

TORRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXTERNAL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY MEETING

Brynsworthy Environmental Centre - Brynsworthy

Monday, 8 November 2021 - 10.00 am

PRESENT Councillor J Manley (Chair, Torrridge District Council)
Councillor Tucker (Chair, North Devon District Council)

Representing Torrridge District Council (TDC)

Councillors S Langford, C Leather, S Newton and P Pennington

Representing North Devon District Council (NDDC)

Councillors Biederman, Cann, Gubb, Hunt, D. Spear, I. Spear

ALSO PRESENT	J Williams	- Public Health & Housing Manager (TDC)
	K Hewlett	- Electoral and Democratic Services Officer (TDC)
	N Rowlands	- Service Lead – Housing Vulnerable Persons and Community Safety (NDDC)
	T Birtwisle	- Service Lead - Community Safety Partnership Officer / Harm Risk (NDDC)
	A Dunbrook	- Corporate and Community Services Officer (NDDC)
	Superintendent Davies	- Devon & Cornwall Police
	E Butler-Jones	- Devon & Cornwall Police

93. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cottle-Hunkin and Hawkins, Independent Members Louis Bach and Kenton Baker and the Head of Legal & Governance (Monitoring Officer).

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Procedure Rule A4.3 of the Torrridge District Council Constitution, the meeting was declared inquorate and all business was adjourned. Members in attendance remained to receive an update from Superintendent Davies.

94. MINUTES

The meeting was not quorate, so the minutes for the meeting held on Wednesday 01 September 2021 will be reviewed at the next meeting of the External Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

95. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

96. ACTION LIST

The meeting was not quorate so the action plan will be reviewed at the next meeting of the External Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

97. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

98. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

99. URGENT MATTERS BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR

There were no urgent items.

100. UPDATE ON THE NORTH DEVON AND TORRIDGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

Superintendent Toby Davies gave Members an update on the North Devon and Torridge Community Safety Partnership over the last year. Unlike Cornwall, which was a Unitary Council, Devon had both district and county level local government administrations. The Community Safety Partnership was a district level partnership as well as a County level safety partnership. This could prove challenging when bringing together different organisations.

Over the last year the partnership had focussed on the following priorities:

- Protecting the vulnerable
- Sexual violence and domestic abuse
- Substance misuse
- Emerging threats

Superintendent Davies explained to members that the approach of the partnership had always been preventative, high intensity, and trauma informed. The partnership was unique in that it had very rural areas, urban and coastal, so it was important that focus must not just be given to the urban areas.

There was still a prevalence of organised crime groups in the area with County lines and drug activities still a big area of concern, but it was explained this would be a common theme for most authorities nationally as well. Bitesize training has provided front line workers with knowledge to spot signs of illicit

behaviour, and this had resulted in an increase in intelligence from the community.

Another priority area that was concentrated on was sexual violence and domestic abuse. It was stated that this was the most likely way a female could come to harm, usually within the home or from someone known to them. Superintendent Davies highlighted the work of the sub-group dedicated to victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

It was explained that road safety was of considerable importance, especially in light of the loss of three lives within the space of eight days in the Torrridge area recently. It was stated that the cause of most of the road traffic accidents over the year could be attributed to locals in the area. Superintendent Davies highlighted the road safety initiative Operation Snap, whereby members of the public could upload their dash-cam footage to the police via their website - this has proven to be very successful. It was confirmed there would be two speed detection officers in vans dedicated to the area and mostly located on the link road. The Community Speed Watch initiative was highlighted and it was explained how this helped the police in local and rural areas. If communities were experiencing speeding issues advice and help could be given to set up a local Speed Watch group.

The final area that had a big impact on town centres was Anti-Social Behaviour. Superintendent Davies highlighted the Home Office had launched 'Street Safe' which allowed the public to anonymously log areas of concerns over personal safety in the town. It was explained how Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) was a big area of concern for everyone and wasn't just for the partnership to resolve. The ASB steering group was highlighted – their role was to identify and target individuals, who were street based, with the aim of helping them regain a role in society. The use of Public Spaces Protection Orders was also highlighted as a useful tool in tackling ASB in public places and in Torrridge was being widely extended. The use of Covid Marshalls patrolling the streets was another example that gave a sense of safety for visitors to the towns.

Superintendent Davies explained he was a Senior Response Officer for a group called High Flow working in collaboration with One Northern Devon. 13 individuals who were putting the most demand on services had a team around them helping to turn their lives around. A High Intensity Pilot was a collaboration between the Devon Partnership Trust, Police and other partners providing 10 individuals with mental health issues a team dedicated to their needs.

It was confirmed the partnership had strong links with the Exmoor Rural Alliance and the Rural Affairs team. The Office for the Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) were collaborating with a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) at Ilfracombe Harbour, this would be the host location but would cover coastal communities across the area.

Via a virtual link, Janet Williams, Public Health and Housing Manager (TDC) then gave Members an update of the work carried out in the Torrridge area of the partnership as follows:

- The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Bideford town was reviewed and renewed in 2021 and as part of this work a consultation was carried out with the Police, residents and businesses in the town.
- An awareness raising campaign was carried out advising individuals and businesses of the new provisions under the renewed PSPO and regular joint patrols involving the police and council enforcement team reiterating the new provisions
- An anti-social behaviour steering group was set up with North Devon to look at hotspots to look at and understand issues and provide resources to tackle problems where necessary
- This steering group was open to Councillors as well as businesses to give their feedback and concerns on issues affecting them - an invitation was extended to members.

Via a virtual link, Natasha Rowland, Service Lead, Housing Equality, NDC gave Members an update on the work carried out in North Devon as follows:

- The Public Space Protection Orders in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe had been reviewed and renewed during 2021.
- Barnstaple was currently experiencing high anti-social behaviour issues and alongside the ASB steering group an action plan was being drafted to address the problems currently being experienced.
- It was explained this would include a zero-tolerance approach to some of the behaviours that were taking place. The plan showed recognition that there were issues but also balanced with the desire to understand what was triggering the behaviours in certain individuals and how to address those issues

Via virtual link, Tim Birtwisle, Service Lead - Community Safety Partnership Officer/Harm Risk, NDC, provided Members with an update on the Trauma Informed approach as follows:

- Over the last year the trauma informed approach had helped individuals turn their lives around
- In 2020 a Trauma Informed Conference was held and it had been hoped to run more events. However, the Covid pandemic meant these meetings had to move online
- A training organisation had been co-opted providing training online to more than 200 delegates from various backgrounds. These included statutory partners of the CSP as well as individuals from agencies involved in health and social care
- The feedback from the training sessions had been very positive, with delegates saying they had been able to put into practice what they had learned on the course

Emma Butler-Jones, Devon and Cornwall Police gave Members an update on road safety as follows:

- The Forum that met to discuss road safety issues ceased at the beginning of lockdown due to the Covid pandemic.
- The work dealing with road safety had continued with the input from local communities and by liaising with Highways and local authorities.
- The community speed watch project was being used successfully as an approach to dealing with speeding issues in rural towns and villages.
- Anyone interested in the issue of road safety was invited to get in touch.

Emma Butler-Jones went on to give Members an update on the Sexual violence and Domestic Abuse Forum as follows:

- The Forum continued to meet online during lock down and were able to introduce measures to help victims of abuse such as the Safe Spaces campaign and the Ask for Angela scheme
- Bitesize sessions on spotting abuse in the workplace had been run for businesses
- The focus of the Forum was early intervention and prevention and the awareness of violence against women and girls was being taken into schools
- As the biggest risk behind closed doors the Forum would still treat domestic abuse as a top priority

The Superintendent summed up for members and highlighted the importance of partner engagement in the issues. It was explained that the area remains one of the safest places to live in terms of the levels of crime, and whilst crime will always be an issue crime rates compared to the rest of the country remained low.

Finally, it was confirmed that Safe Devon Partnership would be restructuring and that the OPCC's office planned to change the way funding would be distributed – it was stated that future projects would need to be specific and show where money was going to be spent.

The following responses were given to questions asked:

- The Ask for Angela scheme was nationally recognised and licensed premises in the area were all aware of how to support someone.
- It was confirmed that attendance at CSP was intermittent from representatives in health, the probation service and the fire service. It was confirmed that not all partners were statutory, some were volunteers. It was explained that Covid had affected the ability for some partners to attend.
- It was explained that the issues with 101 and not being able to get through on the phone was not covered by CSP. However, the historical issues of retaining call handlers was highlighted to members along with the variety of ways people can report so that 101 can be freed up for those who need it.
- It was explained that if Police statistics were not showing incidents of criminal activity, this would suggest that reporting of those incidents was

not being made through the correct channels and so not getting to the police. It was confirmed that anything reported was logged and there would be a record.

- In relation to ASB Youth Engagement Officers who visited schools in Torridge were highlighted and it was confirmed they had received funding to put outreach workers on the street educating the young people.
- It was explained how the increase in Public Offence numbers could be seen as a positive, as it showed that Police Officers were being more proactive and dealing with situations before they escalated to more serious offences.
- It was confirmed that the Road Safety Sub-Group welcomed attendance from Councillors and this would be a good way to get involved in managing the response.
- The Street Safe app was a Home Office initiative and anonymous. It was not the same as reporting to the Police. Superintendent Davies confirmed that the CSP promoted Street Safe on their social media platforms, as well as Devon Live whose audience numbers were significant.
- It was confirmed that there are Bitesize sessions covering Safety Online, and these could be delivered at parish level to reach the elderly.
- There is a dedicated Rural Affairs team dealing with poaching of livestock from agricultural land.

101. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

The meeting was not quorate so the forward plan will be reviewed at the next meeting of the External Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 11.34 am

Chair:

Date: