

North Yorkshire County Council

Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 18 January 2016 at 10.30 am.

Present:-

County Councillor Derek Bastiman in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, Bernard Bateman MBE, John Blackburn, Jean Butterfield, Bryn Griffiths, Andrew Lee, Cliff Lunn, Stuart Parsons, Tony Randerson and Tim Swales.

Also in Attendance

County Councillors: Carl Les (Leader of the Council), David Blades.

Officers: Neil White, (Corporate Development Officer), Odette Robson, (Head of Safer Communities), Neil Irving (Assistant Director Policy and Partnerships), Lesley Ingleson, (Head of Youth Justice Service), Mark Taylor, (Project Officer).

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Sam Cross and Steve Shaw Wright.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

69. Minutes

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2015, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

70. Public Questions or Statements

There were no public questions or statements

71. Update on the Community Safety Priorities and Activities within the Police and Crime Plan

Considered -

The oral report of the Police and Crime Commissioner Julia Mulligan.

The Committee invited the Commissioner to respond to a range of pre-prepared questions on community safety submitted prior to the start of the meeting. They are as follows:

1) What benefits will communities see in the change of funding to commissioning for community safety and what effect does this have on partnership working at a local level?

All of the previous funding for community safety had been granted to Councils; however, there was no evidence of impact and outcomes on the

communities the funding was meant to support. Now that the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner is responsible for this funding there needed to be a far greater understanding of the impact and effectiveness of the commissioned services.

The Police and Crime Plan, the document outlining the key priorities of the Commissioner has been shaped by the public and their priorities at both a local and regional level. Key partners, including the Borough and District Councils were also consulted on their organizational priorities. Ultimately, a range of issues were identified and the Police and Crime Plan demonstrates how the drivers of these issues such as repeat offending and alcohol in the night time economy will be confronted.

In addition to this, partners have benefited from reactive funding to use in order to tackle issues as and when they arose. Finally, work has been undertaken through the Community Safety Partnership as the county wide group and its commissioning team to further identify and tackle important local issues as they arise. All this has meant for a flexible and accountable approach to commissioning for community safety.

2) Has making victim care a responsibility for the commissioner helped?

The Police and Crime Commissioners took on the responsibility for victim services in their areas. Victim services for North Yorkshire and West Yorkshire had been provided out of a call centre in Wakefield. Dissatisfaction with this service resulted in it being moved to York when the Commissioner took office just to serve North Yorkshire and York. As a result of this the range of victim support services offered was expanded.

In addition money has been provided for specific support services for specific types of crime such as child sexual exploitation, for which there had been no prior provision. Domestic abuse services have also been developed to include medium risk offenders for earlier intervention to prevent them becoming high risk.

3) What changes will people see over the next few years to protect vulnerable people?

Protecting vulnerable people is the number one priority in the Police and Crime Plan. Unfortunately in North Yorkshire there have been increases in the number of crimes affecting vulnerable victims, such as domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and cyber-crime. The police launched a cyber-crime unit in April 2015 to tackle the increases in online criminal activity. Closer working with partners such as Trading Standards can improve this further. A combination of enhanced victim services and improvements in police activity will provide holistic change to protect vulnerable people.

In response to a question about the protection for vulnerable people with mental health problems it was noted that a big area of work had been getting partners to sign up to the Mental Health Concordat which sets out a consistent approach among partners as to how people with mental health difficulties should be dealt with. Improving the work of the street triage approach as well as ensuring that people who need services can access those services easier and quicker, preventing them from being picked up by street triage further down the line. It was bad news when Bootham Park Hospital closed towards the end of 2015 as the facility had a section 136 suite. North Yorkshire still has 3 section 136 facilities in Scarborough, Harrogate and Northallerton whereas before 2012 there were none. November 2015 was the first month in the force's history where no one needed to go to a section 136 facility and this was partly due to the fact that

assets and resources from the Bootham Park closure were put back into the community. North Yorkshire is far from where it needs to be in supporting vulnerable people with mental health difficulties but it has come a long way.

4) How will the commissioner and the National Rural Crime Network be taking forward the issue of the impact of crime on rural life?

Julia Mulligan helped to set up the Rural Crime Network in July 2014. This was in response to a lack of hard evidence that citizens were not satisfied with the service they received from the police in rural areas. The largest survey of its kind was commissioned and sent out in England and Wales with 17,000 respondents, 13,000 of which lived or worked in rural areas. The evidence was conclusive, that there was a 20% satisfaction gap between respondents from rural areas and respondents to the national police and crime statistics which are predominantly based on urban respondents.

The Commissioner was also continuing to challenge the Government on the funding formula for police forces which was not taking into account forces with large rural areas. As a result of the lobbying the 6 Commissioners who took this to Government received an apology in the House from the responsible Minister and a review of the funding formula. The Commissioners made it clear that the new formula needs to be linked to how the police forces are structured and not in isolation of each other.

The Commissioner has recently become a member of the Strategic Police Reform Board looking into reform nationally and Julia Mulligan works to ensure that the voice of rural forces and the public is heard. The police assess resourcing areas nationally based on a threat, risk and harm model of crimes which predominately favours urban areas. There was a risk that because of this funding would be moved from rural areas to urban areas however, this has been prevented.

Working with the National Farmers Union training has been provided for officers to identify suspicious activity around livestock theft, and new equipment has been provided such as tag scanners for sheep which can be used to check if the sheep have been stolen.

A Member noted that rural cross border crime was a particular issue in his area and that communities would be willing to offer support. The Commissioner noted that Land Rover Defenders being stolen was a problem nationally as the parts are valuable. For the Member concerned, the proximity to Cleveland was a major aspect of cross border crime as Cleveland has one of the highest crime rates in the Country. In response, the Commissioner commented that the police forces are looking to move to borderless policing where the police can pursue perpetrators across police boundaries. Closer cooperation between forces, as well as merging certain units such as the dog unit allow for increased activity across a larger 'greater' force area.

5) The use of mobile cameras on B roads and for anti-social behaviour with the ability of Parish Councils to purchase one for their area?

It was noted that there would be no possibility for Parish Councils to buy their own cameras or to contribute to the cost of one to be installed in their area. North Yorkshire Police have made a significant £1m investment into automatic number plate recognition technology. In addition the force has the national lead into developing ANPR software and networks nationally to allow for greater cross force cooperation to tackle offenders. The Committee can be reassured by the scale of the investment that all things are being considered.

6) What work is being done with the Railway Police on the trafficking of drugs on the railways?

It was outlined that this was principally an operational issue and the Commissioner could not go into detail on these matters. It was emphasised that there were a number of local operations ongoing and from a commissioning perspective it was vital that victims could access support services to prevent unnecessary deaths and serious illness from drugs.

7) What level of collaboration is there with police forces in the south of the county around the York area?

There is a huge amount of collaboration between the forces of Yorkshire and the Humber. Odyssey is a task group who handle cross border activity. It was accepted that there was a lack of transparency around regional activity and that the Commissioner would work to improve this. A Member wanted to know if the investments in ANPR had helped significantly. It was noted that the investment had been really helpful, especially when pursuing vehicles across police boundaries. The real challenge is the sheer volume of data produced by cameras and how it is stored and used. The need now is to make the data more real time and proactive.

8) The use of the 101 number and the review of the First Contact Customer Experience?

The 101 number is a national system that has been in place for three years. The service is in the process of being re-procured and the Commissioner is involved with this. There are a number of issues that need to be addressed in that procurement. There are question marks around how people with disabilities can effectively access the service. There are resilience issues, the number went down over the New Year as a result of the flooding in York and the police had to put other measures in place. It costs £0.15 per call to the number and this cost needs to be reduced. Finally, what can be offered in terms of better promotion will be considered as considerable work needs to be done on this area.

A huge amount of data is collected on the service but it offers little insight. The data suggests that the service is running smoothly however, forces know that it's not. Last year the Commissioner commissioned a review into the 101 service. It found that awareness in North Yorkshire and York was above the national average but it was still very low at 45%. The review also found that public awareness of when to use the service was also very low. There was a call abandonment rate of approximately 1 in 7 although the majority of callers try again and get through. This equates to approximately 2,500 abandoned calls each month. The interactive voice response software used in option two of the telephony system is inadequate; the contract is up for renewal and it is important to look at examples of best practice where technology has improved to potentially adopt a better automated response system.

It was noted that members of the public often don't get called back where a message had been left and also that they don't get feedback on the outcome of their issue. The Chief Constable is aware of the issues raised in the review and is developing an action plan to address the problems; this is being overseen by Joanna Carter the Commissioner's Chief Executive.

A Member highlighted that one of the biggest problems is apathy, the public quite rightly don't want to ring 999 for a non-emergency only to get frustrated with the 101 number and in the end they don't report an incident. Another Member added that a lot of local work was done initially to advertise the 101

number yet frustration with the service undoes that effort. The public get frustrated that nothing informs you when calling, that the officer you have tried to get a hold of has actually got the message or been informed, or is actually dealing with it.

The Members frustrations were acknowledged by the Commissioner and were in line with the findings of the review. A £1.6m investment was being spent upgrading the phone system to ensure that the system will always route a call through to someone so that you will always receive an answer. Mobile technology is also being considered for certain officers, Sussex police force is leading the way on communication with lots of contact information and means of communication online. The closest North Yorkshire officers can come to that at the moment is calls being routed through the airwave radios.

A Member commented that a lot of work needed to be done to restore public confidence in the service. It was added that there should be a link between the 101 service and the County Council system on reporting highways incidents for instance, where useful information passes seamlessly between the two. The Commissioner undertook to look into this issue and report back on her findings.

A Member highlighted that PCSO's were the best link between communities and the police. PCSO's often went to Parish Council meetings, local communities had their contact number and the PSCO would respond to local incidents that would otherwise have been logged in 101. The Commissioner noted that the number of PSCO's has increased slightly whereas in other force areas it has been cut back. A Member added that PCSO coverage was actually very patchy. The Commissioner noted that engagement was often down to the individual. Part of the problem might be that when a PCSO moves on they don't pass on that local knowledge to their replacement.

Resolved -

That the Police and Crime Commissioner be thanked for the update and be requested to provide an update on the development of the 101 number to the committee in 2017.

72. Executive Member Update

Considered -

The oral update of County Councillor Carl Les, portfolio holder for community safety.

Councillor Les commented that he had been struck by a comment by the Police and Crime Commissioner that more could be done for vulnerable people across the county. He wanted to consider this and would look at what this could mean for the County Council.

Councillor Les updated Members on the flooding that had affected the County in late December 2015 and early January 2016. While North Yorkshire was fortunate that it hadn't been as badly affected as Cumbria and Lancashire, the south and west of the County, particularly Tadcaster had suffered widespread flooding. Work had only just commenced on repairing the A59 which remained closed; support was being received from Government on this issue and it was hoped that this might accelerate plans for a bypass on the A59. Councillor Les praised Council staff for their hard work and commitment responding to the flooding.

Councillor Les commented that he was disappointed with the Government's

budget settlement for the County Council. Representations had been made to the Treasury through a budget consultation and the Council will wait to hear the outcome of that, but it seems likely that the Council will have to find further savings on top of what was already required.

A Greater Yorkshire devolution deal is still the preferred option for the City of York Council, East Riding Council and North Yorkshire County Council, however, West Yorkshire is holding out for a West Yorkshire devolution settlement. At some point the sides need to find common ground or walk away from the deal.

Finally, it was noted that the roll out of Member I.T. equipment is underway and the Committee might want to review how this has been delivered as part of its future work programme.

Resolved -

That the oral report be noted.

73. Transforming Rehabilitation - Changes to Probation Service

Considered -

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader informing Members of the changes to delivery of probation services under the Government's Transforming Rehabilitation agenda.

Martin Weblin (Purple Futures Community Rehabilitation Company) and Wendy Capes (National Probation Service) attended the meeting to answer the Committee's questions on the issue. These questions are as follows:

a) What is the current adult reoffending rate in North Yorkshire?

Purple Futures do not yet have any data on this. When the service was privatised the existing data became the property of the Ministry of Justice. Purple Futures only have data from when they started and with the clients they have worked with since then. It was noted that reoffending rate measures were being reviewed by the Government and only once that has been completed will organisations be able to measure success. The split between organisations for high risk offenders and medium and low risk offenders will make it difficult to make a direct comparison to historical data where one service managed all offenders.

b) What measures will you both use to judge whether the changes in the delivery of the service have been a success?

For Purple Futures the obvious measure is payment by results. However, this breaks down in 17 service level targets which cover every area of work. Purple Futures have four Ministry of Justice staff who work with them and are solely focused on monitoring effectiveness against outcomes.

The targets cover a number of areas including the quality of the service but would include data from competitors. It was too early to say how successful the changes had been but as most of the targets were currently green it looked like the targets were achievable.

The Probation Service had 23 similar national measures with a few reds for North Yorkshire but overall it was an improving picture.

A Member wanted to know if it was an offence for employers to discriminate against applicants who have a criminal record. In response, employers are

able to discriminate legally between applicants based on criminal records, however, a lot of offences do not have to be declared when applying for work.

A Member wanted to know if there was a potential or perceived conflict of interest if Purple Futures were to offer employment to offenders they worked with in order to boost payment by results. It was noted that there needed to be trust in the providers, if that were to happen and someone was offered stable employment working within Purple Futures as a result of their probation and it helped them turn their life around then it wouldn't be a bad thing.

c) What have you found to be the significant pathways out of reoffending in North Yorkshire?

It was emphasised that this varied depending on each individual as each individual responded differently to various pathways of support. There are three general areas of support that are key to preventing reoffending; these are: finding the individual stable work, secure housing, and improved emotional and psychological wellbeing particularly, improving self-esteem. Partnership working and good relationships with other agencies such as housing associations can be key to the success of preventing reoffending.

In response to a question it was noted that there will always be those offenders who refuse to change and actively participate in a life of crime but that comes down to the skill of the practitioner to judge the character of the person and take the appropriate approach.

d) Have you seen a different mix of offenders in the county that would have an effect on the future offending rates?

It was noted that the criminal demographic in North Yorkshire hasn't changed significantly in the last few years. The number of sex offenders and historical sexual abuse offenders has increased and they tend to be older and present different needs such as health and social care requirements. There continues to be a low number of female high risk offenders in the Probation Service.

e) How have you dealt with the change that gives compulsory supervision to prisoners serving less than 12 months?

The process hasn't changed significantly, the change means that everyone leaving custody is now on a license and are also supervised beyond the cessation of the license up to a period of 12 months. There is now much closer work with the housing charity Shelter who manage the 'Through the Gate' aspect of the programme providing consistent support starting in custody through to when offenders are back in the community.

A Member wanted to know which organisation supervised unpaid work. All unpaid community work was handled within the community rehabilitation company. Depending on the offender, supervision can then be passed on again to a charity or voluntary group. If the offender is working in a charity shop immediate supervision can be undertaken by the suitable person within that establishment although the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) will always monitor the offender.

Monitored work parties form the majority of the unpaid work and this could be any number of different projects although they are encouraged to be as close to the offenders as possible to prevent travel time. Anybody can petition for work such as charities or parish councils.

f) How have you developed your relationship together with other partner

agencies and what areas do you still need to improve on?

Many of the relationships already existed as many of the same staff transitioned during the change and so carried those relationships with them. Third Sector Commissioning was employed to commission providers and services within communities and the voluntary sector as well as to foster effective links on behalf of the CRC and the Probation Service.

A Member highlighted that mental health issues are scarcely mentioned in the report and wanted reassurance that it is appropriately considered. It was confirmed that the National Probation Service (NPS) are heavily involved within personality disorder services as that is often a common issue. This enables the practitioner to work more effectively within a holistic framework. Community Mental Health Nurses do offer advice on cases however, traditionally the link with the mental health services is not as strong and a difficulty is often found engaging with those services. The County Council's Health and Wellbeing Board are more of a strategic group and don't necessarily consider the forensic detail of issues.

g) How have you worked towards closing the gaps in services such as Through the Gate?

This particular client group has been effectively merged with our existing client base and has not yet presented an issue. A lot of the work is sub-contracted to Shelter and another organisation called 3P who handle the more chaotic and disorganized individuals.

A Member wanted to know who determines whether commissioned providers are suitable. On the whole this is done by partners such as the County Council or Third Sector Commissioning, although the CRC and NPS will contribute to the discussions on contract monitoring and effectiveness.

h) How do you ensure a good working relationship focused on reducing youth offending with local youth offending teams?

There are two probation service officers seconded to the youth offending service to allow for a longer lead in time for transition between custody and being out on supervision. Louise Johnson, the head of the North Yorkshire National Probation Service, sits on the Youth Justice Board contributing to the ongoing discussion of issues and improving links between the organisations.

A Member commented that transformation officers were already stretched since the changes. It was confirmed that the transforming rehabilitation agenda has been quite brutal and amongst some there was a resistance to privatization. A lot of human resources support was needed however, the skills required were very similar and a lot of staff did continue working after the changes. Some staff thrived off the fact that they could now focus more on high or lower level offenders after the changes, so it was a very mixed picture.

Resolved -

that (A) the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company, Purple Futures be invited to a Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in 2017 to advise on the changes in the reoffending rates within North Yorkshire, and

(B) the North Yorkshire Health and Wellbeing Board be requested to look at the
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significance that mental health issues have in leading to criminal justice and to consider whether it should be and how it could be given higher priority within its plans.

74. North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service

Considered -

The report of the Head of the Youth Justice Service providing the Committee with an overview of the key strategic priorities for the Youth Justice Service Partnerships 2015-16 and 2020 review of the Youth Justice Service.

The current service delivery model for the Youth Justice Service has been in place since 2000. Over recent years, the cohort of young people has changed with the service now working with a considerably smaller and more challenging group of young people. In addition there has been significant change in the wider criminal justice landscape: regionalization of Courts and the Crown Prosecution Service, introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners and Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda. Furthermore, the Youth Justice Service is facing significant financial pressures with a projected overspend of £309,571 by the end of 2017/18.

Consequently, there will be a 2020 review of the North Yorkshire Youth Justice Service to consider the most appropriate approach to meet the needs of young people whilst meeting the statutory requirements of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This 2020 review is running alongside a national review of the Youth Justice Service announced by the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) which will report to the MoJ at the end of summer.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that sometimes youth offenders do pass between council boundaries, for instance being placed in North Yorkshire however the funding does not come with the children.

Resolved -

That the report be noted.

75. Prevent

Considered -

The report of the Assistant Director - Policy and Partnerships briefing Members on the implementation of the statutory Prevent Duty.

With effect from the 1 July 2015, Section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory duty on the County Council and other specified authorities in exercising their functions to have "due regard to the need to prevent people being drawn into terrorism". Actions undertaken to date relate to key areas of the statutory guidance around: governance and partnership working, risk assessment of the local area, guidance and support for teams that work with adults and children, creation of a Channel Panel to consider early intervention for at risk individuals, appropriate training being put in place for staff, and linking with communities.

It was noted that a common theme of cases that go through the Channel Panel are that there is often a mental health issue involved. It was also clarified that the Prevent agenda was not new and in fact it comes down to safeguarding vulnerable individuals.

A Member wanted to know if there was any member representation on the Local NYCC Corporate and Partnerships O&S Committee – Minutes of 18 January 2016/9

Prevent Groups. It was confirmed that there was some member representation. In response to a question it was noted that the majority of referrals were coming in from schools and adult safeguarding. Once they have come through to the Channel Panel work begins on a multi-agency basis to consider what interventions could be made to prevent the person being drawn into terrorism. There is a national list of providers for interventions however, they are based on the consent of the individual and that can be the trickiest part.

A Member wanted to know what type of terrorism referrals had been made for. It was noted that there was a cross section of referrals but generally they had been for far right and Islamist extremist views. A Member commented that he had had Prevent training in his role as a school governor and was impressed by its implementation. A Member wanted to know what proportion of the Islamist extremist referrals had been from families. In response it was highlighted that there had been no referrals from families. It shouldn't be portrayed as a specifically Muslim trait or that parents should be more aware of what their children are doing. Radicalisation can occur online and often the victim isn't aware that they are being groomed or manipulated.

Resolved -

- (a) that the report be noted, and
- (b) that a session on Prevent is included at the earliest opportunity in a future Members' Seminar.

76. Work Programme

Considered -

The report of the Scrutiny Team Leader inviting comments from Members on the content of the Committee's programme of work scheduled for future meetings.

Resolved -

That the content of the work programme report and schedule be agreed.

The meeting concluded at 12:50pm

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