

Communities Scrutiny Review Board

5 July 2021

Minute Extract

06/21 Financing of the Public Protection Officers Team

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director for Communities and Place on the Financing of the Public Protection Officers Team. This report was presented by the Director of Public Protection and Streetpride.

It was reported that a decision had been taken at Council Cabinet on 13 March 2019 to approve a 'new model for Neighbourhood working'; this saw an increase in the number of PPOs from 9 to 20 to provide ward based priority services across all 17 wards of the city. The Board noted that the PPO team was designed to deal with anti-social behaviour, nuisance parking and environmental crime along with other enforcement and community related demands.

It was reported that the PPO Team used the three E's approach (Engage, Educate, Enforce) which was considered good practice by Keep Britain Tidy, who delivered the 'Enforcement Academy' for Local Authorities. It was noted that in March 2020 the Coronavirus Pandemic (Covid) significantly impacted the Council's ability to deliver services as resources were focussed on reducing the spread and managing the impact of the pandemic. It was reported that the PPO Team refocussed their priorities to provide vital support to the Covid effort by taking a lead role in localised contact tracing. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that they also provided support to the most vulnerable in the city with safe and well checks, along with other ad hoc duties.

It was reported that Covid had highlighted good practice and enhanced collaboration between teams, partners, and community groups. It was noted that this had led to Police, Environmental Health, Trading Standards, Community Safety and Public Protection meeting up three times per week for joint tasking. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that at these meetings, demands were reviewed, and resources allocated according to role and skill set. The Board noted that this collaborative approach had ensured that Covid restrictions were effectively managed, and businesses were supported in the city throughout lockdown and the recovery roadmap.

It was noted that the team had continued to support the wider community safety agenda throughout the pandemic and had continued to deliver patrols through the city, supporting complex issues such as neighbour disputes and working to the three Es of enforcement for environmental demands. It was reported that shift patterns within the service had recently changed to accommodate evening and weekend demands and

that this had enabled officers to proactively patrol and react to demands on parks and open spaces on evenings and weekends until 10pm.

It was noted that during the pandemic, officers had been required to adapt their role to support residents and reduce the risk of spreading the virus. It was reported that the PPOs continued to provide key front-line services throughout the pandemic and had completed 1,445 Covid related actions for residents and businesses which was included in the total 8469 service requested completed throughout the performance year.

The Board noted that in addition to these actions, the team also supported the wider Council enforcement team by providing back fill for 101 essential cases to enable Environmental Health Officers to act on Covid cases. It was reported that the team completed 8469 service requests with 112 resulting in enforcement action (Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or Parking Charge Notice (PCN)) which equated to 19.3% of serviced requests. The Board noted that this demonstrated that around 80% of the time officers were providing support, advice, and guidance to residents in line with the agreed three E approach.

The Board noted that the Council had a statutory duty to complete quarterly returns to the Environment Agency on the amount of fly tipped waste collected and the system allocated an indicative cost to the amount. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that from April 2020 to March 2021 the Council collected over seven thousand fly tips with costs attributed to this being £334.9k as indicated by Waste Data Flow. It was reported that in order to enable social distancing at the Raynesway HWRC site, opening times were reduced, bays were restricted to one resident per bay and a booking system was implemented which received positive feedback from residents and local businesses. It was noted that a saving of £575k realised from the changes was included in the Council's MTFP to support the balancing of the Council's finances during significantly increasing demands across all Council Service through the pandemic.

The Board noted that Public Protection Officers provided a visible enforcement presence in the city and had powers to enforce against antisocial behaviour, environmental crime, and breaches of Public Spaces Protection Orders. It was noted that legislation that PPOs enforced against included: The Environmental Protection Act 1990, Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Public Spaces Protection Orders and The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) Regulations 2020.

The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that Public Protection Officers had the power to enforce against waste crime offences, including littering, waste on land and fly tipping along with other offences including graffiti and dog fouling. It was noted that waste and recycling were key factors in the Council's ability to support the climate change agenda.

The Board noted that Public Protection Officers played a key role in providing a visible uniformed presence in the city. It was reported that working with Police partners and BID rangers, PPOs provided support to businesses by providing a visible deterrent for crime and disorder in the city centre. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that Derby's parks and open spaces had provided an area for external exercise and socially distanced interaction for residents through the pandemic. It was noted that patrolling these spaces provided residents with assurance that crime and antisocial behaviour was being actively managed, which helped to maintain feelings of safety in the city.

The Board noted that development of the Council's Better together approach was underway, which identified the most effective way of locality working. It was reported that by 'working with' communities rather than 'doing to' the Council would gain valuable insight into what mattered to communities which in turn enabled better service provision and community empowerment. It was reported that whilst the PPO team were not working on the development of the service, delivering services in the localities gave PPOs important local knowledge and connections. It was noted that PPOs would work with colleagues across all services areas as the approach developed.

The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that the Council operated a chargeable bulky waste collection service with two crews operating 4 days per week. It was noted that throughout Covid restrictions, capacity was increased with another round to take increased demand. The Board noted that the total number of bulky waste service requests from April 20 to March 21 was 7513, which generated £171k income.

The Board noted that the latest fly-tipping data available through the Environment Agency Waste Data Flow demonstrated a national trend of an increase in fly-tipping. It was reported that the data showed that there had been a significant impact in the East Midlands and that Derby was no exception to this. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that Waste data Flow attributed a cost value to the management of fly tipping using a weighted measure. It was reported that for Derby City the cost of fly tipping management was valued at £334.9k from April 20 to March 21.

The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that fly tipping was dealt with by three Streetpride crews in the city, who proactively cleared waste, reacted to resident service requests and referred to enforcement colleagues where evidence was present to support a prosecution. The Board noted that colleagues from Derby Homes' Estate Response Team included the management of fly tipping within their duties in the city's social housing areas. It was reported that this was funded by the Housing Revenue Account and worked

collaboratively with PPOs, Streetpride, Neighbourhoods and Housing Officers to resolve problems.

The Board noted that digital technology initially rolled out in Waste Collection services was being expanded through Streetpride services. It was noted that this enabled crews to identify fly tipping and other street cleansing demands and also enabled Team Leaders to schedule work and produce real time, geographical reports on cleansing demands. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that work was underway to link the PPO Team to this system to feed this information to patrol plans.

It was reported that Keep Britain Tidy had completed several experiments using behavioural insight techniques. It was noted that their studies had found that most fly tipping took place in places frequently visited by the perpetrators and that a Council's speed of response could add to the reinforced behaviour by giving the perception of acceptance. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that studies had shown that leaving fly tipping in situ with some method of identifying it as a waste crime highlighted the issues and triggered an emotional response from the perpetrator. It was noted that in as many of 70% of these cases where the waste was highlighted and left for up to 5 days, perpetrators collected their own waste back and disposed of it correctly. It was reported that Streetpride services were currently using some of these methods and would continue to review effectiveness.

The Board noted that the Council's Public Protection Team were developed to deal with antisocial behavior and environmental crime. It was reported that they worked closely with their colleagues in Neighbourhoods Teams and Streetpride to solve public realm issues; and that they worked collaboratively with enforcement colleagues and Police partners on joint tasking and low-level crime and antisocial behavior. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that the net cost of the Public Protection Officer Team was £333k. It was noted that Streetpride services managed waste collection and disposal along with street cleansing and other maintenance operations. It was reported that two crews provided bulky waste collection services and three crews provided fly tipping clearance. It was noted that where evidence was present in fly tipping, referrals were made for enforcement investigations.

The Board noted that the cost of a waste collection crew and vehicle was around £150k and income generated for bulky waste collections off sets this amount. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that the full costs estimated by the Environment Agency on the cost of collection, processing and disposal for the Derby City Council was £334.9k based on 5728 fly tips in the last performance year. It was reported that the Council provided disposal facilities at Raynesway Household Waste Recycling Centre. It was noted that in the height of the

pandemic, changes were made to enable social distancing and reduce contact.

The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that the changes included using digital technology to book disposal slots and a reduction in opening hours. The Board noted that savings realised from this approach totalled £575k and were included in the Council's MTFP. It was reported that the bulky waste collection service had been doubled through periods of increased demand during the pandemic. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that innovative solutions were being explored nationally to address fly tipping and the Council was exploring methods including behavioural insight techniques.

A councillor questioned whether the Council's Bulky Waste Service was subsidised and was informed that this service was subsidised, and that only one crew was funded by the costs charged for this service.

A councillor asked whether the Council were working to motorists littering out of car windows. The Board noted that the Streetpride Team were looking into how artificial intelligence could be used to help prosecute motorists who litter. It was reported that changes to legislation now allowed drivers to be prosecuted when passengers in their vehicle threw litter out of windows. It was agreed that an update on this would be brought to a future meeting.

A councillor questioned whether the Council were working with schools to educate young people about littering. It was reported that this formed part of the Council's Waste Strategy and the Director of Public Protection and Streetpride agreed to bring this strategy to a future meeting.

A councillor asked whether there were any vacancies in the Council's PPO Team and was informed that there were four vacancies. Councillors questioned how long it took to train new PPOs and were informed that it took approximately six weeks. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride agreed to update the Board once the four vacancies had been filled.

The Chair questioned whether the PPO Team were on track to hit their income generation target. The Board noted that so far, the PPO Team had collected around £2k and that this was expected to increase once the Public Protection Business Support Officer vacancy had been filled. It was reported that the PPO Team looked to educate individuals rather than issuing fines as a first response. It was noted that the Council's focus was on prosecuting individuals who were payed to fly tip. It was noted that the income generation target would be reviewed if it became apparent that the current target would not be hit. It was agreed that the Board would receive a future update on how the Council were working to change behaviours around fly tipping.

Councillors suggested that fly tipping in Derby may have increased as a result of the Raynesway HWRC site having reduced opening hours and a booking system. The Board agreed to recommend that Cabinet consider increasing the opening hours of the Raynesway HWRC site and removing the booking system.

The Chair asked whether any information was available from other Local Authorities on how they were successfully tackling fly tipping. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride agreed to provide the Board with reports on this from the APSI Network.

The Chair suggested that discussions on the Council's Better Together Approach should include how PPOs fit into this approach. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride informed the Board that although they weren't involved at this stage of discussions, they would feature in later discussions on the Better Together Approach. The Board agreed to recommend that discussions on the Council's Better Together Approach should include how PPOs fit into this approach.

The Chair commented that in some areas of the city there were problems with residents leaving rubbish on streets instead of using bins correctly. It was noted that officers were working with landlords to improve where bins are located for tenants. It was also noted that Waste Minimalisation Officers were assisting residents with disposing of rubbish correctly. It was reported that where it was deemed necessary, the Council would prosecute individuals for leaving rubbish on streets. The Director of Public Protection and Streetpride agreed to provide an update on this at a future meeting.

The Board Resolved:

- 1. to note the contents of the report, which included an update on PPO Team performance and funding, along with some updates requested by the Board at previous Communities Scrutiny Board meetings.**
- 2. to recommend that Cabinet consider increasing the opening hours of the Raynesway HWRC site and removing the booking system.**
- 3. to recommend that discussions on the Council's Better Together Approach should include how PPOs fit into this approach.**