

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
HELD ON MONDAY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2021
(FROM 5.30 PM – 7.03 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Chris Aldred in the Chair. Councillor Margaret Atkinson, Councillor Michael Harrison, Councillor Paul Haslam, Councillor John Mann, Councillor Pat Marsh, Councillor Stuart Martin, MBE, Councillor Nigel Middlemass, Councillor Matt Scott and Councillor Tom Watson.

In Attendance: Cabinet Member for Housing & Safer Communities,
Councillor Mike Chambers

Late Arrivals: None

Early Departures: Councillor Paul Haslam at 6.45 pm
Councillor John Mann at 7.00 pm

47/21 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES:

Notification had been received that Councillor Paul Haslam was acting as a substitute for Councillor Sam Gibbs, Councillor Matt Scott was acting as a substitute for Councillor Sue Lumby and Councillor Margaret Atkinson was acting as a substitute for Councillor Bernard Bateman. Apologies were received from Councillor Norman Waller and Councillor Robert Windass.

(5.30 pm)

48/21 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

(5.31 pm)

49/21 – MINUTES:

The minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 6 September 2021 were submitted. It was agreed to amend Minute 45/21, the reference to the east of North Yorkshire would be changed to the East Riding of Yorkshire. The Minutes of the meeting as amended were approved as a correct record.

(There were four votes for the motion and six abstentions.)

(5.32 pm)

50/21 – EXEMPT INFORMATION:

There was no exempt information.

(5.33 pm)

51/21 – PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS- QUESTIONS:

There were no public questions submitted.

(5.33 pm)

**52/21 – NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE HARROGATE DISTRICT OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMISSION REPORT - JUNE TO SEPTEMBER 2021:**

The Chair introduced the item, welcoming Detective Superintendent (DSI) Steve

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Thomas from North Yorkshire Police (NYP) to the meeting. NYP had submitted a written report providing detailed local crime information for the period June – September 2021. The Chair thanked NYP for the informative report which had been prepared by members of the Neighbourhood Policing Team Harrogate Inner (Nicola Colbourne) and Harrogate Outer (Alex Langley). DSI Thomas provided Members with an overview of the information within the report, this included:

- Significant increases in demand generally, including call-volumes over the summer months, with levels returning to normal in September 2021.
- Recruitment had been ongoing and once training was complete there would be an uplift in staff levels.
- There had been an increase in Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) particularly in Ripon. NYP had developed bespoke operations, working with the community and partners to address this (Op. Change and Op. Driver). Some individuals involved were also involved in serious crimes and use of motor vehicles in an anti-social manner. NYP had been successful in disrupting this.
- ASB had also been an issue in Harrogate, NYP had increased visibility (including high profile media campaigns) and again targeted motor vehicles being driven in an anti-social manner.
- Increasing use of social media and monitoring how posts were shared. It was noted that this was improving the way people think about community safety and police responses.
- NYP and HBC had worked together looking at multiple occupancy housing and specific properties/landlords. Detailed information was within the report.
- Tackling knife crime through Op. Disarm. A partnership response and significant resource focussed on education meant a reduction in this type of crime locally, reports were decreasing for first time in 18 months.
- Vehicle crime had seen a significant decrease, this was due to covert tactics and high visibility. Bicycle thefts had also reduced.
- There had tragically been two murders one was at Mayfield Grove and one at the Majestic Hotel, NYP had sought to reassure the community following these serious incidents.
- It was reported that someone was seriously injured in an incident that had taken place at Ashville College, firearms officers who were present had acted to provide critical first aid. Following this NYP had worked with independent schools to look at security of sites.
- It was noted that burglary was a crime that could be a particularly impactful offence for victims, and it was reported there had been a significant decrease in 2 in 1 burglaries where a property is targeted for high value vehicles. Overall the number of reported burglaries was considered low for the area.
- NYP processes for dealing with drug crime and county lines were regarded as best practice nationally. Protecting children and vulnerable people was a key element of this work as well as working together with other forces (West Yorkshire, Manchester).
- Tackling hate crime was a key priority, appropriate services and safeguarding were in place.
- Stop and search was a proactive tool for the police and was especially useful in disrupting drug dealing. Data on stop and search uses and outcomes was within the report. Training was in place to educate officers on appropriate use

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with an emphasis on targeted intelligence.

Councillor Nigel Middlemass referred to the ward based statistics in the report, and queried when changes in ward boundaries would be reflected. It was confirmed that, given forthcoming changes to Local Government in North Yorkshire this work would be undertaken at an appropriate time. DSI Thomas confirmed that NYP could share information with a specific local focus and/or time period on request.

The Commission discussed the channels used for reporting crime and levels of communication about outcomes for people who had provided information to the police. It was noted that providing acknowledgements and follow-up information to people who report crimes could help build confidence and encourage more people to share information and have a positive impact on community safety. DSI Thomas confirmed that there would be more options with enhanced online reporting. Significant national and local campaigns would be coming forward in winter 2021. It was anticipated that improved online mechanisms would help with reporting of outcomes. It was noted that elected Members also had an important role within the community and could help with promoting the reporting of incidents.

DSI Thomas confirmed that contact information for the Neighbourhood Policing Team was available online and officers could feedback information/updates if this was available. DSI Thomas referenced the stringent requirements of courts in terms of the quality and volume of evidence that was essential to progress enquiries. Double or triple corroboration was necessary for an arrest warrant to be issued. Members considered that it could be useful to raise awareness about this with residents in order to encourage reports to be made and to manage expectations.

Councillor Stuart Martin expressed gratitude for the work being done in Ripon, confirming that actions taken by NYP and partners had significantly reduced ASB in the area, he asked that DSI Thomas pass on his thanks to all officers involved in this work. Councillor Martin raised the issue of identity theft and fraud, explaining that in his view there was not a very joined up approach between organisations and that there was a big impact for victims. DSI Thomas stated that this type of crime was a key priority for the force and the strategy was being refreshed. He referred to the difficulties in investigating these types of crime which were often complex, and sometimes involved international enquiries that could be difficult to progress. Education and prevention was therefore the key focus for the police as well as working with financial institutions. The Neighbourhood Policing Team, PCs and PCSOs were all involved in awareness building in communities. DSI Thomas referred to the advice available on the 'get safe online' website which was a good resource available to help people identify what is and is not genuine.

DSI Thomas informed Members that, based on the most recent national statistics, North Yorkshire continued to be the safest place to live in the UK and this was despite changes to crime reporting standards. The Chair stated that NYP did a fantastic job over a wide geography. On a local level the Chair was Ward Councillor for Fairfax and stated that he had received significant positive feedback from the local community about improvements since the closure order for a house of multiple occupancy on Avenue Grove. The work undertaken to resolve issues here was hugely appreciated by residents.

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The Chairman thanked DSI Thomas for his informative update on behalf of the Commission and expressed the Commission's gratitude for the content and quality of the report.

(5.33 pm – 6.25 pm)

53/21 – HARROGATE DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY GROUP AND COMMUNITY SAFETY HUB UPDATE:

The Chair introduced the Cabinet Member for Housing & Safer Communities, Councillor Mike Chambers, who was the Chair of the Harrogate District Safety Group. A written report had been submitted which provided an update on community safety issues affecting the Harrogate district. Councillor Chambers referred to the closure orders at Mayfield Grove and Avenue Grove. These orders represented a significant amount of partnership work and this action was considered effective. It was confirmed that the council would issue similar orders in the future should there be a need, however it was also hoped that these examples would act as a deterrent and prevent other similar disruptive and criminal activity.

Some other developments and key areas of community safety work were highlighted:

- Additional resources included a more senior NYP officer and an adult mental health social worker.
- Received a grant from the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner
- StreetAid had received around £15k contributions and was having a real impact in bringing people off the street and keeping them off the street, helping ensure there was support to maintain lifestyle changes.
- CCTV - had undergone a minor restructure, becoming more closely linked to the work of the Hub, business crime partnership had been reaccredited and new cameras at HBC sites (Ripon Leisure Centre, Spa Lane Accommodation).

Councillor Pat Marsh asked about timescales for referrals and for cases, it was confirmed that this was dependant on the details of each individual case. The parameters were discussed in the context of each new case at a multi-agency meeting where all information and potential outcomes/actions were reviewed with contributions from all agencies. Impact on the community was scored, frequency, mental health and substances were also factors. Cases were then periodically rescored and officers would be looking for the score to lower over time. It was noted that the cases that were referred to the Hub were often complex and that there were a broad variety of interventions available. Recently there had been a greater focus on data and this was being looked at county wide with a view to learning more about the effectiveness of different types of interventions.

In response to a question about StreetAid grants, the Community Safety and CCTV Manager explained that officers and partner agencies could make referrals and request StreetAid grants on behalf of individuals. There was a range of requests for a variety of purposes which was encouraged as it was understood that some requests may be for very practical items and some might be more creative or for items that could boost an individual's sense of wellbeing, individuals were also involved in the process. Grants could only be issued for items where no other

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funding was available. Some examples were training courses and professional development, fishing equipment and home improvements.

Members considered the future work of the Hub and the CCTV section in the context of Local Government Reorganisation. It was confirmed that Harrogate Borough Council operated the CCTV service and associated infrastructure, which was valued by the police and local businesses and contributed to public safety and this important service would continue to be delivered despite organisational changes. It was anticipated that there would continue to be a focus on locality and community within the new organisation. The Commission considered that authorities and partners should work together to ensure that examples of best practice were rolled out across the county. Members also considered that beneficial partnership working had been undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. This included links with Public Health England and trading standards, and officers were looking to build on this.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mike Chambers and the Community Safety and CCTV Manager on behalf of the Commission for their informative update.

(6.26 pm - 6.45 pm)

54/21 – FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS:

The Chair introduced the item explaining the purpose of the item, which was considered at each ordinary meeting of the Commission. The main purpose was to make Members aware of Forward Plan items to enable pre-decision scrutiny where possible, the document submitted showed when reports would be published, and the names of lead officers were also provided. In addition where decisions were to be made some time in the future, if Members consider it appropriate, Overview and Scrutiny involvement could be facilitated.

The Scrutiny, Governance and Risk Manager referred to two Key Decisions that were within the call-in period, these were Knaresborough Business Improvement District and Refurbishment of The Sun Pavilion, Cornwall Road, Harrogate (Forward Plan Ref: 38ED21).

(6.45 pm - 6.47 pm)

55/21 – MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 TO 2026/27 - DRAFT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMENTS:

The Scrutiny, Governance and Risk Manager (SGRM) submitted a written report summarising the comments made by the Commission during their consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27, at a meeting held on 6 September 2021. The SGRM explained that, due to the schedule of meetings and timescales on this occasion there was the opportunity to bring the comments before the Commission in draft form for agreement ahead of referral to Cabinet.

Councillor Pat Marsh referenced subvention funding for the Harrogate Convention Centre, which was an item discussed and included in the report, this had been agreed and was being progressed.

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RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:

That (1) the budget parameters as laid out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2026/27 are agreed; and

(2) the draft comments/report is agreed and referred to Cabinet/Council

(6.47 pm – 6.49 pm)

56/21 – OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22:

The Scrutiny, Governance and Risk Manager submitted a written report that contained details about the work programme including work that had been undertaken and forthcoming work. The next scheduled meeting was due to take place on 18 October 2021 and would be a special meeting organised on behalf of the Council with Louise Wallace, the Director of Public Health for North Yorkshire. In 2020 the Commission had completed an in-depth review of customer services and there would be report back to the Commission on 6 December. The work item focussed on agency workers would be progressed after the budget process in 2022.

The Commission's comments and suggestions about improvements to local bus provision had been included in the Council's response to North Yorkshire County Council's initial consultation on Enhanced Partnerships and Bus Service Improvement Plan. The Commission's comments and suggestions about improvements to local bus provision had been included in the Council's response to North Yorkshire County Council's initial consultation.

At a meeting of the Commission held on 6 September Councillor Pat Marsh and Councillor Tom Watson indicated that further in-depth work could be undertaken to progress the local bus provision work item. It was noted that prior to the pandemic a working group had been established and there had been one meeting. Members considered that access to public transport was a key concern for many people and for some people difficulties with transport could lead to isolation.

Members noted that future involvement would be as part of any work or consultation that was undertaken by NYCC as the Local Transport Authority. The Commission would be kept informed about on-going issues with bus provision. Members could promote public consultations to anyone who wished to provide feedback on local bus services. Members could also to determine if it would be appropriate for the Commission to consider any related items. Councillor Watson referred to rural bus services in the East Riding of Yorkshire as an example of best practice.

RESOLVED:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Commission local bus provision working group is disestablished.

(Seven Members voted for the motion and there was one abstention)

(6.48 pm - 6.56 pm)

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57/21 – FEEDBACK FROM OTHER COMMITTEES AND EXTERNAL BODIES:

Councillor Nigel Middlemass was the nominated representative on the North Yorkshire County Council Scrutiny of Health Committee. He provided the following update to the Commission from a meeting of this Committee held on 10 September 2021:

- There had been six public questions at the meeting
- Harrogate and Rural Alliance Health social care had delivered a progress report
- COVID-19 cases were increasing steadily locally
- Vaccine take up locally was higher than the national average:
 - 88% of North Yorkshire residents aged 16 or over have had first vaccine
 - 80% of North Yorkshire residents aged 16 or over have had two vaccines
 - 93% of North Yorkshire residents aged 50 or over have had two vaccines
 - In North Yorkshire and York 57% of 16-17 year olds have had first vaccine

The Chair thanked Councillor Middlemass for his informative update.

(6.56 pm - 7.03 pm)