

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION
HELD ON MONDAY, 16 JANUARY 2023
(FROM 5.34 PM – 7.12 PM)**

PRESENT: Councillor Chris Aldred in the Chair. Councillor Michael Harrison, Councillor Paul Haslam, Councillor Pat Marsh, Councillor Nigel Middlemass, Councillor Andrew Paraskos, Councillor Tom Watson and Councillor Robert Windass.

Late Arrivals: None

Early Departures: None

63/22 – APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES:
Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Sue Lumby and John Mann.

(5.35 pm)

64/22 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:
No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

(5.36 pm)

65/22 – MINUTES:

The Minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 7 November 2022 were approved as a correct record.

(Five Members voted for the motion and there were two abstentions)

(5.36 pm)

66/22 – EXEMPT INFORMATION:

There was no exempt information.

(5.36 pm)

67/22 – PUBLIC ARRANGEMENTS- QUESTIONS:

There were no public questions under Standing Order 27.

(5.37 pm)

68/22 – INVITATION TO THE CHIEF CONSTABLE (NORTH YORKSHIRE POLICE):

The Chair welcomed the Chief Constable for North Yorkshire Police (NYP), Lisa Winward and the Inspector for the Harrogate outer area, Ed Rogerson to the meeting.

Chief Constable Lisa Winward provided an overview of policing across North Yorkshire. The key areas of focus for NYP were prevention and early intervention, place based working, gaining intelligence from local communities, safeguarding the most vulnerable, partnership working and establishing areas of demand within policing. It was reported that there had been a 12% reduction in reported neighbourhood crime in North Yorkshire and the City of York and victim satisfaction

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currently sat at 86%.

The Chief Constable then provided an update on policing within Harrogate

- Public order offences - decreased by 7%
- Reported anti-social behaviour - decreased by 43%
- Fatal road traffic collisions - decreased by 50%
- Arson and criminal damage outcome rates - increased from 9% to 11%
- Burglary outcome rates - increased from 5.8% to 6.4%
- Rape outcome rates - increased from 2.2% to 10.1%
- Drugs possession outcome rates - 80%
- Supply offences outcome rates - 50%

The three-year national police staffing uplift programme, which would end on 31 March 2023, had increased officer numbers across the county by approximately 200. It was noted that new officers joining the force would undertake three years of training to achieve a degree level qualification as part of the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship. The Chief Constable explained that NYP had recently signed an agreement with the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) for a budget of £1.9m including an increase in staffing within the force control room in order to improve control room performance and service delivery.

Inspector Ed Rogerson proceeded to provide an update on crime trends within the local area. Following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions there had been an increase in reports of anti-social behaviour associated with the night-time economy in Harrogate town centre, particularly on Parliament Street, The Ginnel and Oxford Street which had been responded to with increased visible police patrols. NYP had worked with local licensees to strengthen the pub watch scheme, which had closed down due to a lack of support. A new app which was funded by Harrogate Business Improvement District was launched to enable licensees and the police to communicate more effectively. In order to focus on women's safety, several Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) had been enrolled in a welfare and vulnerability engagement programme which provided training to officers working in the night-time economy and aimed to raise awareness of potential issues that might arise. NYP and the Council had launched a 'Get Home Safely' campaign to help residents get home safely over Christmas which had been promoted via posters and digital messaging displayed across the district. Various community engagement days, supported by the Community Safety Hub (CSH) were reported to be effectively targeting knife and drug crime in the local area.

A problem-solving plan which included increased police visibility, was in place for McDonald's in Harrogate town centre to help combat issues related to anti-social behaviour. Several residential streets in the town centre had seen a considerable reduction in crime after a property in the area was subjected to a closure order obtained by the CSH. Community surgeries had been held to allow the local community to visit police officers and to report any areas of concern. Operation Chrome had been implemented to target vehicles associated with anti-social behaviour around the Strawberry Dale and ASDA areas in the town centre, which had led to an increased amount of enforcement of traffic related offences. The CSH had been seeking funding for environmental improvements to Bower Street to

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reduce reports of anti-social behaviour. An online tool called StreetSafe, which allowed individuals to anonymously flag up public places where they had felt unsafe had been recently piloted across police forces throughout the country. Reports made in the Harrogate area were reported to be low in number and primarily consisted of poor lighting complaints, with Bower Street being flagged as a potential safety issue. A problem-solving plan had therefore been put in place for the area. It was reported that the former Kimberly Hotel in Harrogate was currently an empty building which required redevelopment and had become a hotspot for break ins and associated drug activity. NYP and the CSH were working with partners including the Council's Environmental Protection team to ensure that the premises was adequately secured.

Reports of graffiti had been responded to with increased visual checks by PCSOs on patrol and NYP had worked with local schools to identify the perpetrators. Inspector Ed Rogerson explained that NYP's Operation Expedite County Lines Team had been working hard to prevent high harm offences through the use of stop and search and other disruption tactics in hot spot locations for drug use in Harrogate. NYP's Child Exploitation Team worked with victims of child exploitation and their parents in order to protect young people at risk of exploitation and had attended over 430 multi-agency meetings since April.

In terms of the wider district, reports of anti-social behaviour caused by a group of young people in Boroughbridge was being tackled by the NYP Neighbourhood Team who were working with local schools and social care to protect the offenders as well as the community. The Protect Your Home scheme, which was run by the office of the PFCC and funded through the Government's Safer Streets Fund, aimed to prevent burglaries of residential homes and farms and was greatly successful in the areas that the scheme covered. There had been an increase in reports of burglaries from new build housing developments in the Knaresborough area which had particularly benefitted from the scheme which issued free security upgrades such as new locks, alarms and ring doorbells to strengthen security in vulnerable areas.

In response to a question from Councillor Robert Windass, Inspector Ed Rogerson confirmed that he would ensure that the NYP Neighbourhood Team were aware of reports of anti-social behaviour in Back Lane car park in Boroughbridge and that the police were actively increasing their presence in the area.

Following a question from Councillor Andy Paraskos, the Chief Constable and the Inspector explained that it was unlikely that the Protect Your Home scheme would be extended to the Tockwith area due to the strict criteria which enabled certain geographical areas to benefit from the funding based on crime statistics in vulnerable areas. In response to a query about effectively dealing with cold callers, the Chief Constable confirmed that a partnership approach in conjunction with local authorities and trading standards was imperative. If the police were made aware of a suspicious incident, they should attend the scene if vulnerable individuals were at risk as burglary offences were often linked to cold callers. Inspector Ed Rogerson clarified that a pedlar's certificate should be owned by all individuals selling goods on the street, the absence of which could be used to confirm if an offence had been committed.

Councillor Michael Harrison queried the most effective way for Councillors to contact

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the police with specific non-urgent cases. Chief Constable Lisa Winward confirmed that the preference was engagement with the relevant local police team and that those teams should be emailed directly. In response to a further question regarding current police involvement in mental health crises, the Chief Constable explained that there were particular circumstances in which the police would be obliged to intervene in order to prevent the loss of life. It was however apparent that due to a lack of resource to be able to support an individual through the care system, this often resulted in further involvement from the police, when policing was not the service required. It was reported that 65% of police time involved dealing with matters that were not deemed to be core policing, for example dealing with mental health crises. A Right Care, Right Person scheme was in the process of being implemented across the county which aimed to get the right agency to support an individual in need and if a police officer was not the right person to provide care, they would not be sent.

Councillor Pat Marsh requested that PCSO's contacted their local Councillors in order to create a direct point of contact to deal with issues raised by residents. Councillor Pat Marsh also raised concerns regarding the monitoring of 20mph roads, which was not a service currently carried out by NYP. The Chief Constable referenced the York and North Yorkshire Road Safety Partnership which involved multiple agencies working together to increase road safety. She also explained that road safety involved education and engineering in addition to enforcement, which was not a long term solution. An approach of partnership working and problem-solving would be required following a report that the barriers had been removed from the entrance of Stonefall Park in Harrogate which had resulted in increased reports of speeding motorbikes.

The Chair referred to a recent meeting of the North Yorkshire Police, Fire and Crime Panel at which it was stated that 53% of recorded violent crimes in North Yorkshire were against women and girls. In response, the Chief Constable explained that a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy had been adopted by the PFCC and NYP which involved partnership working between agencies to protect women and girls from harm and to provide support to victims of crime. It was noted that this holistic approach involved internal work within the police force to ensure that any unacceptable behaviour was identified quickly to ensure trust within policing and external work through partnerships with agencies to support victims of crime and tackle the perpetrators. The Chair asked how North Yorkshire compared on a national level with regards to reported instances of VAWG and it was **agreed** that this information would be provided prior to the meeting of the Commission on Monday 27 February 2023.

In response to a question from Councillor Robert Windass, information was provided about the low conviction rates for rape crimes. The Chief Constable explained that rape was a challenging crime to investigate as often a witness was not present and the difference of opinion between the victim and perpetrator often related to consent. Operation Soteria aimed to develop new operating models for the investigation and prosecution of rape in England and Wales. This model supported policing to improve responses to rape and other sexual offences and focused on tackling the perpetrators' behaviour and better supporting victims.

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It was confirmed that the three-year national police staffing uplift programme provided approximately 200 additional police officers for NYP across the three years and that the force would continue to recruit staff to retain this figure, to take into account those leaving due to retirement and other reasons. It was the intention to retain the uplifted officers for at least another 12 months after the scheme ended on 31 March 2023. In response to a query concerning data produced from Vehicular Activated Signs which showed vehicles exceeding a 30mph speed limit, it was confirmed that if further information was provided the police would look into this matter. Inspector Ed Rogerson explained that all speed enforcement was intelligence led and areas with reported instances of speeding were targeted for enforcement.

Councillor Paul Haslam referenced the need to attain additional funding for the Woodfield area of Harrogate. The Chief Constable explained that a partnership working focus would be needed alongside long term problem-solving to get to the root cause of deprivation within the area.

Chief Constable Lisa Winward informed the Commission that she would be happy to attend future meetings of the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Constituency Committee following Local Government Reorganisation.

The Chair thanked Chief Constable Lisa Winward and Inspector Ed Rogerson on behalf of the Commission for their attendance.

(5.37 pm – 7.12 pm)