

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>TOURISM ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Sharon Davis, Scrutiny Manager
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	2 December 2020

## COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 2020

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update on the work undertaken by members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee in carrying out the statutory annual review of the Community Safety Partnership.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To consider the update, determine if any further scrutiny work is required and approve the following actions agreed by the review;

- That the 2021 meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Review Panel input into the draft Community Safety Plan 2022;
- That the following information be provided electronically to Members of the Review Panel;
  - The number of reported incidents of domestic abuse and subsequent convictions;
  - Details of the number of reports of sexual abuse and rape, the number of prosecutions undertaken and the number of convictions achieved, along with a comparison of national trends;
  - The latest statistics regarding burglaries in Blackpool; and
  - The latest statistics regarding reoffending in Blackpool.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure the Committee has an overview of work that has been undertaken within its remit.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

**4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

4.1 None

**5.0 Council priority:**

5.1 The relevant Council priority is

- “Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience”

**6.0 Background information**

6.1 The Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny is the Council’s statutory Crime and Disorder Panel. As part of this duty, it is required to meet at least once in a Municipal Year to consider crime and disorder issues. As in previous years the Committee has undertaken this function in 2020 by holding a dedicated Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Review Panel meeting to consider the CSP’s work and priorities. In 2020 this meeting was held on 2 December 2020.

**7.0 Community Safety Review Panel**

7.1 On 2 December 2020 members of the Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee held a review panel meeting to consider the Community Safety Partnership Annual Report. Councillor Mitchell chaired the meeting with the following members also present;

7.2	Councillor P Burdess	Councillor G Walsh
	Councillor J Hugo	Councillor P Wilshaw

7.3 The meeting was also attended by Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet member for Housing and Welfare Reform, Councillor Jo Farrell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Mr John Blackledge, Director of Communities and Environmental Services, Mr Dominic Blackburn, Community Safety Manager, Chief Inspector Mark Morley, Lancashire Constabulary and Mr Mark Winder, Acting Group Manager, Community Protection, Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service.

7.4 Mr Blackledge informed the meeting that responsibility for Community Safety at the Council had changed during the last twelve months. The Community Safety team had moved to work alongside Public Protection within the Communities and Environmental Service Directorate at the Council.

7.5 During 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic had created significant challenges for all partners of the CSP. In response a Covid Taskforce Group had been established, which had met twice weekly to discuss and address issues that had arisen. The Domestic Abuse Group had also been established in November 2020 and would lead on implementing the provisions of the

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Domestic Abuse Act. It was also noted that a new Domestic Abuse Officer had been appointed to help with this work.

- 7.6 A new Community Safety Plan is also to be planned to be approved for 1 April 2022. This would be developed by the CSP following a strategic needs assessment scheduled for late 2021. The input of the TEC Scrutiny Committee was welcomed to input into this process with the Panel agreeing to organise a Review Panel in late 2021 to consider the outcome of the assessment and potential future priorities.
- 7.7 The Panel queried how well resourced the CSP was to undertake its work. Mr Blackburn responded that the CSP had been working well and had the tools and powers to effectively undertake its work. He also agreed to share a copy of the Community Safety Team's staff structure for information.
- 7.8 The meeting also discussed the use of Community Protection Notices (CPN). Mr Morley reported that the use of CPNs in Blackpool represented best practice and that other areas of Lancashire had looked to learn from.
- 7.9 The Panel considered the follow CSP priorities 2019-2022;

### 7.10 Domestic Abuse

Mr Morley informed the Panel that Domestic Abuse (DA) remained an ongoing concern especially during the Covid-19 lockdown where many victims could have been trapped with their abuser. This had required work to find ways for them to come forward and report DA. However it was noted that more victims had been coming forward and being carried forward to prosecution.

- 7.10.1 The Panel asked, and Mr Morley agreed, that the data regarding DA be shared showing the number of reports and the number of offenders subsequently prosecuted and convicted be shared with the TEC Scrutiny Committee for information.
- 7.10.2 Messaging for DA and what services were available was also recognised as important by the Panel. Mr Blackburn responded that there was a Tackling Violence Reduction Team whose work included messaging, and Mr Blackledge added the importance of having a joined up message between partners had been recognised to ensure a co-ordinated approach.
- 7.10.3 The Panel also queried what services were available for adults who had been attacked by young people who were either a family member or in their care. Mr Blackburn replied that over the last eighteen months there had been eighty nine such reports. He added that the Police and Crime Commissioner had supported training on supporting victims and young people for partners' staff.

7.11 Violence Against the Person

Mr Blackburn informed Members that 'Violence Against the Person' covered a number of categories of violence and that there were a number of working groups in existence that worked to address it.

- 7.11.1 He also stated that Lancashire Constabulary had specialist teams on Friday and Saturday nights to address the issue of violence in Blackpool town centre.

7.12 Anti-Social Behaviour

The Panel noted that information provided regarding Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) had shown that there had been an increase during 2020. Mr Morley informed Members that this had been the result of calls regarding breaching of Covid-19 lockdown regulations being logged as ASB and therefore the increase in numbers did not represent a concern for the CSP.

- 7.12.1 Mr Blackburn added that the requirement to bring homeless individuals sleeping rough indoors before the first national lockdown had resulted in a number of people with complex needs being placed together in accommodation. This had led to some instances of ASB early during lockdown that had subsequently been resolved.
- 7.12.2 Members also asked if the use of Covid Marshals had been successful in encouraging people to abide by Covid-19 restrictions. Mr Blackledge explained that although the marshals did not possess any enforcement powers they had been successful in encouraging people to follow guidelines. The number of marshals needed was also queried, with Mr Blackledge informing Members that there had been forty during the summer but since the move into Tier Three of national restrictions this had reduced to around twenty. He added that funding for the marshals had come from government grant.

7.13 Sexual Assault and Rape

The Panel noted from the report that the level of sexual assaults and rape had not changed during 2020 and asked if the figures for the offence could be clarified. Mr Morley responded that the lockdown had meant that fewer instances had been reported, in part attributed to the closing of the night time economy for much of the year. However he expected that following the foreseen lifting of Covid-19 restrictions in 2021, that there would be an increase in the figures.

- 7.13.1 Members also asked what the conviction rate for those reported of committing sexual assaults and rape were in Blackpool, noting that media reporting had shown that the national figure was low. Mr Morley responded that the offences could be difficult to prove and that every report was passed to the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and taken as far as was possible. It was also important to recognise the victims in cases and ensure that enough support as possible was put in place regardless of the outcome of a criminal investigation. He

also emphasised that the final decision for undertaking a prosecution was the responsibility of the Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS), not the Police.

7.13.2 The Review Panel asked that details of the number of reports of sexual abuse and rape, the number of prosecutions undertaken and the number of convictions achieved, along with a comparison of national trends be provided to Members for information.

### 7.14 Child Exploitation

Mr Blackburn reported that lots of positive work had been undertaken during 2020 to address the issue of Child Exploitation (CE), including criminal and sexual exploitation. A Daily Exploitation and Missing meeting had also been established to allow the rapid sharing of information, the consideration of data and the identification of issues between partners. This was reported as having worked well.

7.14.1 Members queried why referrals of sex offenders had been made to housing in the Talbot and Claremont wards in Blackpool and asked if this increased the risk to young people in those areas. Mr Blackburn responded that it was a complex issue, but that every placement was risk assessed and partners were aware of the threat that the sex offender could pose. Mr Morley added that partners were experienced in managing risk and that each offender was subject to regular checks and arrests would be made of anyone breaching conditions of their referral. Councillor Brookes added that each offender had an individual plan which allowed partners to know where they were and keep track of them.

7.14.2 The Panel also noted that a key component of the County Lines drugs gangs was the criminal exploitation of children and asked if Lancashire Constabulary had engaged with hotels and guest houses in seeking to address the issue in 2019-2020. Mr Blackburn replied that the CSP had engaged with hotels and guest houses to help them identify potentially inappropriate bookings linked to County Lines. He also explained that Section 116 powers could be used to challenge such bookings, however there had been no use of such powers despite hotel operators expressing support for them.

7.14.3 It was also asked if any training existed for CSP partners on Child Sexual Exploitation. Councillor Farrell responded that Fylde Coast Womens Aid operated a programme for providing such training called "Wired".

7.14.4 Mr Winder added that the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) had been used to help identify cases of CE during ordinary fire safety inspections. It was noted that the FRS was a trusted organisation who often had better access to people's homes than other agencies.

### 7.14.5 Burglary

Members also discussed the rate of burglary in Blackpool, Mr Morley explained that rates of detection were typically low but recognised that it was a high impact crime for victims. In

response to this the Police sought to deploy to every reported instance to provide reassurance to communities. Mr Morley added that he would provide the latest statistics for Burglary in Blackpool to Members for information.

7.15 Other Areas of Work

Modern Slavery – Training was provided to partners to ensure that signs of modern slavery could be recognised and reported. It was also noted there was an ongoing issue of slavery being used in the operation of cannabis farms, controlled by criminal gangs often based outside of Blackpool.

7.15.1 Sex Workers – Partners had been undertaken visits to “Massage Parlours” and other businesses known to operate as brothels to ensure that women working there were safe and that sexual health advice could be offered. During the national Covid-19 lockdown an issue of operators violating restrictions had been noted and where possible the Council would seek to prosecute them.

7.15.2 Street Sex – This was noted as an issue in the Central Drive area and Church Street in Blackpool. In response the Police and Council had installed CCTV in problem areas, which had led to a reduction offences. It was however reported that some street sex workers had moved online to attract business.

7.15.3 Reoffending – In response to a query regarding levels of reoffending in Blackpool, Mr Blackburn agreed to provide the latest data to members of the Review Panel.

7.16 The Review Panel thanked the officers and members of the CSP in attendance and noted the following actions;

- That the 2021 meeting of the Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Review Panel input into the draft Community Safety Plan 2022;
- That the following information be provided electronically to Members of the Review Panel;
  - The number of reported incidents of domestic abuse and subsequent convictions;
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Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

**8.0 List of Appendices:**

8.2 None

**9.0 Financial considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Legal considerations:**

10.1 The Tourism, Economy and Communities Scrutiny Committee is required as the Council's statutory Crime and Disorder Panel to meet at least once a year to consider crime and disorder issues.

**11.0 Risk management considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Equalities considerations:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

13.1 None

**14.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

14.1 None

**15.0 Background papers:**

15.1 None