Report Card, as he is employed by South Wales Police.

3. **SAFER NEATH PORT TALBOT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE PRESENTATION**

The Committee received the presentation on the work of the Safer Neath Port Talbot Community Safety Partnership and performance over the year, as detailed within the presentation.

Members were informed that there was a Community Safety Partnership that had been created under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and was co-chaired by the Police and the Council. It was noted that in Neath Port Talbot there had been a reduction in crime by 14.8% since 2008/2009. It was highlighted that the Partnership's priorities were domestic abuse and tackling and preventing new psychoactive substances.

Domestic Abuse accounts for 50.1% of all violent crime and there were two domestic homicide reviews ongoing in Neath Port Talbot. It was explained that the reviews were undertaken by the Home Office and an independent panel would look at the circumstances and which agencies were involved to establish if lessons could be learned. It was noted that a review of Domestic Abuse Services in the area had been commissioned by the Council and the Health Board who had joint responsibility for the Domestic Abuse Partnership. It was an opportunity to consider current service provision, how to improve them and develop a new strategic plan. The views of partners and domestic abuse survivors were being sought as part of the review. Members were informed that a draft timescale for completion was end of June 2016. It was noted that there had been some partners that had not yet engaged and it was important that all agencies were on board.

It was highlighted that New Psychoactive Substances was a local issue that mainly affected young people. The substances were easy to obtain and had physical and mental effects that could lead to other substance misuse and crime. The challenges faced by the Police included that it was difficult to enforce and to measure the

prevalence. It was noted that preventative work was taking place within schools to educate young people.

Other areas were also being tackled, such as shop lifting. It was explained that in regards to shop lifting, some shops had removed security and would write off the cost of stolen stock in their bottom line as it cost shops more to prosecute. There had been a spike in burglary in the last 12 months and a lot of work had been undertaken to address this. In a lot of these cases they related to unsecured premises and wrap around care was given to victims by the Community Safety Partnership. The nature of work had changed with 80% involving protecting vulnerable people in society.

Members were pleased that vulnerable people were being protected and queried what strategies were being used to address online bullying and grooming of young people and older people being targeted by criminals trying to obtain their personal information, such as bank details. Officer explained that grooming of young people was being addressed in partnership by the Western Bay Safeguarding Children Board. The Police were developing specialist roles that would be dedicated to this work. It was noted that this was also a key priority for the Police and Crime Commissioner Panel. It was explained that the Community Safety Team had undertaken a lot of work with older people to highlight issues they could be targeted with, such as the rogue trader campaign and internet safety.

Recorded crime had increased and it was felt that part of the reason for this was changes in the way it was recorded. It was noted that there was a high percentage of people that were unwilling to follow up with prosecutions and there were a lot of cultural issues regarding this issue. Members highlighted the necessity of the continuing message to the public to report crime as the Police can only act if they had the information and sometimes needed to build an evidence base. The 101 number had become centralised which had improved the system for reporting non-emergency incidents. It was noted that ways of reporting incidents online were being considered, which would be a big advancement and improvement.

The outcomes rate for the area was 23%, which was a reduction on 25.4% achieved last year and lower than the force rate of 27.8%. It was noted that there were not a lot of travelling criminals coming into the area and the majority tended to live within the community and opportunities were taken to gather intelligence on these individuals.

It was noted that in regards to sexual offences the Police were tending to deal with historical cases rather than current issues. There were instances of hate crime and there was a strong community engagement structure in place with proactive groups in the area. There had been an increase in criminal damage and areas with higher percentages were targeted by the police. It was highlighted that criminal damage can often be an indicator of other issues, such as domestic violence and burglary.

Members noted that there had been some proactive work undertaken in the Pontardawe area regarding underage drinking and asked if it could be rolled out across the County Borough. It was explained that the work was being undertaken by the Community Alcohol Partnership and it had been very useful in changing perceptions in the community. It was highlighted that the work had been enlightening and there had been some unexpected results. The viability of extending the scheme would be considered. Members noted that supermarkets had a duty to contribute funding to the community as they sell alcohol. Officers were unsure of how this scheme worked but they were aware that supermarkets contributed money to a social capital fund. However, the main issue with this funding was it only funded projects for a short period and then they would have to be mainstreamed.

Members noted that the link between alcohol and violence. It was highlighted that the Social Care, Health and Housing Scrutiny Committee had undertaken a task and finish group to look into the alcohol and the effect on the adult male population aged 55 and over. Members queried what had happened to the recommendations and requested an update against them. It was noted that the recommendations had been presented to Welsh Government as there would need to be changes at this level. It was agreed that officers would bring a follow up report to a future meeting. Members noted that supermarkets had been unwilling to participate in this piece of work.

Members queried whether it was drugs or alcohol that contributed the most to people being more likely to be involved in crime or domestic violence. It was felt that it was probably a mixture of both but overall alcohol had the biggest impact as it was more readily available. There had also been more clinical advances in preventing deaths from drug overdoses, otherwise more deaths would be seen from drug misuse. Lone drinking by people who were isolated had a big impact.

Members commented on partnership working and noted that in some areas the Fire Authority was linking in more with the Police and Health Board to deliver integrated working. It appeared that there was less in this area. Members also queried that South Wales Police had to give some money to Dyfed Powys Police and that Dyfed Powys had significant reserves. It was explained that the Police funding formula resulted in South Wales Police being disadvantaged as the cost of policing densely populated areas tended to be higher than rural areas. It was noted that the budget for the South Wales Police was mainly allocated on workforce. In rural areas there were more funds available for grants. It was highlighted that issues around funding for different Police forces had been raised with the Home Office.

Officers highlighted that the Fire Service, rather than the Fire Authority, had always been active members of the Local Service Board and Community Safety Partnership. They would also be a partner on the new Public Services Board, which would be meeting formally for the first time in May 2016. It was noted that Welsh Government had decided on the four statutory partners for the Public Services Board and the Police were not included in this, however the Police would be invited participants. It was noted that the Public Service Board would be scrutinised by the Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the presentation be noted.

4. **COMMUNITY SAFETY TEAM REPORT CARD**

The Committee received the Community Safety Partnership Performance Report Card for 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016, as detailed within the circulated report and presentation.

Members were informed that the work of the team included Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Abuse, Crime Prevention and Community Engagement. In regards to Anti-social Behaviour it was highlighted that there were on average less than 200 incidents a month and there were very low rates of repeat victims. It was noted that there were currently two low level repeat victims who were being supported with care packages. There were no Acceptable Behaviour contracts in the area and there were four injunctions. It was highlighted that a weakness in the current system of providing data statistics, which may result in the figures not being a true reflection.

Members noted that the report card referred to maintaining low levels of anti-social behaviour and asked if it should be to reduce levels instead. Officers explained that there had to be a balance to ensure that it was recorded and there would be concern if none was reported.

Domestic Abuse Services were explained to Members and that very high risk cases were dealt with in partnership and there were meetings on a fortnightly basis that dealt with 15 to 20 cases. Domestic Abuse Services were currently under review, as had been highlighted in the previous presentation. It was noted that there were concerns regarding funding as the service was reliant on grant funding and alternative sources of funding were identified where possible. The Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop had to rely on partners for specialist services.

Crime prevention work was undertaken by the team and this included such initiatives as the Feel Safe Scheme, for residents over 60, and Stop Repeat Scheme, for high risk victims of serious crime. Surveys were often undertaken to establish how to make households more secure. Members praised these schemes as they had been very effective.

The team undertook extensive community engagement activities and some of the main activities were highlighted to Members. This included internet safety, where awareness raising was undertaken with parents and the team had also attended parents' evenings in schools. Older people had also been targeted in partnership with the Older Person's Council through the silver surfers initiative and leaflets. Officers noted that Members had raised concerns during the previous item about older people being targeted online and Officers would refresh the leaflets and ensure they were still fit for purpose and circulate them to Members. Another very successful community engagement activity had been Paws on Patrol, which now had over 400 members. It was highlighted that a lot of engagement involved the team going out to the community and utilising other events. Where possible the team tried to ensure that engagement activities were intelligence lead and specific to issues in the area. In addition Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime were always on the agenda as it would be unknown could be a potential victim.

It was highlighted that New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) had been a significant area that has been tackled by the Team. They had developed an action plan and had been into every Comprehensive

School in Neath Port Talbot to warn young people about the dangers of these substances.

It was noted that the team administers small pots of grant funding for community groups, which was overseen by the Policy and Resources Committee. In addition there was the High Sheriff's fund that the team assisted with allocating. It was highlighted that the Crucial Crew event this year was going to be a flagship event as it would be the 21st Anniversary of the event. Members were welcome to attend the event.

It was noted that the team had received no complaints during 2015/16 financial year and there were regular compliments. There had been some staff sickness this year and it had been managed through the Council's policies and the staff members had been supported back to work. Members noted that when staff were sick they had to be supported and requested that figures such as staff sickness were broken down by quarter. This information was circulated to Members.

It was highlighted that the majority of the posts in the team were grant funded, which caused concern for the team as it tended to be last minute that funding was agreed. It was noted that the team were good at identifying funding. Members recognised that this was a difficult way to work and praised the team for doing an excellent job. Members asked why the team had not been requested to contribute to the Forward Financial Plan. It was explained that the budget had been protected as it was already a small budget and the team did a lot with it. Where possible the team did identify savings that could be made more generally.

Members asked how staff engagement was measured and officers explained that this was undertaken through a staff survey. However, the team was managed by a different directorate when the last survey was undertaken for Chief Executive's Directorate and therefore this information had not been collated for the team.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.