

Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Committee

(Via Microsoft Teams)

Members Present:

4 December 2020

Chairperson: Councillor S.K.Hunt

Vice Chairperson: Councillor R.L.Taylor

Councillors: D.Cawsey, H.N.James, S.Pursey, S.Rahaman, N.T.Hunt, S.Bamsey and S.A.Knoyle

Officers In Attendance S.Brennan, C.Plowman, N.Headon, C.Jones, B.Dennedy, M.Rafferty, E.Barrett and Williams

Cabinet Invitees: Councillors A.Wingrave and L.Jones

1. **Anti-Social Behaviour Plan, Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime and Drug Abuse**

The Committee was presented with a presentation covering the topics Members requested an update on following their recent Regeneration and Sustainable Development Forward Work Programme Workshop; those topics included Anti-Social Behaviour, Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime and Drug Abuse.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Members were informed that the main focus of work this year for the Anti-Social Behaviour Team had been around the issues in town centres, in particular the Ambassador area in Neath town centre; the general complaints from residents were related to on-street drinking and drug issues, and there had been a slight increase in begging over the past few weeks which was noted to be expected at this time of year.

Officers explained that the work in Neath town centre had started in June once lockdown had been lifted; significant partnership work had been put in place and since then there had been a definite improvement in work. It was mentioned that there were still some issues in the Ambassador, however weekly meetings were taking

place and any issues were being dealt with efficiently as possible. It was noted that the next partnership meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 15 December and in this meeting Officers were hoping to resolve any outstanding issues of the work that had been concluded; any further issues would be referred into the Police led problem solving group from there-on.

It was mentioned that two operations were being put in place throughout December to target certain aspects of Anti-Social Behaviour; Operation Shoebill which will cover retail crime and Operation Kilmarnock which will cover street drinking.

In regards to partnership meetings, Officers had been meeting with Local Councillors in areas where there were highlighted issues, for example a meeting recently took place with Local Councillors, partners and the Business Improvement District (BID) Team in Port Talbot.

A mobile Police Station was stated to had been positioned in the town centre of Port Talbot until the end of November and following discussions with the Sargent who was based there, improvements had been made as individuals who had carried out acts of Anti-Social Behaviour had been identified and work was being undertaken in order to address these particular issues.

In the Briton ferry area, the issues were noted to have been mainly around poor landlords and issues around the properties; Environmental Health had taken on the majority of these issues as they were relating to fly tipping and poor condition of properties.

Members were informed that GW Logs was a big issue in the Gwaun-Cae-Gurwen area and in November there was a court case in which individuals were successfully prosecuted for the poor welfare of animals; there was still some work ongoing in this area as recently additional issues had arisen, therefore Officers will be working with the Local Councillor in the area to address those.

It was stated that a partnership meeting in regards to Wern Works in Briton Ferry was due to be convened to address the emerging issues on the site; Officers were in contact National Resource Wales (NRW) around this. It was mentioned that part of the notice that was served was to clear the internal building, which had been completed, however the entrances into the building were yet to be secured; this was something Officers were pushing to be completed as there were concerns around fly tipping and the use of the premises.

In regards to youth disengagement, it was noted that there was very little being reported to the team through the 101 contact number regarding behavioural issues with young people; next year a piece of work will be carried out with the Youth Justice Early Intervention Service, NPT Youth Service and South Wales Police to look at factors such as gaps in the service, where other pieces of work need to be carried out and what the teams can do in terms of support. Members were encouraged to report any concerns in their wards or provide any suggestions they may have to the Team.

A discussion took place around the Street Vulnerable Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC). It was highlighted that the Street Vulnerable MARAC was started in November 2017 to address issues in the town centres; 58 people have come through the forum since then and currently 12 people were being addressed on the list. It was added that Officers had a really positive working relationship with the partners that attend these meetings.

To conclude the presentation, it was stated that the Community Safety Team take a problem solving approach throughout all aspects of work and join together as much as possible with agencies and partners in order to identify the causes of the issues in the community and deal specifically with those causes; the work that had been carried out recently highlighted the benefit of this type of approach.

Members asked if Officers were receiving co-operation from those involved in dealing with the Wern Works in Briton Ferry. It was noted that NRW had placed the notice on the organisation to clear and secure the site and that it should have been complete some time ago; there was a certain time limit provided to complete this, however as previously mentioned that was yet to be done. It was explained that NRW were attending court on Monday next week in relation to this notice; Officers confirmed that they would contact the Local Members with an update on the case following the outcome of court.

In terms of a long term solution, it was asked if Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) were a piece of legislation that would work for town centres, and if so, could both Neath and Port Talbot town centres look at introducing them. It was stated that discussions around town centres was still ongoing, however currently Officers were not looking at introducing PSPOs in the town centres for a number of reasons, including the point previously raised in relation to the approach of targeting the cause and using problem solving techniques; evidence had suggested, both locally and nationally, that

this approach works as it was more effective and a range more tools could be utilised. It was noted that PSPOs were a very blunt tool and would likely move the problem on to another area and cause different Anti-Social Behaviour activities to occur which could be even more harmful; they also require a lot of work to take place before, during and after they would be introduced and there were currently no resources to enforce them. Officers added that looking at the bigger picture and identifying the most effective course of action was most beneficial; identifying the individuals causing the issues, liaising with internal and external partners and dealing with individual cases. It was highlighted that if Members felt that there were particular areas not being covered or were aware of any ongoing issues, to contact the Officers in order for suitable approach to be arranged.

Officers were asked if there was a way to check that Anti-Social Behaviour issues were being resolved and if there was a way to measure the effectiveness of the approaches being used. It was stated that during the lockdown period Officers had seen a difference in Anti-Social Behaviour across the county; the multi-agency approach had been working as confirmed by residents and the improvements seen on the streets. It was highlighted that individuals, including the traders in the town centres, had particularly seen improvements when the mobile Police unit had been situated in the town centre; this unit could not be parked there all the time due to restrictions on Police Officers time and availability, however a mobile unit had now been placed in western command and would likely be seen in Neath and Port Talbot more frequently over the coming months. Issues were noted to be dealt with as and when they arise and would be monitored regularly; having a presence in the town centres and other conflict areas, for example the Police horses in Neath, was highlighted to be important.

It was raised that street artists were using locations, such as the Wern Works in Briton Ferry, as there were currently no legal walls or spaces for them to display their art in Neath Port Talbot; Officers noted this point as something that could potentially be raised in future discussions with the NPT Youth Service. It was added that it would be beneficial to identify a particular space for street artists to prevent them from using these types of locations.

Members asked for an update on the issues emerging at Taibach Workingmens Club; this location was raised at a recent Community Safety Partnership meeting, in which a lot of people expressed their concerns around this particular location. It was stated that there was

an action for NRW to convene a meeting to discuss the issues; Officers confirmed that they would update Members on this fully in due course, as they would need to find out the current position as colleagues in Environmental Health were in liaison with NRW. It was added that the landlord of the club had previously tried to reach out for help in relation to the Anti-Social Behaviour issues, therefore liaison with the landlord and providing additional help would be significant in trying to resolve the issues.

The Local Member for Aberavon thanked the Police for their efficiency and work during a recent County Lines incident in August 2020.

Members were encouraged to feed into the Anti-Social Behaviour Plan where necessary in order to help deliver change and report issues in order for them to be resolved; working in partnership was noted to be key in this area of work so liaising with the Cabinet Member, Officers and the Police was important.

Domestic Abuse

Despite an increase in demand on the Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVA) Service due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was noted the service had been able to maintain a high standard of service provision and adapt working arrangement and practices. Officers were pleased to have been provided with additional resources in the form of two new full time IDVA's; they will ease the pressure internally, caused as a result of an increase in demand due, and will create scope to further develop and enhance service provision going forward.

The Committee was informed that the service also held responsibility for the NPT MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) in respect of domestic abuse and had recently appointed a Coordinator role for this, which was pivotal to the effectiveness of the process; for example ensuring there is a proper flow of information, risks were shared and clear notes and action were recorded. It was added that training for the MARAC partners had been arranged and there was a Steering Group to oversee the work of the MARAC, which reflects on its effectiveness.

Members were presented with recent statistics from the NPT IDVA Service which included:

- 268 referrals for high-risk cases for the period April 2020 to Oct 2020

- For that period 64% engaged with the service – this was meaningful engagement where risk management and safety planning was implemented
- 13% were recorded where contact was made with the victim but IDVA input was declined
- 10% where the service was unable to establish direct contact despite robust attempts being made, in line with the services' intake policy
- 335 children were linked to cases referred to the service – this point had been picked up by the Leadership Group as specialist providers were reporting a decline in the number of children they support, whilst the service hadn't identified a decline; it was noted that work needed to be carried out around this matter which had been tasked within the Leadership Group

In relation to noticeable trends, it was highlighted that there had been an increase in cases where pregnancy had been identified (4%), an increase in male victims (up to 6%) and a reduction in referrals of repeat/complex cases; Offices mentioned that they were surprised to see the reduction in referrals of repeat/complex cases as during usual operations they would find that some cases had returned.

Previously, the work of the Domestic Abuse Team had been primarily victim focused, however they were now preparing to carry out more work with perpetrators with the opportunity to change their behaviour. It was noted that there was a Police and Crime Commissioner funded programme for perpetrators called DRIVE which had started to be rolled out across Western Bay; this programme was stated to be an intensive intervention, working with high-harm and serial perpetrators to challenge their behaviours and reduce abuse. Officers added that a DRIVE IDVA had been recruited to work within the DRIVE Team. Members asked if the DRIVE programme was undertaken voluntarily by perpetrators; Officers stated that they would find out this information and inform Members accordingly.

Officers were asked for the percentage increase in Domestic Abuse cases since the start of lockdown. It was stated that there was a dramatic increase in the IDVA service in particular, however the exact figures would need to be confirmed. Officers mentioned that the figures and trends for the specialist agencies may differ. It was suggested that the Committee could include Domestic Abuse trends and figures to the Forward Work Programme in order to obtain more information and detail from both the specialist providers and the IDVA service from the lockdown period.

Following the presentation, it was highlighted that the Violence against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) strategy set out clear priorities of work and included a range of information including the increase demand on services; one of the priorities listed was to ensure that messages were conveyed to the public, in a number of different ways, letting them know that services were still open and support was still available.

Hate Crime

The Committee was provided with an overview of the work of the Community Cohesion Officer for NPT, which included links with the Communication Team and the NPT Black Minority Ethnic (BME) Association. It was highlighted that the weekly intentions monitoring meetings with Police colleagues and partners, for example Swansea University, were very useful to share information in relation to Hate Crime in the area.

The presentation included graphs provided by victim support, who send out monthly updates to the Local Authorities listed, on the breakdown of hate crimes that have been reported in that area each month. It was noted that at the beginning of the pandemic, there were serious concerns within the Chinese community, as there were reports that individuals in shops and university were receiving abuse due to the origins of the outbreak; although there was an increase in Hate Crime in that particular area, the figures had stayed quite consistent and did not rise dramatically through the months. One of the graphs displayed a breakdown of the different types of Hate Crime that had been reported which included disability, gender identity, race, religion and sexual orientation; in Neath Port Talbot, the following number of incidents were reported for November 2020:

- Disability – 2
- Race – 9
- Sexual Orientation – 1
- Unknown – 1

Members were informed that the Community Cohesion Officer was working in close partnership with the Hate Crime Officer in Neath Police Station and received weekly reports from the Western BCU. It was noted that the recent report received highlighted a few incidents in the area; Officers mentioned that they could circulate this report and the statistics to Members if they would like more information on the incidents.

It was highlighted that Hate Crime Awareness Week this year was on 10 October 2020 through to 17 October 2020 and during this week a number of events were held online:

- Online Launch Event – worked with Race Council Cymru, Victim Support and South Wales Police on this event; the Rt Hon Commissioner for South Wales Police also joined the event and it was noted to be very well received.
- Webinar with Arti Shah – the 4ft actress gave a webinar around the topic of Hate Crime and talked about personal experience in relation to the impact of Hate Crime; Officers received excellent feedback from those who were involved.
- Community Champion Hate Crime Training – worked with Race Council Cymru and the Hate Crime Officer to provide online training to try and enable people in the community to share information about Hate Crime and how to report it. It was added that staff training was scheduled, however this had to be postponed; Officers will be looking to re arrange this training for the future.
- Monthly Trans Drop-in Online – worked with the Hate Crime Officer to provide a safe space for those in the Trans community to get together and talk; these sessions currently take place in the evenings and if they continue to be successful, there were plans to bring in experts to provide help and advice for those who attend. It was mentioned that these sessions weren't currently being advertised on social media due to the sensitivity of the topic; instead they were promoted through word of mouth within the Trans community.

Members asked if there was any capacity available to carry out work on prevention locally; working with social media platforms specifically, such as Facebook, to push out messages and advertisements. It was stated that Officers could look into paid advertisement on social media platforms and could also look into funding in relation to paid campaigns; there were opportunities to use the Community Safety social media channels as well as the Councils corporate communications and the BME Associations platforms. Some examples of existing prevention exercises was provided including the fake news infographics and videos that BBC Bitesize use. It was added Officers had no control over what posts social media platforms, such as Facebook, allowed onto the platform; however, working together locally on this issue could make a difference in tackling Hate Crime online.

It was asked if anyone in Neath Port Talbot had ever been prosecuted for carrying out a Hate Crime online or promoting hate speech online, and if Police had any powers in relation to the posts on social media platforms, for example would they have the authority to request that posts be taken down if they were promoting Hate Crime. It was agreed that these questions would be emailed to Inspector Claire Morgan.

Members expressed the need to carry out preventative work with young people, especially in schools, as previously the work was more aimed at raising awareness of Hate Crime. It was mentioned that schools did have schemes in place such as Crucial Crew, and were looking to introduce more including training for staff and 'Show Racism the Red Card' which was aimed at children. Members were encouraged to speak with Police colleagues to express the need for more preventative work in schools and provide any ideas.

Drug Abuse

The Committee was informed that NPT Council holds the Area Planning Board (APB) Substance Misuse Commissioning and Delivery Team, and hosts in terms of receiving the funding for across the Region. It was recognised that the way in which Substance Misuse services were delivered across the Region needed to improve, therefore a key piece of work needed to be carried out.

Previously, consultants had been commissioned to undertake a review of the Substance Misuse services; that review resulted in a report looking at a revised model. However further work following a national drug summit, led to the concept of a new fully integrated Public Health Model.

It was confirmed that the APB and the Joint Public Services Board had agreed to start work to develop a new Public Health integrated model with a real focus on aspects such as prevention, treatment and enforcement; this project was going to be a massive transformation project which will be delivered by a team who will be led by the Police and Crime Commissioners office.

Officers were also going to be looking at a different way of commissioning the service in terms of having a more collaborative/combined approach which will include the pooling of budgets across Public Health, APB, and Police and Crime Commissioners office to develop a much more effective and accessible service. It was noted that the project was not a quick fix

and would take some time to be established, however there were plans to progress this work even further in the New Year.

It was stated that the service had continued to operate in different ways during the pandemic; a lot of the face to face work, on a 1-1 basis and group basis, had stopped and were replaced with virtual groups which people could attend online. It was noted that appointments, where possible, were provided over the phone or on a form of virtual media; there were still some face to face work being carried out for people who were at risk and needed that type of support, however it was ensured that social distancing measures were in place and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was used where necessary.

In regards to information sharing, it was explained that third sector colleagues had developed quite a lot of resources that they had been publishing on their websites for people, including self-help guides.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, it was stated that organisations had been inspired to improve the way in which they work together and offer a flexible approach by helping out in other service areas where there were particular pressures; for example there was a joint working agreement across all the services to help ensure that individuals, who need to self-isolate and didn't have anyone around to help them, could still access their medication.

It was noted that Officers had seen an increase in the number of people being referred to structured treatment services in quarter 2 (July through to September) compared to quarter 1 (April through to June); a piece of work was carried out with providers to try and identify why this had happened. Detailed in the report, providers had stated that some of the reasons for this could be that:

- People were not asking for help during the early days of the pandemic, as they wanted to wait until the pandemic had passed
- More people not having to go to work (a lot more people were drinking because of this, as well linked with the summer weather)

Officers highlighted that there were concerns in relation to the increase in the number of referrals to the young people services, however this had been identified to be as a result of improved promotion and awareness raising during lockdown. It was added that drug use amongst young people had reduced due to the lockdown.

Members were updated on some of the developments within the Substance Misuse service, which included the establishment of robust contract monitoring systems and processes; these processes helped the service to understand and identify any issues related to the effectiveness and efficiency of services. For example, it became evident that the Counselling service wasn't providing value for money, therefore a re-cost was undertaken which had reduced the level of funding but kept the same amount of provision. It was mentioned that this enabled funding to be released for the service to invest in additional units of low threshold prescribing; increasing the number of units of low threshold prescribing would then free up resources, within the prescribing service, who work with people with more complex needs. In addition to this, it was noted that the service had purchased a number of spaces for a rapid access prescribing service so that people who were most at risk of harm could access a prescribing service quite quickly. Officers added that the service had adopted an assertive outreach approach which meant that if people didn't turn up to their appointment, the staff would go out into the community to find them.

It was explained that staff had identified an issue with the way in which people were accessing services; previously this process has been through an assessment service, however these services did not have the capacity to be able to assess the number of people that needed to come through the service. Members were informed that a new proposal had been developed to change the way in which the route into service was operated; staff were currently working with partners across services to ensure that the new proposed process will work without having any negative impact.

As part of the development of the new contract monitoring framework, it was mentioned that Officers had been looking at the information they were asking services to record and report on, to make sure that the information is useful and provided the APB the information they needed to be able to make decisions about the future commissioning of services and to identify any issues with performance; a series of dashboards were being developed which could be used by contract monitoring and the APB, to alert staff of any issues relating to the services and enables staff to then take action.

A discussion took place in relation to the Take Home Naloxone Programme; Naloxone would be given out to people who take opiates, to reverse the effects of an opiate overdose. It was noted that when a comparison was completed between quarter one and

quarter two, it showed that there were 48 less kits given out in quarter two, however when this was looked into further, information showed that there was a 40% increase of kits given out in quarter one which was in the early stages of the pandemic. Officers highlighted that for the first time recently, nasal and injectable Naloxone could be offered; the nasal Naloxone provided the opportunity to get the kit out to the wider community and wider partners, families and carers who typically wouldn't be able to carry an injectable kit. It was stated that the Police Federation had declined the request to carry nasal Naloxone kits, however South Wales Police had agreed to this and their Police Officers were volunteering to carry the kit; there were hopes that once the Police Officers start to carry the nasal Naloxone, it would be agreed by the Police Federation and the whole of South Wales Police Force will be carrying the kits. It was noted that outreach workers were delivering kits and there were also postal kits available on request; staff were identifying those most at risk, who weren't able to physically walk into services due to needing to self-isolate etc. so that they could post the kits to them. Officers added that staff and security in the Ambassador in Neath had also been trained in Naloxone; recent visits to the premises highlighted the exceptional work being carried out by staff and all staff and they were very much open for services to connect with them and deliver services within the hotel.

In regards to needle exchange, it was stated that there was a 40-50% decrease across the region in exchange activity; the data showed that the reduction in activity was mainly in steroid users, which was more than likely due to the restrictions on travel and gyms closing, so the motivation for use wasn't there for these particular users. The fall in transactions was noted to be mainly seen in pharmacies.

Members were informed that within the harm reduction work that was being carried out, a Drug Poisoning Task Force had been established in which reviews were carried out on all drug poisoning, and staff provided intervention and support to those that have had a non-fatal drug overdose; there had been a greater growth within the group which enabled staff to strengthen the governance and develop policies and procedures which allowed the Task Force to deliver better outcomes for example monitoring drug poisoning in more depth. It was mentioned that identifying the person behind the data had been pivotal and it enabled staff to understand the person holistically rather than just reviewing a data set.

Officers confirmed there had been a big push in increasing the notifications of non-fatal overdoses and being the only APB in Wales that had notifications from the emergency department on overdoses, there had been a new protocol established; a 72 hour rapid review protocol which meant that services needed to intervene with 72 hours with face to face contact and provide interventions, harm reduction and Naloxone as a minimum. It was added that the APB had been seen as the innovators across Wales for doing this and there was a lot of interest in the work that was being carried out.

It was highlighted that there had been a decrease in drug related deaths for 2019; the recent ONS report showed a 30% reduction in cases within the Swansea area and a 77% decrease of cases within the NPT area. Officers mentioned that NPT had the biggest reduction in Wales within the ONS data.

Members asked if the waiting list had improved for certain medication that individuals needed to help with their substance misuse; further services had been commissioned to obtain rapid access to prescriptions, especially for the vulnerable clients. It was noted that the Community of Drug and Alcohol Team who provide prescribing to people in Neath Port Talbot was very accessible as it currently did not have a waiting list for medication. However, it was mentioned that the process that people need to go through for prescribing does take time and some people who would benefit from a prescribing intervention may not stick with it by the time it takes to receive the medication.

Officers were asked to provide an update on the working relationship with the Health Board over the course of the pandemic; The Health Board was a member of the APB and recognised that services do need to be improved, as mentioned earlier, therefore the APB would be embarking on the transformation project discussed during the presentation. It was added that during the pandemic, partnership working had gone from strength to strength.

Members thanked the Officers from the Community Safety Team for their hard work especially during the pandemic, and for taking the time to present to the Committee.

2. **Forward Work Programme 2020/21**

Members noted the Regeneration and Sustainable Development Scrutiny Forward Work Programme for 2020/21, which was populated by the Committee at their recent Forward Work Programme Workshop.

As previously mentioned, it was agreed that Domestic Abuse trends and figures be added to the Forward Work Programme in order to obtain more information and detail from both the specialist providers and the IDVA service from the lockdown period.

3. **Forward Work Programme - Cabinet**

The Cabinet Forward Work Programme was provided to Members information purposes; the Forward Work Programme was noted.

CHAIRPERSON