

## **PARTNERSHIPS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a meeting of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 15 December 2022 at 10.00 am.

### **PRESENT**

Councillors Joan Butterfield (Chair), Jeanette Chamberlain-Jones, Pauline Edwards, Bobby Feeley, Martyn Hogg, Peter Scott (Vice-Chair), David Williams and Elfed Williams.

Lead Member for Housing and Communities, Councillor Rhys Thomas and Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities, Councillor Julie Matthews were in attendance at the Committee's invitation to present items from within their portfolios.

### **ALSO PRESENT**

Corporate Director: Communities (NS); Interim Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation (NK); Community Safety Manager, Conwy County Borough Council (ST); Chief Officer, Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (TB); Scrutiny Coordinator (RhE) Committee Administrator – Host (SW) and Democratic Services Officer – minutes (KE)

#### **1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Kelly Clewett.

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

There were no declarations of interest.

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

None.

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

The minutes of the Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 27 October 2022 were submitted.

Matters arising:

Environmental Enforcement Services Contract Provision (recommendation ii page 8) – The Chair asked whether the recommendation had been implemented? The Scrutiny Coordinator advised that the Service had confirmed that the Communications Team had been contacted with a view to drawing up a communication plan to inform residents, businesses, city, town and community councils of the proposed changes.

The Committee:

***Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2022 be received and approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.***

**Prior to the commencement of the following item of business the Chair informed members that the Committee would be discussing business item number 5, 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**

The Lead Member for Housing and Communities introduced the report (previously circulated). He reminded the Committee that it was the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) annual report - April 2021 to March 2022.

Interim Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation explained that Community Safety was managed within the Business Improvement & Modernisation Service but there were many other departments with whom they worked closely, including Youth Services, Planning & Public Protection and Safeguarding etc.

The Conwy and Denbighshire CSP's action plan was part of a regional plan developed across North Wales led by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The plan was formulated from an analysis undertaken on an annual basis. Locally the plan was managed by a Conwy and Denbighshire Community Safety Partnership.

The Community Safety Manager referred to the Performance Summary Report (appendix 1) highlighting:

- Priority 1: Reduce Crime and Disorder in Denbighshire by working in Partnership - performance status at the end of 2021/22 was acceptable;
- Priority 2: Reducing reoffending - performance status at the end of 2021/22 was acceptable; and
- Priority 3: Local Priorities – performance status at the end of 2021/22 was good.

The change from the previous reporting period was due to youth offending and domestic abuse/stalking increasing.

Priority 1 involved working collectively with partners e.g. North Wales Fire & Rescue Authority, Police, Probation, Health with the aim of:

- reducing victim based crime;
- reducing Antisocial Behaviour (ASB);
- reducing domestic abuse and sexual violence and
- working with colleagues on multi agency risk assessments and conferences to manage repeat offenders.

Priority 2 – the aim was to reduce reoffending by working with:

- Probation Service (on adult reoffending);
- Children and Young People's Service / Youth Services; and
- collectively to prevent organised crime.

Priority 3 - Local and Regional priorities which were often highlighted by elected members or North Wales Police where they received numerous calls e.g. linked to licensed premises, anti-social behaviour etc.

### **Priority 1- Reduce Crime and Disorder in Denbighshire by working in Partnership.**

Overall, the performance for the Partnership was acceptable due to the continued increased numbers of victims of domestic abuse and stalking and harassment that came forward to report such incidents. Whilst the percentage increase seemed high, the actual numbers were small. Examples of working in partnership to deal with this priority included the following measures undertaken:

- Raising awareness of victim based crimes via social media, attending events ensuring information was available on partner websites.
- Home and business surveys carried out by crime reduction advisors and Police Community Support Officers to help prevent burglaries.
- Provision of target hardening equipment and crime prevention advice (Locks/door bars etc.).
- Participation in the monthly online Multiagency Risk Assessment Conference meetings (MARACs) reviewing cases of victims of domestic abuse and implementing action plans.
- Denbighshire sent out numerous press releases on domestic abuse throughout the year and changed the colour of the Pont y Ddraig Bridge to signify the support of the Local Authority on White Ribbon day on the 25<sup>th</sup> of November 2021. A vigil was held with partners in the events arena in Rhyl to show support in the prevention of violence.
- Promoted the 'Live fear free All Wales helpline' which received 192 calls from Denbighshire residents.

Project activity meetings with partnership agencies covered:

- Modern day slavery;
- County Lines;
- Integrated Offender Management;
- Domestic Abuse; and
- Drink Aware campaigns.

### **Priority 2 – Reducing re-offending.**

There had been a decrease in re-offending in the over 18's but an increase in youth offending. The focus of the partnership had been to:

- Participate in local offender management programmes;
- Promote community resolutions and restorative justice when solving minor issues;
- Attend restorative justice conferences as a critical friend;
- Identify repeat antisocial behaviour (ASB); and

- Established a dedicated forum in Rhyl to look specifically at crime and disorder.

### **Priority 3 – Local Priorities.**

The overall performance status of priority was good. The partnership had:

- Established local multiagency groups in Denbighshire to manage repeat incidents of Antisocial Behaviour;
- Promoted the use of community resolutions to resolve repeat incidents of antisocial behaviour;
- Implemented community protection notices / Public Space Protection Orders;
- Controlled licenced premises and enforced / monitored taxi licences;
- Continued (March 2022) operations on targeting car washes under modern day slavery action plans;
- Monitoring community tension, protests/vigils - including hate crime with the assistance of the Regional cohesion team.
- Applied for additional third sector funding for additional domestic abuse services locally.

Corporately Denbighshire had published communications both internally and externally relating to training and early intervention complimenting the work of the Regional Vulnerabilities Board and the regional domestic abuse team.

Additional police activity was undertaken around the night time economy -- specifically looking at violence against women and girls. The 'Ask Angela' scheme was running in public houses in Denbighshire.

A £5000 grant was received to publicise the Live Fear Free campaign merchandise – lip balms, hand sanitisers and pens which included the helpline number – strategically placed – in order for those needing assistance to access.

### **Crime Statics Analysis**

Of the 13 Crime and incident reporting categories relating to Denbighshire 7 recorded the highest Year to Date (YTD), compared to pre-covid figures. The figures were as expected with no anomalies being flagged up.

The Community Safety Manager went on to explain the different crime categories that were monitored. Comparisons were made with figures recorded pre-covid as the lockdowns had an impact on the type of crimes being committed. For that reasons trends were monitored rather than figures.

Significantly there had been a year on year increase in Stalking and Harassment. Coercive and Controlling Behaviour had been added to that category which had the impact of a spike in numbers recorded.

Antisocial behaviour had seen an increase nationally involving young people. The partnerships were working closely with Youth Services to ascertain the root of the

cause in communities where there were issues. Multi agency meetings – including local members – were being held to identify and resolve issues.

Responding to the Committee's questions the Community Safety Manager advised that:

- The benefits of working in partnership included shared resources, collective responsibility, eligibility for grant funding and avoidance of duplication of work.
- Feedback on the 'Ask Angela' campaign had been positive. The Licensing Team would be asked whether any statistics were available
- Statistics were compared with regional and national figures to identify trends.
- Online fraud / scams were not part of the report's crime category statistics – although they were a regional priority for attention by the Police and Crime Commissioner – figures would be available as the Trading Standards Service was responsible for recording and investigating alleged incidents of on-line fraud and scams.
- In addition to the annual report updates were provided to the Senior Leadership Team and Lead Member on a quarterly basis.
- The Monitoring of Protests/Vigils was introduced during Covid but would be utilised going forward to monitor any community tensions.
- The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector services were a vital part of the partnership when working with young people. The Hwb in Denbigh and West Rhyl Young People's Project had provided support and valuable engagement over recent antisocial behaviour incidents and with the Safer Streets Project and
- North Wales Police's Chief Inspector for Denbighshire could be invited to attend the Committee the next time the Community Safety Partnership annual report was presented.

The Interim Head of Business Improvement & Modernisation advised that the Rhyl Safety Community Group forum (which included local members) had been established to address the number of antisocial behavioural issues taking place. The next meeting was scheduled to take place in January 2023.

The Lead Member for Housing and Communities thanked the Community Safety Manager for her enthusiasm and commitment in the role, these sentiments were echoed by the Chair and Committee members.

At the conclusion of an in-depth discussion the Committee:

**Resolved: subject to the above observations –**

- (i) to receive the Conwy and Denbighshire Community Safety Partnership's performance and statistical update for 2021/22;***
- (ii) to support the priorities identified by the Community Safety Partnership for delivery during 2022/23; and***
- (iii) with a view to facilitating effective scrutiny of the delivery of community safety activity in the area, to request that North Wales Police's Chief Inspector for Denbighshire be invited to attend the Committee meeting in September 2023 for the presentation of the Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report for 2022/23.***

## 6 DENBIGHSHIRE VOLUNTARY SERVICES COUNCIL (DVSC)

The Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities introduced Tom Barham, Chief Officer of Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC), commenting on the importance of the working relationship and support with Third Sector partners to achieve mutual objectives.

The Chief Officers presented an update report on the work of the DVSC over the previous 12 months as it moved on from the challenges of the Covid Pandemic to the Cost of Living Crisis.

The DVSC had recently produced a purpose statement to clarify the purpose of voluntary councils:

‘DVSC enables charities and community groups (Third Sector) to be more effective and more connected, working together to build a strong and vibrant Denbighshire’.

He advised The DVSC were an independent charity that worked best in partnership with the Third Sector and Denbighshire County Council (DCC), to improve the communities in Denbighshire as enablers that advise, facilitate, fund and champion the voluntary sector.

The residents of Denbighshire had a range of needs met in part by the activities of the Third Sector. The DVSC supported community-based groups who had needs around:

- setting up,
- growth,
- good Governance,
- partnership,
- networking and influence,
- recruitment of staff and volunteers,
- access to funding,
- skills and
- ability to respond effectively to change.

The DVSC was part of Third Sector Support Wales, a network funded by Welsh Government, with a range of online resources that encouraged work across 4 pillars: volunteering, good governance, sustainable funding and engagement & influencing. There would be a renewed focus on volunteering over the coming months.

The DVSC also managed the assessment and distribution of grant programmes with DCC, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, Welsh Government and Health Board. Last year almost 0.25 million pounds of funding, 87 grants had been distributed within Denbighshire.

Governance was an important aspect of DVSC’s role, it continued to provide training, consultancy and direct advice to Third Sector groups, helping to form 18 new social enterprises over the previous year.

With the aid of DCC funding the DVSC undertook a project in 2022 to ascertain the resilience of Third Sector organisations in the wake of Covid.

The Third Sector Research Report April 2022 highlighted:

- that there were 2450 Third sector organisations in Denbighshire
- that 10% of all jobs in Denbighshire were in the Third Sector
- that volunteering levels in Denbighshire were the 3rd highest in Wales representing 4,700,000 volunteer hours
- that these organisations had been resilient during Covid but were now under threat from increased demand, ongoing uncertainty, short term funding and increased operating costs
- that there were issues around recruitment, skills gaps, technology and data. 52% thought their organisation would grow, with only 54% thinking they were sustainable.

The DVSC worked with a range of organisations (approximately 250), mostly small, start-up and growing organisations. Provision of support could be face to face or by being signposted to national resources on funding etc..

The DVSC was working with DCC under the Shared Prosperity Fund to improve how local authorities commissioned and procured services from the Third Sector, and attempting to lower barriers to procurement that many of the smaller organisations feared, focussing on the social value aspect.

The DVSC research showed:

- potential in improving working relationship with Denbighshire County Council and a
- shared desire for partnership, networking and bridging the gap, particularly around the cost of living crisis.

Practical examples of DVSC working with DCC included:

- Setting up a new 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Liaison Group.
- Croeso Cynnes / Warm Welcome Initiative and
- Working together on the Shared Prosperity Fund / 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Opportunities, creating networks of peer support.

Responding to members' questions the DVSC's Chief Officer encouraged members to share their local knowledge as to organisations who needed help or support, particularly around funding or grants. He advised that it was important for DVSC to have a presence and be visible across the county. The organisation did not employ a large number of people, its role was to support and facilitate community groups to become resilient. It had recently undertaken a volunteer fayre in Llangollen, with the next one due to be held in Rhyl/Prestatyn.

The Chief Officer thanked DCC's officers and councillors for the welcome he had been given in the role and their willingness to work together. He encouraged elected members to raise awareness of DVSC's services within their communities.

The Committee thanked the Chief Officer for attending the meeting, for his informative presentation and for his comprehensive answers to members' questions. It was:

**Resolved: to –**

- (i) acknowledge the progress achieved by Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) to date in realising its vision for delivering and enhancing its working relationship with the Council and with voluntary organisations within Denbighshire; and***
- (ii) support DVSC and the Council's aims of developing close and effective partnership working relationships between public and voluntary sector stakeholders with the aim of ensuring that all the County's communities will be vibrant, connected and resilient for the future.***

## **7 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Scrutiny Coordinator submitted a report (previously circulated) seeking members' review of the Committee's work programme. Members were informed that the purpose of the report was to review the Committee's future work to ensure it included all items requested by members.

The Committee was reminded that the next Partnerships Scrutiny Committee meeting was scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023. There were two substantial items tabled with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board:

- I. Partnership Working in Relation to Mental Health and
- II. North Denbighshire Community Hospital Project.

The Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SC&VCG) were next scheduled to meet on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Members were reminded to complete the Scrutiny Proposal Form (appendix 2) if they had any items they would like submitting to the SC&VCG for review and/or allocation to scrutiny committee's forward work programme.

The Committee asked for a reminder to be circulated to members on how to propose a scrutiny item.

The Committee:

**Resolved: subject to the above comments to**

- (i) confirm its forward work programme as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and***
- (ii) request that all councillors be reminded of the process to be followed in order to propose an item for future scrutiny.***



## 8 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

Councillor Bobby Feeley had attended the first meeting of the Bwthyn y Ddôl Project Board, a flagship children's assessment centre venture in partnership with DCC, Conwy County Borough Council and BCUHB.

Unfortunately, the project was being run from temporary accommodation in Colwyn Bay owing to the originally appointed contractor going into administration. Following a lengthy tender process a trusted contractor had been identified, it was anticipated that they would be appointed, pending conclusion of a successful evaluation, at the end of that week and building would commence in the new year.

The Committee:

***Resolved: to receive the verbal report given by Councillor Bobby Feeley on the discussions that had taken place at a recent meeting of the Bwthyn y Ddôl Project Board.***

Meeting concluded at 12.15pm