

COMMUNITY & ADULT SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 MAY 2021

Present: Councillor Jenkins(Chairperson)
Councillors Carter, Gibson, Philippa Hill-John, Lent, Lister,
Mackie and McGarry

13 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

14 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

15 : MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2021 were agreed subject to the amendment of Cllr Mackie's declaration of interest which should read that her sister is Head of Integrated Care.

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 March 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

16 : WORKING TO PREVENT DRUG DEALING AND DRUG RELATED CRIME IN CARDIFF FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19

The Chairperson advised Members that this item looks at how the Community Safety Partnership is working to prevent drug dealing and drug related crime in Cardiff following the outbreak of Covid-19.

Members were reminded that in line with Committee's responsibility as the Council's Crime & Disorder Committee its role is to consider the work of the Partnership as a whole. The item would be considered in a number of parts.

First, the Community Safety Partnership will provide Committee with a presentation which will be followed by a brief opportunity for Members to ask the panel any immediate questions.

Then there will be evidence session with the police which will again include a presentation and Q&A session. Then there will be a Q&A session with an individual with lived experience.

Then finally, the item will end with an opportunity for Committee Members and the Community Safety Partnership to reflect and comment on the discussions.

For the Community Safety Partnership panel The Chairperson welcomed:
- Police and Crime Commissioner,
Alun Michael and Cllr Lynda Thorne Co-chairs of the Community Safety
Leadership Board,

- Chief Superintendent Wendy Gunney and Sarah McGill Co-Chairs of the Community Safety Delivery Group,
- Sian Sanders, Operational Manager for Cohesion & Community Engagement and;
- Jenny Rogers, Community Safety Manager.

The Chairperson invited the Police and Crime Commissioner and Cabinet Member to make statements, following this Members received a presentation from Officers and were invited to ask questions and make comments;

Members asked if it would ever be possible to eradicate drug dealing or if it simply has to be accepted in today's society. The PPC stated it was about people's lifestyles and choices and not just about enforcement; it's about where to draw the line, reduce the harm and enforce where necessary. He added about the use of the 4 E's over the past year; Engage, Explain, Encourage, Enforce; stating there was a constant debate over certain drugs being legalised and that if you don't eradicate drug use you won't eradicate drug dealing.

Members asked about Charges for people caught with small amounts of drugs. The PPC stated that judgements are made in circumstances of where the harm lies; very often drug users are often victims too and it's important to take into consideration Harm, Reduce and Enforce where it counts.

Members referred to empowering residents and asked how this can be done. Members were advised that it's about a Community Based Approach; local residents are suffering but they can also be part of the solution; it's about prevention and giving residents the confidence to report.

Members referred to the good work undertaken with homeless people during the pandemic and asked if lessons could be learnt for preventative measures for young people and drug taking. The PPC explained that work was underway with initiatives such as Step into Sport, using the resources of community sports clubs in partnership with the Council and Cardiff Met to provide choices for young people and to squeeze out the attractiveness of risky behaviours.

The Chairperson advised that Committee would move into the evidence session with the police and joining Chief Superintendent Wendy Gunney he welcomed;

- Inspector Kevin Jones;
- Inspector Jeff Lewis;
- PC Gareth Hiller and;
- PCSO Mike Woods

Members were provided with a presentation from Inspector Jeff Lewis and Members were invited to ask questions and make comments;

Members asked about increasing intelligence and whether people in the community should report things such as a car driving past smelling of cannabis. Inspector Lewis said yes they should as the information relating to that car could be a piece to the bigger picture and it was better to have information from several sources.

Members had found the case studies in the presentation informative and asked if it was frustrating when someone gets a lenient sentence. Inspector Lewis said it was important to respect the Courts decisions.

Members asked about the role of Neighbourhood Policing and asked if there would be better intelligence and engagement if there were more PCSO's. Members were advised that PCSO's have a big role to play in communities, they can gain people's trust and build up intelligence, the information they gather is invaluable; austerity meant that PCSO's were cut but SWP kept hold of their teams.

Members discussed the importance of visibility of PCSO's on the streets, in open spaces and on social media and also for them to get positive messages out the community; Cllrs also have a role to play in sharing these messages.

Members discussed that residents needed to feel confident that their issues are being followed up and also that they will have anonymity should they report issues. Members were advised that coming out of the pandemic there would be a focus on community engagement; restarting local competitions; visiting schools and community groups etc.

Members referred to the delays in getting cases to Court, not only during the pandemic but beforehand and asked what could be done to improve this. Inspector Lewis explained that it was a combination of volume, the amount and detail of papers that are needed for the CPS and also that some urgent things come up so SWP have a large number of pending cases.

The Chairperson advised that Committee would move into a Q&A session with the individual with lived experience and he welcomed Wesley Cunliffe who gave a brief overview of his background and experiences to Members, who were then invited to ask questions and make comments;

Members asked about Mr Cunliffe's school friends and he explained that lots of them had substance misuse, committed car crimes and some had lost their lives.

Members asked whether Mr Cunliffe had had any anxiety about getting caught for his former crimes or whether he had not felt there was a deterrent. He explained that it was a big fear for him but he had needed to feed his family so it was hard to say no to the money.

Members asked about the individual who had approached Mr Cunliffe to commit crimes on his behalf and whether he considered Mr Cunliffe to be vulnerable and an easy target. Mr Cunliffe said yes, he was groomed, he knew what his situation was and knew he had no family support.

Members asked what preventative work could be done and Mr Cunliffe considered early intervention, referrals and working with organisations such as St Giles.

Members noted that early identification was needed for intervention and asked how young people could be identified as needing support. Mr Cunliffe explained that in Gwent there is a multi-agency approach; once identified then referrals are made and partner organisations work together.

Members asked if Mr Cunliffe felt there was enough engagement in schools and what the right age to start engagement would be. Mr Cunliffe explained that in Gwent they speak to years 7 and 8; he visits schools, delivers workshops and tells his story. The feedback he receives is positive and that the pupils feel more positive to report issues.

Members asked Mr Cunliffe if he considered things were better or worse than when he was younger. He considered this was a difficult question as unless you deal with supply and demand, drugs will always be an issue. People are successfully exited now but more organised crime cohorts always come in.

The Chairperson welcomed back the Community Safety Partnership panel and invited Committee Members and any panel Member to reflect on any part of the discussions;

Members discussed the importance of early intervention and support in relation to Mr Cunliffe's experiences; his family had needed support long before he was groomed. The police had understood him and saw him as a victim and supported him going forward. The PPC considered that his story was a perfect endorsement of what the Police are trying to do now with interventions such as Step into Sport but also having a balance and being tough on county lines.

Members discussed the difficult balance between prevention and enforcement and asked if there was a risk of going too far down the prevention route. The PPC considered that SWP do both well.

Members asked how groomers could be spotted/stopped. Members were advised that everyone has a role to play in this and it was important to spot the signs such as children having more, new clothes, friends that parents don't know/haven't met etc.

Members asked if there was going to be a review of PCSO's powers. The PPC said there was not; there slight differences in powers and these can be different in rural areas for instance. The PCSO role is very much communication, problem solving, empowering communities to solve problems and being an essential part of neighbourhood policing.

Members noted the amount of work that was going on and asked about targets/measurements. The PPC said he was dubious of setting targets as if the wrong ones are set they can send people on the wrong course. He understood the need for measurement and evidencing good success; and scrutiny in many forms. The Cabinet Member concluded by saying it was a complex issues but everyone is working together better than ever and outcomes are better than targets.

AGREED: that the Chairperson, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet Member conveying the observations of the Committee when discussing the way forward.

17 : COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Members were asked to note the briefing on '*Capturing and Reporting the Impact of Scrutiny*'; Members were aware of the work PRAP Scrutiny committee has done in this area previously and this is simply confirmation that a system is now in place to capture and record the data. Members were reminded that they can now make recommendations following scrutiny of issues at committee, not just through task and finish work. The Chair has to make any recommendations clear at the end of letters then they will be responded to formally, monitored for progress, and reported back on 6 monthly.

Members were advised that there would be a Single Scrutiny Annual Report and a draft of this would be brought to the next meeting before it goes to Council.

18 : URGENT ITEMS (IF ANY)

None received.

19 : DATE OF NEXT MEETING

1 June 2021

The meeting terminated at 7.15 pm