

Minutes of **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting date **Thursday, 14 March 2024**

Committee Members present: Councillors Roy Lees (Vice Chair in the Chair), Sarah Ainsworth, Kim Snape, Michelle Beach, Dedrah Moss, Arjun Singh, Michelle Brown, Christine Heydon, Samantha Martin and Debra Platt

Committee Members present virtually (non-voting): Councillors Pauline McGovern

Guests present: Beckie Ramsay, Doing it for Dylan Campaign
Chief Inspector Chris Abbott, Lancashire Constabulary
Councillors Beverley Murray, Executive Member (Early Intervention) and
Councillor Terry Howarth, Executive Member (Homes and Housing)

Officers: Jennifer Mullin (Director of Communities and Leisure) and Laura-Jean Taylor (Head of Public Protection)

Apologies: Councillor Aidy Riggott

A video recording of the public session of this meeting is available to view on [YouTube here](#)

36 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no such declarations.

37 Minutes of the last meeting held on 25 January 2024

Resolved – That the minutes of the the meeting held on 25 January 2024 be approved as a correct record.

38 Public Questions

There were no public questions.

39 Executive Cabinet Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of meetings of the Executive Cabinet held in 18 January 2024 and 22 February 2024 be noted.

40 Notice of Executive Decisions

Resolved – That the Notice of Executive Decisions be noted.

41 Health Scrutiny Update

The Chair informed the Committee that there had been no Lancashire County Council Health and Adult Care Scrutiny meetings held since the last health scrutiny update.

42 Water Safety - Doing it for Dylan Campaign

Beckie Ramsay from the “Doing it for Dylan” Water Safety Campaign gave a presentation about her campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of swimming in open water which had been inspired by the tragic death of her son, Dylan in 2011 who had decided to go swimming in a local quarry.

The presentation included a short dramatization showing two young characters, one of whom drowns after attempting to swim in open water. Beckie explained that this film was shown at schools at which she had given talks about water safety. It highlighted that anyone, even a strong swimmer, could get into difficulties in open water.

Her campaign had been mentioned at World Drowning Prevention Day in Australia and she has travelled all over the world to promote awareness of water safety including Kenya. She had won awards for her campaigning including from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

Beckie stressed that she was not against swimming in open water – she wanted to tackle lack of awareness of the dangers. Her approach would be “No lifeguard, no swimming”. The presentation demonstrated the importance of wearing protective clothing in open water as worn by rescue services.

Beckie informed the Committee that there had been no national public announcements from the Government on water safety since the 1970s. Open water often contained dangerous chemicals and she gave an example of one water source tested which had a PH of 11.6 (bleach is 12.2).

She indicated that since Dylan’s death thirteen years ago, annual drowning statistics have remained static i.e. 600 deaths a year, of which 400 were accidental. Beckie felt that there was a lot more which could be done to promote public awareness and improve water safety.

Some of Beckie’s proposed recommendations were:

- Improved warning signage at open water sites
- Councils engaging with landowners e.g. on adequate fencing and lighting
- Signage with suicide prevention information and locator apps for people at high risk
- Measures for water safety equipment nearby open water – e.g. rope– to be a designated bright colour so easily identifiable if stolen (trialled in Scotland);and to tackle theft and vandalism of equipment e.g. lifebuoys

- Locating high risk sites and raising public awareness
- Promoting awareness of water safety via schools, local media
- Encouraging the public to sign up to the “What3Words” locator app
- Installing Number Locator Boards every 50 metres along open water to help rescue services (this was trialled in Liverpool and rescue times were reduced from 23 to 9 minutes)
- Greater accountability for landowners to ensure water safety measures are in place
- To create a Lancashire wide approach so that Lancashire can lead on the issue.

Beckie also spoke about a voluntary organisation called “Beneath the Surface” which carried out private searches for missing persons once police resources had been exhausted. They use a piece of technology called “Aqua Eye” which was an underwater camera making it easier to locate people underwater.

Chief Inspector Chris Abbott, Lancashire Constabulary informed the Committee that he was already part of a water safety advisory board in West Lancs and that he would be willing to be involved in setting up a similar body here in Chorley. He acknowledged that funding in this area was an issue for both Lancashire police and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service however it was important to do as much as possible.

The Committee thanked Beckie for her excellent and informative presentation, particularly as it was a subject which had affected her personally. It was agreed that the Council should do everything it can to assist the campaign and take the proposed actions forward.

Resolved - It was recommended that:

- i) That a water safety action group be formed – the Council can help with setting up e.g. a Constitution and applying for grants
- ii) Councillors Michelle Brown, Michelle Beach and Sarah Ainsworth expressed interest in being involved in the group.

43 Community Safety Partnership/Crime and Disorder

The Director of Communities and Leisure, Jennifer Mullin presented a report providing an overview of the work of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Chief Inspector Chris Abbott, Lancashire Constabulary and Laura Jean-Taylor, Head of Public Protection were also in attendance.

The report demonstrated the resilience of the CSP and its capability to provide a dynamic response.

The report included The Strategic Assessment 2022 (Appendix A) and then further broken down into Local District Profiles – (Appendix C), highlighting the key issues and risks across Lancashire.

Utilising the information contained with the strategic assessment, local knowledge and intelligence and the Lancashire Talking survey the CSP had drawn together a Chorley

and South Ribble Community Safety Partnership Action Plan (Appendix B). The plan detailed the established key priorities and the commitment of the Responsible Authorities towards each priority. A partnership event was held on 21 July 2023, which was a great success with great attendance and engagement across the partnership and Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector organisations.

The report gave details of a number of police activities. Chief Inspector Chris Abbott indicated that Operation Centurion for example, launched by the Police and Crime Commissioner in July 2023 targeting ASB hot spots areas, had successfully targeted locally based issues and that overall crime figures were lower across the board.

Councillor Pauline McGovern made some suggestions to improve how information was presented in the report which were noted by Jennifer Mullin.

The issue of road safety was highlighted by Councillor Christine Heydon, in particular the need for additional signage on a single track lane which had recently been refused. Laura- Jean Taylor agreed to take this up through the appropriate channels.

A request was made for follow-up data on convictions. Chief Inspector Abbott agreed to provide the information.

It was requested that councillors be informed when PCSOs are moved to a different area.

The Chair referred to the drop in crime statistics in November 2022. Inspector Abbott suggested that this was likely due to a drop in social activity post COVID, which has since resumed.

Resolved –

- i) That the report be noted;
- ii) That the requests listed above be actioned.

44 Second Monitoring Report Overview and Scrutiny - Select Move

Councillor Terry Howarth, Executive Member (Homes and Housing) presented a report providing the second update of the work undertaken to deliver the 18 recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group for Select Move.

The report also gave details of two Select Move Customer Surveys which were completed between 14th November to 13th December 2023. One survey was sent to applicants where Chorley Council was managing the application, and the second survey was sent to applicants whose applications were managed by any other partner.

Councillor Howarth explained that one of the key recommendations, simplifying the banding, had been addressed in the Select Move Policy Review. The new policy had now been signed off by all three Local Authorities, (Chorley, Preston and South Ribble). The policy implementation has been delayed due to lack of CIVICA (IT software provider) capacity, however CIVICA will now start work developing updates

to the housing management system. They have committed to a new “go live” date in September 2024.

Councillor Howarth indicated that he was very pleased with the report and the progress made.

Resolved –

- i) That councillor Howarth be thanked for his attendance;
- ii) That the report be noted.

45 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme

The Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2023/24 was provided for information.

Resolved – That the document be noted.

46 Reports from the Task and Finish Groups

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – Suicide Prevention and Bereavement

The Committee was informed that so far, three members had expressed interest in the Task Group: Councillors Michelle Beach, Samantha Martin and Christine Heydon.

It was noted that the issue was a Council priority and of particular concern in Chorley which had a high suicide rate.

Resolved - That the initial scoping meeting be open to all members to find out more.

47 Any urgent business previously agreed with the Chair

There was no urgent business.

Chair

Date