

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

County Hall, Worcester

Thursday, 20 October 2022, 10.00 am

Present:

Cllr Tom Wells (Chairman), Cllr Alan Amos (Vice Chairman),
Cllr Alastair Adams, Cllr Brandon Clayton, Cllr Matt Dormer, Cllr Steve Mackay,
Cllr Emma Stokes, Cllr Richard Udall and Mr T Reid

Also attended:

Cllr Karen May, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well Being
John Champion, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Jones, West Mercia Police
Superintendent Melanie Paley, West Mercia Police
Yvonne Pepper, Road Safety Manager, West Mercia Police
Anna Southall, Engagement & Campaigns Manager, Road Safety Team, West
Mercia Police

Liz Altay, Interim Director of Public Health
Tim Rice, Head of Service for Safer Communities, Public Health
Paul Kinsella, Senior Public Health Practitioner
Simon Wilkes, Head of Regulatory Services
Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Sheena Jones, Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);

(A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

1278 Apologies and Welcome

Apologies were received from Councillor Shirley Webb and Mark Hughes
(Parent Governor Representative).

1279 Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip

None.

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board Thursday, 20 October 2022
Date of Issue: 28 November 2022

1280 Public Participation

None.

1281 Worcestershire County Council Community Safety Update Report

In attendance for the discussion:

Karen May, Cabinet Member with Responsibility (CMR) for Health and Wellbeing

Liz Altay, Interim Director of Public Health

Tim Rice, Head of Service for Safer Communities

Paul Kinsella, Advanced Public Health Practitioner

Simon Wilkes, Head of Regulatory Services

John Champion, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC)

Assistant Chief Constable (ACC), Rachel Jones, West Mercia Police

Supt Melanie Paley, West Mercia Police

The CMR introduced the Report and in doing so highlighted that the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board had been designated by the County Council (the Council) as its statutory Crime and Disorder Committee.

Tim Rice, the Head of Service for Safer Communities updated the Board on the developments in relation to Community Safety in Worcestershire including:

- Drugs and Alcohol Abuse
- Prevent
- Protect
- Reducing Reoffending
- Child Exploitation
- Trading Standards
- Domestic Abuse

The PCC was invited to comment and in doing so thanked the Board for inviting him to the meeting and for Worcestershire County Council being a proactive partner to work with. Worcestershire had been the first Council in West Mercia to introduce the Drive Programme (which was a response to domestic abuse that aims to reduce domestic abuse by deterring perpetrator behaviour). The PCC commented that although the crime and disorder legislation was outdated, the spirit of it ie to work together was right and that there was a very good working relationship with Worcestershire. The PCC advised the Board that Members ought to seek assurance around data with which he could assist. The PCC also suggested that the Community Safety Partnerships were not working as intended and needed a better structure.

The Chairman thanked the PCC for his introductory remarks.

During the opportunity for questions, which was led by the Lead Member for Crime and Disorder (Cllr Udall), the following main points were made:

General:

- The delays in the Crown Prosecution Service related to Crown Courts. Worcestershire, however, was performing better than other areas. The delays were mainly due to judicial capacity which meant that Police were supporting victims for longer and outcomes for victims were decreasing. Additional resources were being provided to Police Officers to help with this.
- Acknowledging that providing data to the Board was a challenge, it was requested that future reports included key performance indicators and/or other measures of outcomes.
- Hyperlinks should be included in future reports where appropriate.

Drug and Alcohol Abuse:

- A Member questioned whether the Police carried out enforcement in respect of domestic use of Cannabis, in response the ACC advised that the main focus for the Police was on supply and that drug use was mainly dealt with via the treatment route.
- The benefits of the 'Neighbourhood Matters' tool was highlighted and it was suggested that more promotion of it was needed.
- A Member highlighted that during some recent local job recruitment, 9 out of 12 applicants had failed a drugs test, this reaffirming the need to support people. The Interim Director of Public Health referred to the draft Alcohol and Drugs Strategy due to be launched in December 2022 which would have a strong focus on prevention.
- A request was made for data relating to drug reoffending rates which would be provided by the PCC after the meeting.

Prevent:

- In response to a Member question about what strategies were in place to identify and monitor new threats and issues to Worcestershire, it was explained that all partners had a role and it would depend on the threat or issue. Some issues were dealt with by the Police, some were dealt with by Public Health, some were addressed via education and information provided to schools. Online gaming was a current issue which provided threats around grooming and radicalisation. Members were reminded that if they were aware of any issues locally to report them.
- The CMR reminded Members that Prevent training had been provided to Councillors and that a refresher would be provided.
- The ACC highlighted that there were Prevent Ambassadors who were responsible for outreach work.
- It was confirmed that Prevent Training was offered to all professionals working with vulnerable people.

Protect:

- It was noted that Protect arrangements (forming part of the CONTEST, Counter Terrorism Act (CLTP)) had significant prominence in this year's CTLP and guidance was awaited from Government on a new duty in respect of this.
- The Worcestershire Project Group had been formed (which included Worcestershire Authorities and the West Mercia Local Resilience Forum) to oversee assurance of the Worcestershire approach on Protect.
- Information on the National Briefings provided around Protect were mainly shared with the Ministry of Justice and CSP's and other agencies involved in Protect.

Reducing Reoffending:

- It was agreed that the Government's regional reducing reoffending plans would be shared with the Board following the meeting.
- The Board was reassured that wrap-around services were provided to offenders who were released from prison at evenings or weekends
- It was confirmed that where appropriate, restorative justice was used and was very effective in reducing reoffending.

Child Exploitation

- A Member questioned the safeguards around child labour, it was agreed that an answer would be provided following the meeting.

Trading Standards:

- It was confirmed that there was limited legislation around tattoo artists.
- With reference to illegal imports and underage sale of fireworks, it was confirmed that Trading Standards engaged with retailers focussing on registration. Councillors were encouraged to report any local concerns.
- Crimes relating to dog breeding were a District Council responsibility. In the case of illegal importation of dogs, Trading Standards worked with local licencing teams and the Police.
- Crimes relating to livestock were reliant on complaints and would be dealt with by the Police if appropriate.

Domestic Abuse:

- Cases of domestic abuse were returning to pre-Covid levels.
- In response to the suggestion that Domestic Abuse training should be mandatory for Councillors, it was agreed that information would be circulated following the meeting.
- Statistics relating to convictions were not available at the meeting but the ACC advised that there was more work to do in this area which was affected by the court backlogs. It was noted that a survivor did not always wish to prosecute and the process needed to be survivor led.
- Reporting of all types of domestic abuse was encouraged by the Police. It was noted that for North Worcestershire in September, there had

been 384 cases of domestic abuse which was a 15% increase on the same time last year and this was replicated in South Worcestershire.

- The PCC advised that the Police would provide support to all types of domestic abuse and would continue with campaigns to promote awareness and encourage reporting. The backlog in the Crown Courts was having a knock on effect around the number of guilty pleas.
- It was noted that 15 new safe units of accommodation were either open or due to open in Worcestershire and due to increase to 29, but more were still needed.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

1282 Community Speed Watch Worcestershire - Update

In attendance for this discussion:

John Champion, West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
ACC Rachel Jones, West Mercia Police
Superintendent Mel Paley, West Mercia Police
Yvonne Pepper, Road Safety Manager, West Mercia Police
Anna Southall, Engagement & Campaigns Manager, Road Safety Team, West Mercia Police

The Road Safety Manager, West Mercia Police introduced the Report explaining the progress made since the last update in October 2021 (as detailed in the Report).

During the opportunity for questions, the following main points were made:

- It was confirmed that in unparished areas, a local community group could discuss with the Safer Neighbourhood Team or Road Safety Team, the possibility of a Community Speed Watch Scheme. An example of this was in Redditch.
- Community Speed Watch Schemes were not used in areas with a 20mph limit but this would be kept under review and any new guidance would be considered as necessary.
- Community Speed Watch Schemes were only appropriate when the speed limit of a road was 30 or 40 mph, fundamentally the safety of the volunteers was paramount.
- The PCC advised the Board about Community Speed Watch Schemes which had number recognition speed cameras and were being trialled in Shropshire.
- The Road Safety Manager explained the process for setting up a Scheme.
- It was noted that acoustic speed cameras were being trialled by the Metropolitan Police.
- Anecdotally, Community Speed Watch Schemes were thought to be successful in tackling community concern sites.
- A Member suggested that it was better if the volunteers taking part in the Schemes were in a different area to where they lived.

1283 Scrutiny Chairmen and Lead Member Update

The Scrutiny Panel Chairmen/Lead Members provided an update on recent Scrutiny meetings and activities.

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Cllr Emma Stokes, Chairman)

Panel Membership – It was noted that Councillor Richard Udall had replaced Councillor Mel Allcott.

With reference to performance information, the feasibility of using Power-BI to review performance was being looked into.

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Cllr Alastair Adams, Chairman)

At its meeting on 7 October, the Panel looked at Community Transport, the new requirements of the Environment Act and performance and in-year budget monitoring.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Cllr Brandon Clayton, Chairman)

At its meeting on the 17 October, the Committee received reports on Improving Patient Flow and Winter Planning, Stroke Services, Maternity Services and the Worcestershire Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Work Programme

It was noted that the Scrutiny Report from the Developer Funded Highways Infrastructure Scrutiny Task Group would be rescheduled from the November meeting to the December meeting.

The meeting ended at 1.25 pm

Chairman