

## **PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in BY VIDEO CONFERENCE on Thursday, 17 December 2020 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Joan Butterfield, Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones (Chair), Hugh Irving, Pat Jones, Christine Marston, Melvyn Mile, Peter Scott, Rhys Thomas and Emrys Wynne (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Mark Young - Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities

Councillor Brian Jones - Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment.

Councillor Tony Thomas - Lead Member for Housing and Communities

Observers – Councillor Graham Timms, Meirick Lloyd Davies.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Corporate Director Communities (NS), Community Safety Manager (ST), Strategic Planning Team Manager (NK), Head of Planning and Public Protection (EJ), Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager (MJ), Senior Engineer Road Safety and Sustainable Transport (BW-J), Democratic Service Manager (SP), Scrutiny Coordinator (RE), Committee Administrator – Host (SJ) and Committee Administrator (RTJ).

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Gareth Lloyd Davies and David G Williams.

#### **2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None were declared.

#### **3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR**

No urgent matters had been raised with the Chair prior to the meeting.

#### **4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 November 2020 were submitted.

No matters were raised in relation to the contents of the minutes.

***Resolved: - to receive the minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 5 November 2020 and approve them as a true and correct record of the proceedings.***

*Prior to the commencement of the following item of business the Chair informed the Committee that it would be discussing it in its capacity as the Council's designated Crime & Disorder Scrutiny committee in accordance with the Police & Justice Act 2006 ss. 19 and 20.*

## **5 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL UPDATE FOR 2019-20**

The Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection and Safer Communities introduced the report (previously circulated) whilst the Community Safety Manager explained the detail contained in the associated appendices. They explained that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) activity and performance report was based on the joint partnership's priorities as identified in the North Wales audit of crime that is conducted annually. The North Wales Safer Communities Board (NWSCB) agrees the priorities and then draws up an action plan that is monitored by the NWSCB, locally the CSP is tasked with facilitating the delivery of the action plan, analysing what is happening in the local area and implementing local solutions. Details were provided of each priority area as follows:

### Priority area 1- Work in Partnership to Reduce Crime and Disorder

Overall the performance for the Partnership was acceptable due to the increased numbers of victims of domestic abuse and victims of crime reporting such incidents. The Partnership had improved communication with victims and survivors better understood what support they required. The way the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) worked had changed so that high risk victims were managed more effectively by all agencies. As part of the regional drive the CSP were looking at applying for funding for more non-mandatory perpetrator programmes and applying for Home Office funding for youth support workers in refuges. The work of the Partnership resulted in a number of projects and activities listed in the report.

The Partnership's work plan for 2019-2020 included additional emerging issues, such as Modern Day Slavery, County Lines, Integrated Offender Management etc. Area Planning Board meetings had proved to be a worthwhile exercise as partner activity had improved as a result and the communication lines were improving.

Over the coming months multiple regional boards would be replaced by four main boards. The objective of this change would be to ensure better communication between linked issues and to mitigate against the risk of matters being missed.

Additional work would also take place on County Lines and Modern Day Slavery and on the adverse childhood experiences (ACE) programme. This would be done in conjunction with the Regional Safeguarding Board and new community safety boards.

### Priority 2- Reducing reoffending

Overall the performance for this priority was Acceptable

There had been a slight increase in adult offending and Youth Offending during 2019-20 hence the status only being acceptable. However, the CSP had invested time in encouraging multiagency attendance at the Integrated Offender Management programme and assisting with the actions of that programme. It intended to continue to assist with the programme, which would also address Organised Crime Groups and County Lines work.

### Priority 3- Local Priorities

Overall performance of the CSP in relation to this priority was Excellent  
In 2019-2020 there had been a continued reduction in the number of reports of antisocial behaviour (ASB) and repeat victims of ASB. This success had been achieved through:

- promoting the use of community resolutions to resolve repeat incidents of antisocial behaviour
- using, when appropriate community protection notices / Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs)
- control of licenced premises and enforcement and monitoring of taxi licences undertaken by the Licensing Department.
- operations targeting car washes under modern day slavery action plans
- working collectively on repeat incidents of antisocial behaviour
- sharing information about online fraud utilising national campaigns
- knife amnesty utilising the recycling centres in Denbighshire.

The CSP would continue to support the monthly Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) tasking meeting which monitored repeat incidents of ASB and provide a multi-agency response to issues raised as well as taking part in restorative justice conferences and promoting community resolutions and mediation. An internal process had been established in Denbighshire to manage/monitor repeat ASB locations for those issues causing most concern in communities. This was reported corporately via the bi-monthly community safety report to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The CSP would participate in further awareness raising of Domestic Abuse, Modern Day Slavery and County Lines locally. The direction for this work would from now on come from the newly established Regional Vulnerability and Exploitation Board. Internally the corporate priority on domestic abuse has been split into specific work areas including; Communications (internal and external), training and early intervention. This would complement the work of the region but would provide specific local focus.

The Conwy and Denbighshire priority work areas linked to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Plan and NWSCB community safety agenda all of which were listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

Specifically, in relation to the Covid 19 Pandemic CSP activity had initially focussed on managing community tensions during the first 13 weeks of lockdown. Reporting networks had been established with the assistance of the regional cohesion team, the CSP monitored their social network sites and managed any queries from the public and local councillors.

Overall 112 reports of tensions/infringements had been received during that period. All were successfully managed by the CSP acting as a coordination point with partners from other organisations. A number of issues stemming from neighbour tensions had to be managed by the CSP due to people being at home.

Crime statistics were monitored on a monthly basis so that the CSP were able to react to any unusual activity or spike in any crimes. On a positive note crime mainly reduced over the period and those determined to commit crimes were managed very effectively by the Police.

Stalking and harassment figures increased during the first 6 months of 2020/21 in comparison to the same time the year before. Under new Home Office counting rules, as of April 2020, coercive control now features within the Stalking & Harassment category and was adding 10 crimes a week to stalking and harassment category. The CSP was aiming to raise awareness of Stalking, Harassment and Coercive Control by taking part in national campaigns. ASB also increased during this same period. Following a data analysis exercise the reasons for this increase in the number of incidents related to the reporting of breaches of COVID-19 restrictions (lack-of social distancing, large gatherings, people travelling into North Wales from outside the area etc.). Denbighshire had not seen a large increase of reported ASB, but what increases there had been were attributable to the infringements of COVID regulations.

The following points were raised and answered during the discussion:

- areas such as Rhyl West which had a disproportionate number of HMOs, were known problem areas at times. When ASB and other incidents did arise meetings between all relevant bodies were organised to discuss the challenges and these usually dealt with concerns which were raised.
- various forums existed where discussions took place in a bid to resolve crime and disorder matters. The lead agency for each forum would depend on the matter being discussed e.g. for crime the lead agency would be the police. In addition, there would be varying levels of such forums depending on the nature and interest of the matter being discussed i.e. local area, county area, regional area. The challenge in relation to HMOs was the fact that they were privately owned and if the owners were abiding by the law, there was not much the authorities could do in relation to them. The challenge was always if people were moved, to where would they go. Public authorities would not choose to cause more homelessness or move the problem to another location. It was therefore important to try and tackle the root cause of the problem.
- the method for recording repeat victims of crime had been changed in recent years therefore the numbers appeared to have increased significantly when this was not the case. Previously multiple calls reporting crimes against the same individual were not recorded as individual incidents, this had since changed, hence the increase in the reported figures.
- With a view to reducing the number of repeat victims of crime and domestic violence work was taking place regionally on devising and delivering perpetrator programmes which were aimed at addressing the root cause of

the crime i.e. alcohol/substance abuse etc., and develop support programmes for the perpetrator and the victim

- assurances were provided that knife related crime was not an issue of wide-concern across the region, however education programmes were run in conjunction with schools.
- Each local authority's relevant lead member represented their authority on the Safer North Wales Partnership Board. There were no elected member representatives on the Vulnerability and Exploitation Board (Managed by the Safeguarding Board) or the other Boards listed in Appendix 2 to the report due to the operational nature of their work. Any issues would be reported to elected members; and
- It was confirmed that the Police and Crime Commissioner attended meetings of the Safer North Wales Partnerships Board.

**Resolved: - subject to the above comments and observations to receive the Community Safety Partnership's**

***(i) performance and statistical update for 2019-20; and***

***(ii) latest 6-month report on crime statistics and the Partnership's actions***

## **6 COVID-19 ACTIVE TRAVEL PLAN SCHEMES**

The Lead Member for Waste, Transport and the Environment introduced the report (previously circulated) which outlined information on the active travel schemes that had been implemented in some Denbighshire town centres and which had been funded by the Welsh Government's (WG) Covid-19 sustainable transport grant. The report also provided the rationale behind the schemes developed and the early findings from their implementation. The Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Manager detailed the application process followed in order to draw down the WG funding and the tight timescales involved with the process.

The Council's Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) had asked the Committee to examine this matter following receipt of a request from a resident in relation to the proposed Covid-19 Active Travel Scheme for Llangollen. SCVCG members had advised the resident that Scrutiny could not examine matters relating to one particular scheme, but would examine the process followed in identifying and developing schemes county-wide. In seeking Partnerships Scrutiny Committee to examine the matter the SCVCG had extended an invitation to the WG Deputy Minister for Economy and Transport, who had responsibility for allocating the grant funding for the scheme, to attend the meeting to discuss the funding application and allocation processes. Whilst the Deputy Minister was unable to attend the meeting for the discussion he had provided the Committee with an evidence paper on the Scheme, which included information on the funding allocated to Denbighshire to date and examples of the different types of schemes funded across Wales. This information had been made available to Committee members ahead of the meeting and was available on the meeting's webpage on the Council's website.

In May 2020, the Welsh Government's Deputy Minister for Economy and

Transport wrote to Council Leaders across Wales inviting Councils to submit expressions of interest for a special grant for “Local sustainable transport measures in response to Covid 19”. The rationale behind the grant was twofold:

- to build upon the increases in active travel (cycling and walking) that had been occurring during the first lockdown period;
- to help facilitate social distancing in town centres and other busy public areas such as routes to schools, bus stops and bus stations once non-essential retail and schools reopened.

Upon receipt of the letter officers from the Traffic, Parking and Road Safety Section met to develop initial ideas for proposals that could be implemented on a trial basis of 18 months. Given the limited time available, it was decided to concentrate on developing proposals for the five busiest town centres namely Rhyl, Llangollen, Prestatyn, Denbigh and Ruthin. Some additional proposals were also developed for footpaths surrounding Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. After discussion with the Lead Member, officers contacted the relevant Member Area Groups (MAGs) to outline the proposals within their areas and to invite feedback.

Based on the feedback received, the proposals for Prestatyn were abandoned. Cost estimates were provided and the expressions of interest were then submitted to the WG on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2020. Confirmation was received from the WG on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020 that funding had been awarded funding for all Denbighshire’s active travel proposals except for Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. The total value of the grant for the active travel schemes was £825k.

This timescale to deliver the schemes was challenging given that the funding wasn’t awarded until the 19<sup>th</sup> June 2020. Nonetheless, the expectation was that proposals would be implemented quickly. To assist in this secondary legislation relating to emergency Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) had been amended to include Covid related highway works as a justification for making a temporary TRO.

The proposals for Denbigh generated many negative comments on social media. After discussions between senior officers and the Lead Member, it was decided to carry out a two-week online consultation for each town centre scheme. It was also agreed that officers would then present a summary of the consultation feedback for each town to the relevant MAG, followed by the MAG making a recommendation of whether or not to proceed with the scheme.

Robust monitoring plans are in place for each of the town centre schemes. This will enable the impact of the proposals to be closely monitored through the 18-month trial period.

Some minor problems have occurred following the implementation of the schemes, which have been dealt with quickly by officers. Such issues are not uncommon for schemes developed during such a tight timescale such as these.

During the ensuing discussion the following matters were raised and discussed:

- Members referred to proposed scheme for Llangollen and how Llangollen was different to other towns in Denbighshire. The scheme there had been

delayed due to the consultation process. The town was busy in August following the lifting of lockdown. There were differing views in the town between shopkeepers, residents and the need to keep both residents and visitors safe. However, officers and lead members had been extremely helpful and proactive in attempting to find workable solutions. During the lockdown the town had been much quieter than usual. 28 traders had submitted written objections to the scheme whilst a petition signed by more than 100 people in support of the scheme had also been submitted. The local members were in support for the scheme as were the older generation of Llangollen and they felt that the Council required to work with the traders/objectors to devise a workable solution.

- The scheme for Ruthin had originally been supported in 83% of those who had responded to the consultation about the scheme. The local member on the Committee supported the scheme to separate cars, walkers and cyclists in Ruthin, and supported the one-way system in Ruthin. Officers had worked very closely with local members. On paper the scheme looked attractive and the plans were for the implementation of the scheme in August, however due to the consultation process the scheme was delayed. There were some issues of concern, however officers were happy to discuss the matters with local members. Local shops were looking forward to having external furniture etc. to allow people to use the shops and cafes. Some members were of the view that the location of some of the bollards may need to be reviewed to ease any concerns with deliveries etc. for some businesses
- Officers had to respond to the WG request for schemes for grant funding within a very short timescale which had been further curtailed as it spanned an extended bank holiday weekend. However, local authorities were required to encourage active travel and with the need to make people feel safe post COVID lockdown restrictions being lifted, this particular grant funding had provided the Council with an opportunity to pilot a number of schemes for the future whilst attempting to try and attract people into towns to boost the local economy. A delicate balance needed to be struck between losing on-street parking and the benefits of providing a one-way traffic route to facilitate wider, safer walkways for pedestrians.
- Engagement and monitoring plans were in place for each scheme and there was an 8 week cycle of monitoring with online feedback from businesses etc. Where issues were raised these would be dealt with quickly.
- The Committee was advised that the Council was required by Welsh Government to generally encourage and promote active travel (such as walking or cycling) not only as part of the ongoing response to the pandemic. This particular scheme was aimed at town centres, not rural routes.
- In relation to the scheme for Rhyl members felt that the traffic flow in the town centre had suffered due to the scheme. There was concern that officers may have only discussed the proposals with member of the Rhyl Business Improvement District (BID) and not the wider business community. Assurances were given by officers that they discussed the proposals with a wide cross-section of the businesses in the town. Work was now underway exploring the whole concept of active travel in a strategic way for Rhyl for the future. Newsletters would be circulated to businesses in the Rhyl area to raise awareness of the proposed scheme.

- Whilst the grant funding was welcomed by the Council and businesses alike the geography of the county's historic market towns did pose difficulties in devising and implementing workable schemes for those towns that would benefit businesses, residents and visitors alike.
- Members were in agreement that all lessons learnt from this particular exercise needed to be heeded for similar exercises in future and in order to support local businesses post the pandemic, as business owners were concerned about what the future would look like

**Resolved: - subject to the above concerns and observations**

- (i) to acknowledge the process followed by the Council in identifying and developing projects, applying for the grant and implementing projects, along with the difficulties encountered due to the short timescale given by the Welsh Government;***
- (ii) to emphasise the importance of early engagement in future with local Member Area Groups (MAGs), local members, and town/ community councils for proposed schemes to utilise central government grant funding in specific towns or communities; and***
- (iii) that a further report be presented to the Committee in six months' time on the impact of the COVID-19 Active Travel Plan Schemes on Denbighshire's towns and the lessons learnt from planning for this particular scheme in readiness for future schemes with short application deadlines and lead-in times.***

## **7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking the members' review of the Committee's work programme and provided an update on relevant issues.

Discussion focused on the following –

- The follow-up report on COVID-19 Active Travel Schemes would be included on the agenda in 6 months' time.
- The Health Board had advised that it would be better placed to report on its capital programme schemes in North Denbighshire in April 2021.
- The Committee was requested to appoint a representative to serve on the Sub-Regional Children's Assessment Care Centre Project Board. Councillor Christine Marston indicated an interest in being Denbighshire's Scrutiny representative. Councillor Hugh Irving proposed Councillor Christine Marston be appointed, seconded by Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones

**Resolved: -**

- (i) subject to the above inclusions and amendments to approve the Committee's forward work programme; and***
- (ii) to appoint Councillor Christine Marston to serve as Denbighshire's Scrutiny representative on the Sub-Regional Children's Assessment Care Centre Project Board.***



## 8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Christine Marston stated she had attended a remote meeting of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) Stakeholders Reference Group on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

She gave a brief update. The Board was out of special measures, however it was still in deficit by £40 million which the Welsh Government (WG) had undertaken to underwrite. The WG had agreed to provide the Board with £82 million over the next three years, this was to get a strategic development plan in place to ensure that BCUHB would deliver a balance budget going forward.

A concept plan on how to deal with the backlog of operations which has been caused by COVID had been outlined.

The Group had also been briefed on the planning application which had been submitted to Denbighshire County Council for a replacement mental health unit for the current Ablett Unit. The budget was £63 million to develop a new mental health department at the rear of the Ysbyty Glan Clwyd site, where the overspill car park was currently situated.

***Resolved: - to receive Councillor Marston's report on the discussions that took place at the recent Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Stakeholder Reference Group meeting.***

Meeting concluded at 12.40pm