

Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel

12 September 2023

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.45pm

Present: Councillors Reid (Chair), Alam (Deputy), Chadwick, Ferguson, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, McLaren, Robinson, Roderick

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by members of the Scrutiny Panel.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel held on 25 July 2023 were approved as a correct record.

17. CRIME AND DISORDER

The Panel welcomed Councillor Vimal Choksi, Executive Member (Towns & Communities); Julian Jackson, Director of Place; Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods; and Mike Walsh, Superintendent, Greater Manchester Police (GMP), to receive an update on the implementation and effectiveness of the GMP neighbourhood model; and activity of the Community Safety Partnership.

Superintendent Walsh provided an update on the neighbourhood model that was launched by GMP in March 2023. Information was specific to the designated team of 2 inspectors, 6 sergeants and 32 PCs in neighbourhood policing. The Police, together with partners, will work individually and collectively to fight crime and solve local problems.

It was reported that there is a drive for the Police to deliver outstanding services and neighbourhood policing is at the heart of this in Tameside. By effectively going back to basics, it is envisaged that communities and members of the public will benefit from a greater commitment, consistency and visibility of the Police. The neighbourhood teams will also benefit from the support of Prevention Hubs and Neighbourhood Crime Teams.

The Prevention Hubs will work with partners to address repeat offending and demand, with the neighbourhood crime and policing teams working together to target offenders. The Panel heard that capacity and resources for neighbourhood policing has been ring fenced, with a focus community led policing and putting victims at the heart of planning and delivery.

The Panel received information that was specific to the operational structure of the four neighbourhoods in Tameside (North, South, East and West). Performance data was shared and broken down by areas with examples of recent activity for:

- Total Arrests / Total Recorded Crime / Neighbourhood Crime
- Residential Burglary
- Hate Crime
- ASB Incidents
- Stop Searches including positive outcome

Councillor Choksi introduced the second part of the item that covered the Community Safety Partnership and key activity. An overview of the Community Strategy 2022 -2025 was provided with reference to key priorities and how they align with those set at a Greater Manchester level.

Detail was provided on the role and responsibilities of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), with reference made to a revised action plan that focuses on strategic priorities and the re-shaping of the CSP work shop and subgroups.

Members received a number of examples of the strategy in action covering the allocation and breakdown of community safety grants; green space neighbourhood watch groups; and anti-violence and weapon seizure campaigns. It was also reported that Tameside Council has worked alongside Greater Manchester Police and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU).

The Panel received an update on the development of new anti-social behaviour (ASB) policy for Tameside and planned next steps. A draft version of the policy can be shared with the Scrutiny Panel for review and comment, to inform the final version. Shared learning available from a recent focus report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO), titled - Out of Order – learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour, has been fully considered.

Councillor Choksi, Superintendent Walsh and officers responded to a number of questions from the Panel on:

- Effectiveness of the neighbourhood model, in particular the ability to deliver key priorities, where improvements are identified and measuring the difference and outcomes locally.
- Becoming community led/informed and how community concerns feed into this work.
- Putting victims at the heart of this work and methods to monitor and test outcomes.
- Confidence of the public in reporting crimes.
- Statutory roles and responsibilities for the Council.
- Confidence in community safety priorities being delivered.
- ASB policy development and specifics on ASB case reviews.
- Impacts and monitoring of community safety grants.
- Fixed Penalty Notice data published to the Council's website relating to litter and dog fouling.

Actions: The points for action include:

- A working group to be established to review local arrangements, systems and outcomes for community safety.
- The Chair to circulate the Draft ASB Policy to panel members for review and comments. With a collective response of the Scrutiny Panel to be submitted to the Executive to support the final document.
- Community safety grants – assurance on the approach to which community grants are monitored and audited. In particular the checks that a grant is used for the purpose intended and any residual amount returned or reallocated.
- ASB case reviews – numbers from the past few years, learning from this and related information being made publically accessible. Ensuring residents are aware of their right to request a case review if unhappy with outcome/resolution.
- The current approach/policy of the Police in dealing with and responding to issues and offences related to off road bikes in Tameside. A further concern was a possible growing number of electric scooters and electric motorbikes on pavements and public footpaths, around foreseen dangers to safety and accidents occurring.

18. RESPONSE TO LGSCO FOCUS REPORT

The Panel welcomed Councillor Vimal Choksi, Executive Member (Towns & Communities); and Emma Varnam, Assistant Director, Operations and Neighbourhoods; to receive a response to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report, Out of Order – learning lessons from complaints about antisocial behaviour, published August 2023.

19. RESPONSE TO LGSCO FOCUS REPORT

The Panel received a response of the Executive to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Focus Report, Not in my back yard – Local people and the planning process, published August 2023.

20. CHAIR'S UPDATE

The Chair advised members of the upcoming Scrutiny Mid-Year budget meeting, with a date to be confirmed shortly and circulated by email.

21. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Place and External Relations Scrutiny Panel will take place on Tuesday 7 November 2023.

22. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR