

EAST STRATEGIC NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM

19 January 2022

Commenced: 6.35 pm

Terminated: 7.50 pm

Present: Councillors T Sharif (Chair), Gosling (Vice-Chair), Billington, Dickinson, Feeley, J Homer, Jackson, Lane, Patrick, Pearce, N Sharif, Taylor and Wills

5 MINUTES

RESOLVED

The Minutes of the meeting of the East Strategic Neighbourhood Forum held on 27 October 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6 NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING UPDATE - SAFER TAMESIDE

Chief Inspector Galt, Greater Manchester Police, began by providing information in respect of two new Teams; the Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC) Team and the Domestic Abuse Team (DAT).

The Chief Inspector explained that the SAC Team dealt exclusively with volume crime (burglary/robbery/vehicle crime) and she was very pleased to report that the district team currently had the best detection rate for burglary in Greater Manchester, at 10.2%.

She further explained that the DAT Team, a unit dedicated to dealing with domestic abuse offenders, was still in its infancy and therefore there were currently no statistics available. The Chief Inspector hoped to bring more information in relation to this unit at the next meeting of the Forum.

Inspector Moss then delivered a presentation updating the Forum in respect of recent initiatives and current priorities in the East Neighbourhood.

Inspector Moss began by giving details of Operation AVRO, a force-wide initiative that delivered a surge of extra resources and specialist officers to a different district within Greater Manchester each month. The operation targeted crimes that members of the public in the district had reported as causing them the most concern. Operation AVRO would be in Tameside on 17 February 2022.

Members of the press and key partners, including local representatives, were invited to attend Operation AVRO deployments to see results first-hand and conduct important multi-agency work, such as welfare visits.

Further information was provided in respect of Operation Safer Tameside, which had taken place on 16 December 2021. Details were given of a number of actions from the day, including:

- One vehicle seized due to driver having no insurance and MOT;
- Four drivers breathalysed;
- Six stopped for faulty lighting;
- Two stopped for illegal tinted windows;
- One stopped for illegal number plates;
- Nine stopped for exceeding the speed limit;
- Four delivery vehicles stopped for failing to wear a seatbelt;
- Two stopped for driving whilst using a mobile device;
- Three warnings for anti-social driving;
- One obstruction on a public highway; and
- One driver contravening a stop sign.

Intelligence was also gathered in regard to a number of issues, which the Neighbourhood Policing Team would be looking into. It was reported that the next Operation Safer Tameside event was scheduled to take place on 25 January 2022 focusing on violent crime towards women and girls.

Current policing priorities for the area were outlined, including:

- Domestic burglaries in Dukinfield;
- Burglaries (both residential and commercial), vehicle crime/theft from vehicles (including catalytic converters) and anti-social behaviour in Stalybridge North/town centre;
- Anti-social behaviour in Demesne Drive/Brushes Estate and road safety issues in Stalybridge South; and
- Burglary (residential), theft from and thefts of vehicles and anti-social behaviour/youth violence in Top Mossley park.

With regard to burglary, Inspector Moss advised that a male had been arrested on Christmas Eve following a burglary at Stalybridge Labour Club. The individual had been charged and was awaiting a court appearance. In addition, following reports of high value shoplifting at Aldi in Stalybridge, two males had been arrested.

Members sought clarity on how the priorities outlined were decided. Inspector Moss advised that the priorities were established from figures collected by the police in relation to reported crime. The police highlighted that they could only prioritise issues if Members and the public made them aware. In relation to road safety, Members requested if this matter could be considered as a priority.

A discussion ensued regarding the issue of vehicle theft and the Inspector explained that the police were undertaking significant work around the issue of keyless vehicle thefts. The SAC team was involved with this work and the police were also liaising with car manufacturers nationally to establish how vehicles could be made less easy to steal and more traceable.

The Chair was keen that figures were brought to a future meeting of the Forum that outlined the number of calls being received and handled and what specific crimes these calls related to.

Members thanked Chief Inspector Galt and Inspector Moss for their attendance and for a very interesting presentation.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

7 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Forum received a presentation from the Interim Director of Population Health, who gave an update in respect of the current position with regard to Covid-19.

Trends in new cases of the virus in Tameside as of 14 January 2022 were displayed and it was reported that the current rate of new cases in the last seven days per 100,000 people was 1,122.3/100,000 (2,549 cases). The rate had increased rapidly in recent weeks, however this was now declining again

The highest numbers of new cases were in younger working age adults (20-40), but still increasing in children. The number of people in hospital with Covid-19 in Greater Manchester and Tameside had increased in recent weeks, however, overall increases in intensive care usage for Covid patients in Greater Manchester and Tameside had not been realised. The situation would continue to be monitored.

Members were advised that:

- Tameside had a similar rate of Covid to the rest of Greater Manchester;
- The rate of new cases had started to reduce but this should be treated with caution due to testing patterns and access;
- The positivity rate was extremely high with almost one in two tests coming back positive (45%);
- Rates in children were still increasing and this was expected to continue as children returned to school after Christmas;
- Guidance changes around testing;
- High numbers of outbreaks and some large outbreaks, particularly in care homes though the levels of vaccination were keeping hospital admissions low;
- Hospital activity had increased and there were indirect impacts in the health system and other public services due to staff absences and disruption to routine activity; and
- Ongoing pressures on all Council front line services and on direct Covid response within Public Health; Adult Social Care; Public Protection and Education.

Current drivers of the present situation in Tameside were outlined, including:

- The new Omicron variant of Covid-19 discovered in late November which had spread rapidly across the globe since then, driving a huge spike in infections;
- The Omicron variant was extremely infectious and was spreading more quickly and more easily than previous variants, such as Alpha and Delta;
- Omicron was now completely dominant across the country and in Tameside;
- This had come at a time heading into winter when seasonal viruses spread easily and there were relatively few measures and restrictions in place to limit transmission;
- Outbreaks were widespread across settings in the borough, some of which were particularly high risk such as care homes. This further spread added to the overall numbers of infections; and
- Spread of infection linked to confined, crowded indoor spaces with inadequate ventilation.

Basic measures to prevent transmission were again emphasised:

- Regular, thorough handwashing with soap and running water;
- Wearing a face mask/covering when in certain settings;
- Social distancing from others of at least two metres;
- Following the current relevant guidance/advice; and
- Vaccination.

Details were given of the current rules in respect of PCR testing, regular testing and contact tracing. Information was also provided in respect of testing sites in the borough and their opening times. The Interim Director encouraged anyone who had not yet received a vaccine to come forward, as well as those who had not yet received their second dose or a booster.

Recent changes to testing and isolation advice were highlighted, including the importance of registering test results online for data collection and in order that they could be followed up.

The presentation summarised how people were being encouraged and supported to tackle Covid in Tameside, as follows:

- Ongoing messaging – testing/vaccination;
- Engaging with communities to provide information and listen to concerns;
- Community Champions programme;
- Supporting people and services to follow guidelines and reduce spread; and
- Support to isolate – there were still support payments available for those needing to isolate and help via the Council call centre (0161 342 8355).

A discussion ensued regarding vaccine uptake among particular age groups and BAME communities. The Interim Director explained that the Population Health team was working with community organisations to encourage uptake of the vaccination among those groups which had

shown vaccine hesitancy. It was highlighted that the difference in vaccination rates was starkest among the different age groups and was lowest among younger people. However, it was advised that young people often had a degree of natural immunity due to outbreaks in schools. At present, around 50 per cent of the borough's 12 to 15 years had received a Covid-19 vaccine.

It was highlighted that Covid-19 rates remained high in Tameside and Greater Manchester and had not fallen as quickly as in other areas of the country and therefore residents were urged to remain vigilant.

The Chair thanked the Interim Director for a very informative presentation and all those who had been part of the successful vaccination rollout in the borough.

RESOLVED

That the content of the presentation be noted.

CHAIR