

Report to:

**TOURISM, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITIES
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Relevant Officer:

Mr John Greenbank, Senior Democratic Governance Adviser

Date of Meeting:

8 February 2023

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL 2022/23

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To inform the Committee on the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership Scrutiny Review Panel.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the outcome of the meeting and consider any areas for further scrutiny as appropriate.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 To ensure that the Committee has an ongoing oversight of scrutiny review panel work.

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 Committee is the committee designated to undertake the Council's statutory duty to review the Crime and Disorder Partnership (Community Safety Partnership). It has been agreed that the committee will carry out an annual review at an informal meeting with a full report to be provided

had been an increase in the levels experienced during 2020-2021 due to the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdowns, the level had fallen and was now considerably lower than pre-2020.

- 6.12 The meeting was told that ASB in Blackpool is managed on a day-to-day basis through meetings between CSP partners. The Council sought to address reports of ASB proactively through the use of enforcement notices and orders, the decrease in data
- 6.13 However it had been recognised that up to 50% of ASB go unreported and members of the CSP expressed a view that with the ongoing- cost of living crisis certain crimes and disorder could increase. However they emphasised the importance of reporting incidents of ASB and other crime, to ensure the CSP partners were able to effectively able to respond to the issues being experienced.
- 6.14 The operation of dispersal orders was discussed, following concerns from members regarding the frequency of their use and the communications with the public once they are issued. The orders were issued to target individuals not groups, nor were they used to force all children within an area indoors. In most cases an Section 34 order would be issued to individuals believed to be causing ASB or other disturbances, which would then allow them to be detained under a Section 35 order if they remained in the area. Any young people in an area where a dispersal order had been issued, not causing ASB would not be affected.
- 6.15 The communications of dispersal orders was noted as requiring consideration as social media announcements gave the impression that the Police were requiring all children in an area to go indoors. This created an impression that “curfews” were being imposed, which was incorrect.
- 6.16 Ongoing challenges in relation to ASB were reported in respect of engagement with young people. It had been noted that the Covid lockdown had prevented engagement with young people, this had caused a slight but notable increase in youth related ASB. The CSP therefore had developed a new engagement plan to address the issue, which would include diversionary work for young people into various social and community based activities.
- 6.17 Begging
- 6.18 The meeting heard that in relation to instances of begging in Blackpool the majority of cases gravitated to the town centre and were cases of professional begging, rather than begging by those in housing need.
- 6.19 Regular tours of the town centre by the Council’s Public Protection team and Business Improvement District Officers to identify those begging and seek to prevent reoccurrences. In cases where individuals was found to be in housing need officers would seek to connect them with Housing Options or relevant third sector organisations. However as many were not the Council had adopted an approach using Civil Injunctions to prevent problem individuals from

begging in the town centre. This had replaced the use of enforcement notices which was no longer used due to the timescales involved and issues in ensuring compliance.

- 6.20 The approach also allowed services the opportunity to engage with individuals begging and identify cases of exploitation and other needs they could have.
- 6.21 Opportunities to assist donating to support homelessness prevention were highlighted, through schemes such as the QR codes placed in Car Parks. It was also noted that the Just Giving page supported by the Council could use its funds more widely, as it currently only donated to the Food Bank.
- 6.22 Road Safety
- 6.23 Road Safety was noted as an area of significant public concern and was addressed in Blackpool via CSP partners involvement in the Lancashire Roads Partnership. This partnership brought together a wide group of organisations together to raise concerns and develop solutions to road safety issues. Partners involved included the PCC, Fire and Rescue and Schools.
- 6.24 The panel was also informed that an update on work planned for 2023/24 could be provided later in 2023 to a meeting of the TEC Scrutiny Committee.
- 6.25 Rape and Serious Assault
- 6.26 Instances of Rape and Serious Assault were known to be under reported in Blackpool and partners therefore seeking to encourage reporting. Although this would cause the data in relation to rape to increase, greater reporting would ensure the response was effective and issues identified. The importance of Blackpool's night time economy meant that it was a priority to ensure that women felt safe in the town.
- 6.27 The situation regarding sex workers in Blackpool was also discussed by the panel. Members heard that the majority of sex workers were located in brothels, often referred to as "massage parlours". Regular inspections of these premises were undertaken by partner where services could ensure that sex workers were housed safely and health needs could be identified and addressed. These visits could also be used to highlight any cases of Criminal Sexual Exploitation.
- 6.28 User of brothels however had been targeted by the CSP, seeking to discourage their use. This work was noted as being challenging as many brothels were located in busy central locations, often used by legitimate traffic.
- 6.29 Occasions of on-street prostitution were more limited with it being reported that only two occurrences were known to be taking place. The Police had regarded these as cases of ASB and would be seek to address issues associated with these activities.

6.30 Child Criminal Exploitation

6.31 Child Criminal Exploitation work in Blackpool was reported as focussing on those children involved in “county lines” drug gangs. Work to address this was being led by the Awaken Team and supported through a daily Exploitation Team Meeting. This meeting sought to ensure that the CSP could react quickly to the latest information and co-ordinate actions.

6.32 The effectiveness of the county lines model for criminal groups was noted and the Police emphasised that the targeting of the sources of drugs and the operators of gangs was the most effective approach to address the problem.

6.33 The panel was informed that a County Lines Intensification Week would be held in March 2023 to highlight the work being undertaken. An invite to all members of TEC Scrutiny Committee would be provided, so that members could take part in the vents taking place during the week.

6.34 Serious Violence Duty

6.35 The panel was informed of work being undertaken in relation to the introduction of a Serious Violence Duty in December 2022. The duty covered a variety of areas but focussed on instances involving knives, murder and where individuals had been hospitalised. The introduction of the duty had meant that the Council would be seeking to review develop a Serious Violence Strategy, with input from the PCC. This had the potential to affect how the CSP structured its working groups and therefore their operation would be reviewed as part of the strategy development, following which the CSP would establish a Serious Violence working group.

6.36 The cost of serious violence to Blackpool was estimated to be approximately £79m, and £300k had been sought for 2023 to support the work taking place.

6.37 The review panel welcomed the information that had been provided at the meeting and noted the work planned and taking place.

6.38 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? Yes/No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 None.

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 The Committee is the Council's Statutory Crime and Disorder Panel and therefore required to meet at least once a year to consider crime and disorder.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 None.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 None.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.