

## **North Yorkshire County Council**

### **Corporate and Partnership Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Minutes of the meeting held at County Hall, Northallerton on 3 September 2018 at 10.30 am.

#### **Present:-**

County Councillor Bryn Griffiths in the Chair.

County Councillors Val Arnold, Margaret Atkinson, Caroline Goodrick, Andy Paraskos, Tony Randerson, Angus Thompson, Cliff Trotter, Annabel Wilkinson.

#### **Also in Attendance**

Officers: Odette Robson, Head of Safer Communities, North Yorkshire County Council; Dr Justin Ives, Chairman of North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership; Julie Firth, Partners in Practice Manager, Children and Families Service, North Yorkshire County Council; and Daniel Harry, Democratic Services and Scrutiny Manager, North Yorkshire County Council.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors Derek Bastiman, Richard Musgrave and Stuart Parsons. There were no substitutes.

Stuart Minting, Local Democracy Reporter attended.

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#### **Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book**

#### **58. Minutes**

##### **Resolved –**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2018, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

#### **59. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **60. Public Questions or Statements**

There were no public questions or statements.

#### **61. Chairman's Announcements - Any correspondence, communication or other business brought forward by the direction of the Chairman of the Committee**

In the absence of the Chairman, County Councillor Derek Bastiman, there were no Chairman's Announcements.

**62. Update on North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership**

Considered -

An update on North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership that was provided by Odette Robson, Head of Community Safety, North Yorkshire County Council and Dr Justin Ives, Chair of the Community Safety Partnership

Odette Robson introduced the report and the key issues referred to are summarised as below:

- Legislation placed a statutory duty on Community Safety Partnerships to develop a strategic plan which addresses multi-agency issues affecting communities and residents
- The North Yorkshire Strategic Plan will be signed off in September 2018, drafts of that plan having previously been circulated to partners for comment
- The Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, to help ensure that it is still relevant to the local area
- The Strategic Plan has the following priorities: NYCSP development; Community Safety Hubs; Domestic Abuse (including scoping around Sexual Violence and Trauma); Serious and Organised Crime (early intervention and prevention); Hate Crime and Community Cohesion
- An inter board network in North Yorkshire has been established to help ensure that the work of a number of key partnerships is better co-ordinated (CSP, safeguarding adults board, safeguarding children board).

Odette Robson said that organisations in North Yorkshire were working together well to reduce crime and disorder and to promote community safety but that it was important not be complacent.

Dr Justin Ives said that the Community Safety Hubs were working well and demonstrated what could be achieved when people worked together, sharing resources and intelligence.

Cllr Caroline Goodrick queried whether stalking and the heightened risk to victims of stalking of physical or sexual violence, was included in the strategy?

In response, Odette Robson noted that stalking was linked to domestic abuse and that a specific Domestic Abuse Strategy was currently being written, which it would be included in.

Cllr Val Arnold asked what the role of the Partnership was regarding homicide reviews.

In response, Odette Robson said that the recommendations of such reviews were considered by the Partnership to see whether there were any changes that needed to be made to how the partner organisations worked.

Cllr Bryn Griffiths asked how many Serious and Organised Crime Groups there were in the county and what level of threat they presented.

Odette Robson confirmed that problem profiles were produced both nationally and locally that detailed the level of development of Serious and Organised Crime Groups and what risk they presented. Work was also done with the Home Office, as part of the national response to this form of crime.

Cllr Bryn Griffiths queried whether internet-based crime fell under this heading.

Odette Robson said that it did.

Dr Justin Ives emphasised that cross-border work was well established and that data, NYCC Corporate and Partnerships O&S Committee – Minutes of 3 September 2018

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information and intelligence was shared between the Police and others to ensure that there was an effective response in place.

Daniel Harry asked what the 'Prevent' element of the Serious and Organised Crime National Strategy involved.

Odette Robson said that the work was targeted at young people who had been identified as being at risk of being drawn into serious and organised crime. Young people who were considered to be at risk could be referred to a multi-agency 'Disruption Panel' to see what help they needed.

Cllr Annabel Wilkinson asked whether schools and other educational bodies that worked with children and young people who were not in mainstream school were involved.

Odette Robson confirmed that all educational providers were well placed to identify children and young people at risk of involvement in serious and organised crime.

Daniel Harry questioned whether the changes to the governance of the Fire and Rescue Service and the increasing role and remit of the Police and Crime Commissioner would have an impact upon the work of the Partnership.

Dr Justine Ives said no, not at this time.

### **Resolved -**

- 1) Thank Odette Robson and Dr Justin Ives for attending
- 2) A bi-annual update on the work of the NYCSP to be received by the committee, scheduled to commence as of March 2019.

### **63. Update on Youth Justice Strategic Plan & Implementation of New Practice Model**

Considered -

An update by Julie Firth, Partners in Practice Manager, Children and Families Service, North Yorkshire County Council on the implementation of the new practice model in the Youth Justice Service (YJS), the current performance of the service against national indicators and the priorities in the Youth Justice Strategic Plan for 2018 -2020.

Julie Firth introduced the report and made the following comments:

- The revised YJS structure and delivery model became operational from 1 September 2017
- The reconfigured YJS is now managed under the Prevention Service and adopts a tiered approach
- The YJS restructuring delivered savings of £324,442, which were necessary, as a result of a reduction in the Youth Justice Board annual grant
- The latest official reoffending data relates to the April to June 2016 cohort, which predates the changes in the delivery model
- Locally, a cohort of 21 young people is used to track reoffending rates
- A review of re-offenses committed over the 12 months ending 31 March 2018 by the cohort suggests a reduction in reoffending of 44% compared to the baseline year
- A Youth Outcomes Panel was introduced in May 2017 as a result of the new model of practice. This Panel considers the most appropriate disposal for young people who have committed a criminal offence for the first time. The Youth Justice Board have cited this approach as best practice
- There has been a reduction in the number of first time entrants into the Criminal Justice System in North Yorkshire, bringing it into more into line with performance across the

family group.

Julie Firth said that a formal review of the first year of operation of the new service model was being undertaken, the outcome of which would be available soon. She said that the Youth Outcomes Panel had marked a significant change in practice as it now enabled a full assessment of a young person's offending and circumstances to be considered as part of the charging process.

Julie Firth told the committee that in North Yorkshire there were a number of privately run care homes that provided services to Looked After Children from neighbouring local authorities. Some of these young people had a history of offending and when they reoffended the Youth Justice Board included their offences in the data for North Yorkshire. This then distorted the data, inflating the number of offences attributable to young people from North Yorkshire.

Julie Firth said that significant time and effort had been spent looking at how the YJS did its work and the systems and processes that were used. This had revealed that caseworkers spent a disproportionate amount of time completing the ASSET Plus assessment tool, which was a mandatory requirement of the Youth Justice Board. Following successful negotiations with the Youth Justice Board, and with support from the DfE, North Yorkshire is going to run a pilot of a slimmed down and simpler, locally developed assessment tool. It is anticipated that this new assessment tool will go live from January 2019, freeing up caseworker time to do face to face work with young people and their families. In turn, this should reduce reoffending rates.

Cllr Annabel Wilkinson queried how many Looked After Children were placed in North Yorkshire by other local authorities.

In response, Julie Firth said that she would need to check but it was around 270. She emphasised that young people are often victims of crime themselves and could be exploited by organised criminal gangs, particularly around the supply of illegal drugs. There were some indications that this may be an issue in Ripon, Harrogate and Scarborough.

Cllr Cliff Trotter asked whether North Yorkshire County Council was paid any funding by those local authorities that placed Looked After Children in the county.

Julie Firth said that no funding was provided, as the contractual relationship was between the private care home and the local authority placing the child.

Cllr Caroline Goodrick expressed her concerns that a number of public services were facing increasing pressures due to the number of Looked After Children placed in the county and that there did not appear to be anyway in which to seek some form of reimbursement for this.

### **Resolved -**

- 1) Thank Julie Firth for attending
- 2) Julie Firth to confirm the number of looked after children placed in North Yorkshire by other authorities
- 3) Check with the Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee what are the obligations of local authorities regarding the care and support provided to children and young people who are Looked After and placed in private care homes in North Yorkshire
- 4) Request a further update in 12 months, with a focus upon reoffending rates and first time entrants.

Considered -

The findings from the scrutiny review, written by Melanie Carr of North Yorkshire County Council, of cash-based, over the counter banking and Post Office services in rural areas of the county, and agree the recommendations arising from the review.

Daniel Harry introduced the report, noting the following:

- In January 2018, Members met with a Natwest Bank representative responsible for Yorkshire and the Humber, and for managing the engagement process for closure of NatWest branch banks
- In April 2018, Members met with the Post Office Externals Affairs Lead for Scotland and Northern Ireland (previously the External Affairs Manager for the National Post Office Company)
- Information provided by Age UK and the Rural Services Network had also been reviewed and the Local Enterprise Partnership for North Yorkshire, York and East Riding had been asked to comment about the impact upon local businesses
- The issue remained that local communities and businesses were impacted by commercial decisions made by banks and to a lesser extent post offices, which made assumptions about how people managed their finances which in many cases were flawed
- Whilst corporate and social responsibility was a key issue, it was unclear how far Government was able to enforce this as part of the regulation of financial services providers.

Cllr Bryn Griffiths said that those committee members who had been involved with this piece of in-depth scrutiny felt that they were hitting a brick wall. He asked the committee to consider the report and suggest some further lines of enquiry that could be pursued.

Cllr Bryn Griffiths also asked that the appended list of 'Banks and Building Society Branches, LINK ATMs and Post Offices in North Yorkshire Market Towns and Large Settlements' be checked as he noted that in Stokesley the Barclays bank, HSBC bank and Natwest bank branches had all closed.

Cllr Margaret Atkinson expressed her frustration that access to over the counter cash banking services was seemingly governed solely by commercial decisions and not by corporate social responsibility.

Cllr Val Arnold raised her concerns about the impact of bank and post office closures upon older people, particularly those who do not have access to the internet and/or on-line banking.

Cllr Caroline Goodrick queried why it was not possible for the banking sector to work together to provide a mobile bank that could handle transactions for all the major banks through one, vehicle-based, access point. The Post Office continued to offer mobile services, as did a number of public sector organisations.

Cllr Annabel Wilkinson noted that the lack of public transport in some areas meant that it was increasingly difficult for people to access their bank when local branches closed and they then had greater distances to travel.

Cllr Angus Thompson said that it was important that post offices were supported locally.

Cllr Annabel Wilkinson suggested that the community post office model that had been a success in East Cowton could be applied elsewhere.

**Resolved -**

- 1) The Chair to write to both the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to North Yorkshire MPs to raise the Committee's concerns about the impact on rural communities and small businesses and the need for banks, in particular, to conform with social responsibility norms.
- 2) That prior to going to Executive with recommendations, further work is done to ascertain the following:
  - a. What more can be done to enable community's to setup and run their own 'community Post Office'?
  - b. Whether Post Offices are adequately funded (and so staffed) to take on the additional work associated with cash transactions when bank branches locally close?
  - c. Whether libraries (static and mobile) could host banks or banking transactions?
  - d. What role does the Council's Stronger Communities programme have to play?
  - e. Whether banks would be able to run a joint mobile banking service?
- 3) To come back to the committee for the meeting on 3 December 2018, possibly with a draft report for Executive.

**65. Work Programme**

Considered -

The report of Melanie Carr, Principal Democratic Services and Scrutiny Officer, providing Members with a copy of the Committee's Work Programme for review and comment.

Daniel Harry asked Members to consider the Work Programme and get back to either himself or Melanie Carr outside of the meeting if there were any areas of work that people felt needed to be included.

**Resolved -**

- 1) 3 December 2018 – add in the follow up to the questions raised regarding banks and Post Offices, possibly the draft report to go to Executive.
- 2) 4 March – ensure that the item on the CRC and Probation includes details of what work is done with offenders both in prison and in the community to enable them to access the education and skills training that they need to help them gain employment.
- 3) Follow up on the outstanding issues that arose from the recent prison visit, in particular clarify whether we actively seek to employ ex-offenders.

**66. Other business which the Chairman agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances**

There was no other business.

The meeting concluded at 11:40 pm.

DH