

POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
14/12/2021 at 6.00 pm



Present: Councillor McLaren (Chair)
Councillors Brownridge, Hobin, Islam (Substitute) and Surjan

Also in Attendance:

Chris Bowen	Greater Manchester Police
Anna DaSilva	Project Director
Chris Lewis	Lead Youth Worker
Youth Council	
Kaidy McCann	Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Curley, Councillor Williamson and Councillor K Phythian.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Brownridge declared a non-registerable interest at item 7 by virtue of being a Member of the Northern Roots Board.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 9th November 2021 be approved as a correct record.

6 **POLICING IN OLDHAM**

Consideration was given to a presentation from the Chief Superintendent of Oldham which advised Members on Policing in Oldham.

Members were informed of the purpose of the Police which was to fight, prevent and reduce crime, keep people safe and care for victims. It was explained how those goals would be met underpinned by their values. It was explained that all Councillors would be receiving quarterly updates from Greater Manchester Police which would be area specific.

Members were advised that crime in Oldham had massively increased as reported in the end of year report following criticism that crimes were not being reported. There had been an increase in stalking, domestic abuse and coercion. It was noted that although incidents could have around four crimes associated, the majority of the time involved one victim. Logs

were now being looked at on a weekly basis and the number of crimes recorded had significantly increased. It was explained that no locality would record 100% of all crimes however, Oldham was recording a high 80%. Crime numbers were being compared to the 2019/20 year to get a more accurate representation due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were provided a breakdown of call and the grading system. For grade 1, Officers were expected to be at the scene within 15 minutes. Oldham had reached a target of 64.1% which was inadequate compared to the target rate of 90%. A new grading system was being introduced in February 2022 which would ensure crimes were given the correct grades. For those that would be considered grade 3, victims would be given a mutually convenient appointment time. This would solve the issues of discouragement from callers in reporting crimes.

Members were informed of the recent operation Vortex which had the following outcomes:

- Arrests – 17 prisoners for an array of offences.
- Weapon seizures – 3 x knives, 1 x machete and 1 x axe
- Drugs seizures – Significant quantities of cannabis along with quantities of cocaine, heroin and crack cocaine (values not known at this time).
- 2 x Cannabis street warnings issued.
- 16 vehicles seized (13 for no insurance and or license and 3 stolen motor vehicles originally taken from different areas of Greater Manchester.
- 17 individuals summonsed to court for driving offences
- 5 Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency prohibition notices issued.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- How crimes were being handled with not enough Officers on the streets. It was explained that two major reviews were in process that would look at both patrols and neighbourhood teams. It was hoped for a net gain for Oldham however, this had not yet been confirmed.
- The length of time to respond to Elected Member queries. It was noted that there was no data available on this however, queries would be responded to as quickly as possible. Members would also be given a direct number for the inspectorate team to help speed up the process.

RESOLVED that:

1. The presentation be noted.
2. An update be provided to the Committee in March 2022.
- 3.

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NORTHERN ROOTS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a presentation on the Northern Roots (NR) project.

Members were informed of the three goals of Northern Roots which were:

1. Create jobs, training and business opportunities for local people.
2. Preserve and enhance biodiversity and the environment at Northern Roots 160-acre site.
3. Improve the health and wellbeing of local residents and communities.

Members were advised that the project had been instigated by Oldham Council following 3 years of feasibility, consultation and planning. The NR Charity had recently been established and a small base had been set up on site. £7 million of external funding had been received to date with another Million being bid for. The project had received 100% fund success rate which had never been seen before. There had been a lot of engagement with the public and other organisations including four groups helping to clear the site of litter.

To take the project further a design team had been appointed and it was expected for the planning application to be submitted in February 2022 with the aim to start the build in spring 2022 with phase 1 of the build commencing in Autumn 2022.

Members asked for and received clarification on the following:

- Did the project have any business sponsors. It was confirmed that some businesses including Park Cakes, United Utilities and Manchester Cabins had become sponsors as grant funding could not be relied upon on its own.
- Site visit for Members. It was noted that a visit would be arranged for Members.

RESOLVED that the content of the presentation be noted.

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YOUTH SERVICE UPDATE

Consideration was given to a verbal update which advised Members on the work of the Youth Council.

Members were advised of the Make Your Mark ballot held every year for the UK Youth Parliament. Make Your Mark was an opportunity for 11-18 year olds across the UK to have their say and begin their democratic journey by voting on the policies they want to introduce or change. Due to Covid-19 the ballot was missed for a year, the next ballot would be taking place between the 1st - 28th February 2022. Members were advised that the topics for the ballot would be sent to members.

Members were also informed of the need of a workshop to help young people gain employment opportunities. It was felt that there was not enough opportunities for young people to show the skills gained from the online world and where these skills could be used. It was also felt that advice was an issue for young people especially for on experience in the working world.

RESOLVED that:

1. The update be noted.

2. An update be provided in March 2022
3. A workshop be set up between the Youth Service, Employability and the Committee to look at employment opportunities for young people.



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POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22

RESOLVED that the Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme be noted.

The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.50 pm