

COMMUNITIES & TRANSPORT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting: 3 March 2025

At: 6.00 pm

PRESENT

Councillor Joe Barratt (Chair) in the chair; Councillor Matt Wynne (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Geoff Abell, Jon Byrne, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Dan Oliver,
Rachel Wise and Micheala Meikle.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting held on 20 January 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interests

Councillor

Interest

Jon Byrne Agenda Item 7 – ‘Scrutiny Review Panel – Stockport Cycling Strategic Review’ as a member of ‘Walk Ride Stockport’.

Officer

Interest

Mark Glynn Agenda Item 5 – ‘Transportation Capital Programme’ as the Chair of the Board of Totally Local Company.

3. CALL-IN

There were no call-in items to consider.

4. ONE STOCKPORT SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (OSSP) - ANNUAL REVIEW AND PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Mark Glynn (Director of Place Management); Chief Superintendent Lewis Hughes (Greater Manchester Police); and Aba Graham (Executive Director of Stockport Race Equality Partnership) attended the meeting and submitted a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on the key achievements of partnership working across partner organisations against OSSP Themes and Priorities during 2024/25 and to date.

The Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture & Sport (Councillor Helen Foster-Grime) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

Policing matters – Chief Superintendent Lewis Hughes (Stockport District Commander)

- In the light of last summer's riots and events across the world, investment had been made in cohesion, which included the Community Networks Key Members event on 12 November 2024 and the creation of the Stockport Communities Together Forum, the first meeting of which was due to take place in April 2025.
- A multi-faith Peace Lunch took place on 28 November 2024.
- The Hate Crime Awareness week event at Stockport County's ground was well received.
- Chief Superintendent Hughes was a member of the Greater Manchester Race Equality Panel and the Greater Manchester Ethnic Communities Network; mapping had been carried out over the ten districts in terms of equality and race and Stockport ranked highly in terms of the service provided by its communities.
- The new District Operating Model was in place with a huge investment in neighbourhood policing.
- All beats would be staffed with a Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) and efforts would be made to recruit the right people to engage and build relationships within the community.
- Visible policing made a huge difference within local communities both in terms of local people and businesses. Seeing visible leadership and communication from the police and a move towards the neighbourhood policing model was likely to yield greater levels of safety, confidence and trust.
- Members commented that there was still some way to go to improve communication between the police and community, although it was moving in the right direction.
- A Neighbourhood Performance Framework would be introduced to look at results, outcomes, arrests and solved crimes.
- There was a commitment for a neighbourhood policing officer to attend all Area Committees in the coming 12 months.
- The statistics around confidence and residents feeling safe within the borough reflected the performance of GMP in Stockport. Chief Superintendent Hughes undertook to check the data for information about different genders feeling safe.
- Members commented on evidence which suggested women and girls, in particular, felt safer in public spaces which were well cared for and stressed the importance of public space design taking account of guidance on making public spaces safe and welcoming.
- Chief Superintendent Hughes undertook to check the email routes for members of the public to report crimes to the Stockport policing teams.
- Stockport was meeting national targets for attendance at incidents and emergencies. 92.5 per cent of Grade One emergencies were attended within 15 minutes and 82 per cent of Grade Two emergencies were attended within one hour, with the national target being 65 per cent.
- Stockport exceeded the targets set locally within GMP.
- Four years ago GMP was the 43rd worst force in the country and it now ranked at 14th.

- Stockport was the top performing district within Greater Manchester for domestic abuse, child protection, robbery, theft and vehicle crime.
- Cumulatively Stockport was the top performing district across GMP.
- The Police had a role in education and had supported schools recently on knife crime.
- In terms of education within schools on hate and radicalisation, the police had invested in the Listening Alliance and was working to strengthen its relationships with young people, schools and colleges in addition to its current work on prevent and celebrating ethnic diversity.
- In terms of working with young people and changing hearts and minds on hate and radicalisation, the police gave a supporting rather than a leading role.
- The purpose of Operation Avro was to maximise results, ensure the police were seen in local communities, engaging and building public trust and confidence
- The most recent Operation Avro in Stockport had resulted in 65 arrests, with 15 'mopped up' later. Ten search warrants were executed, two of which related to large drugs factories. 145 vehicles were stopped, of which three were seized. 55 traffic offences reports were made with tickets and summons issued for low traffic offences. 15 stop and searches were carried out. It was deemed the most effective Operation Avro across GMP in the past twelve months and received 145,000 positive interactions on social media.
- The statistics comparing Stockport's performance with that of police forces across Greater Manchester were based on averages. Stockport's performance was on a par with that of Trafford and Stockport was one of the safest, if not the safest, borough in Greater Manchester. This success had led to a longer-term plan to make further performance improvements across the borough.
- The Victims Charter would be coming into effect later this year and would include statutory obligations to understand the needs of victims and maintain contact, particularly at key junctures during an investigation.
- In terms of domestic abuse, the focus was on victims to ensure that they were supported on their journey through the criminal justice system, and referrals to partner agencies were streamlined.
- There was a challenge in Stockport with electric and off-road bikes being stolen and used to commit crimes. It was a complex issue and the police were responding to community intelligence. Further initiatives included 'We Don't Buy Crime', DNA sprays and powers to seize bikes used in criminality. Events had been held with bike-owners about marking their property with smart tags. In the longer term, work was underway on test kits to check modifications on bikes which might lead to additional powers of seizure.
- There had been a particular spike in bike crime in November 2024 on the A6 which had targeted students and resulted in ten thefts over a two day period. Significant police resources had been mobilised and the perpetrators caught within 48 hours and later charged with ten robberies.
- A product performance had been commissioned on bikes and more statistics on bikes including the numbers seized and arrests made, would be available at Chief Superintendent Hughes' next meeting with the Scrutiny Committee.

Community and Race Relations Matters – Aba Graham (Executive Director, Stockport Race Equality Partnership)

- In relation to events in 2024, it was reported that Stockport Council had been proactive in recognising the contribution of the Race Equality Partnership and that council officers had reached out to the Partnership on a number of occasions.
- The events, including rioting, had left many people within the community feeling unsafe and hesitant to go out. The support provided by the council had been crucial.
- There was still a lot of unreported hate crime happening within the community.
- Strategic events had taken place involving local networks, community groups and the police to discuss the issues which affected the community, the inequalities which create barriers and what could be done to change that.
- Communication was the key to establishing respect between communities and ensuring communities valued one another's differences.
- It was noted that over two thirds of hate crime was race related; it was acknowledged that there was still a long way to go in terms of inequalities.
- There were many reasons for the under reporting of hate crime. Much of it was due to individuals having bad experiences in reporting crime, and those experiences were shared with the wider community creating a perception about reporting hate crime.
- The Partnership was working to assure the community about having trust in reporting hate crime.
- The lack of resources available to the networks was an issue and staff capacity meant that the Partnership was unable to support clients as it would wish so to do.
- Sector 3 held quarterly meetings bringing all the networks together.
- Members thanked the Partnership for its legal work supporting immigration matters. The cost implications of that legal work was significant and the Partnership relied on volunteers; it was felt that more value ought to be placed on the contribution made by those volunteers.
- It was important to recognise that many of the volunteers working for the Partnership has PhDs or had qualifications in engineering or accountancy. Those volunteers had qualified outside of the UK and their skills were under-utilised; they had the potential contribute a lot to Stockport's economy.
- More could also be done to harness the skills of the ethnically diverse elderly community; many within that community were willing volunteer but needed encouragement and confidence to join community groups.
- It was crucial to work with young people and to recognise that within some Stockport schools, pupils from one class might have as many as ten different languages and teachers require support to enable them to nurture all of their students.
- Members thanked Chief Superintendent Hughes and Aba Graham for their attendance at the meeting and for their contributions to the discussion.

RESOLVED – (1) That the OSSP 2024/25 Annual Update presentation be noted.

(2) That the priorities within each of the three themes in OSSP's Plan 2025-28 be noted.

5. TRANSPORTATION CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2025-26

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing details of the proposed Transportation capital programme for 2025/26 and where possible an indicative programme for future years.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynham) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The differences between the Highway Planned Maintenance Fund and the Local Highways Maintenance Fund were set out: the former was a programme of works set out by highways inspectors who reported on highways requiring repair and were added to a list of works; the latter was a central government supplement provided to local highways authorities for resurfacing, patching and to supplement a reactive programme.
- An additional 25 per cent of funding was available from the Local Highways Maintenance Fund and the council's use of that fund might be readjusted in order to capture the government's priorities and gain that additional funding.
- The council's overall aim was to maintain its highways network whilst using funding from different pots to ensure it met its funding requirements.
- It was reported that the cycle route on the part of the Transpennine Trail running between Brinksway and Cheadle had been damaged in the recent floods, with some parts of the pathway going into the river. The council was in the process of cataloguing all the damage caused across the borough resulting from the New Years Day flooding event and looking at what needed to be done to put it right.
- It was noted that there was a £40,000 fund for remedial works and signing on existing cycle routes, however this was unlikely to be sufficient to repair structural damage to cycle routes.
- Where extensive repairs were required on sections of the Transpennine route, the council would be looking for a specific funding pot; the work was unlikely to form part of its capital programme.
- In terms of regeneration work at Stockport Train Station, members enquired as to the proposals to facilitate pedestrian access through the station and whether this would use the existing underutilised underpass or by way of a footbridge. In response, it was stated that it was planned to take advantage of the topography and create an elevated two-tier approach. Extensive consultation was planned in relation to any proposed changes at the station.
- Members sought an update in relation to the development of a connecting ramp between Railway Road and the Thompson Street car park. In response it was stated that the £4 million which had been allocated to the Town Centre West would help to accelerate planned projects within Edgeley.
- In relation to the Greek Street bridge replacement, it was reported that the council had undertaken work to maximise the value from that project.
- Last year's flood strategy had included a proposed scheme at Woodbank Park; it was reported that the council's bid for a 50 per cent contribution from United Utilities towards that scheme had been unsuccessful.
- Officers undertook to report on the proposal for resurfacing the Dark Lane, Bredbury cycleway.
- The council had a list of access controls across the borough, some were privately owned and information was still being sought in relation to others. Area Committees would be asked to make final decisions in relation to council owned access controls.
- The Transport Capital Programme reflected a more structured approach to delivering 20 mph zones going forward.

- Funding was available for School Streets through TfGM for the management of residents, volunteers and school representatives. Funding was also available through the capital programme for poles, lines and signs associated with School Streets.
- The capital programme's designation of £28,000 towards highway trees was noted and officers undertook to report on whether newly installed trees were monitored.
- It was reported that when drains were surveyed, they were checked for roots entering the drainage system. The council was not resourced to undertake checks on highway trees to establish whether the roots were causing drainage issues. However, where there were reports of blockages, roots were cleared from drains.
- There was an ongoing recruitment issue for school crossing patrols and the council was actively trying to recruit additional school crossing patrol staff.
- In terms of road safety around schools, the council had assessed what physical changes could be made to improve the road layout and safety for children crossing roads.
- It was reported that there was a dual approach to road maintenance; one was work planned in advance funded by the capital programme and the other was reactive work, responding to defects on the network.
- The council had a statutory responsibility to focus on particular issues such as skid risk routes and high crash routes. It also prioritised the key route network for those with higher traffic volumes which had the biggest impact on the environment, the economy and movement of people around the borough. In terms of the council's reactive work, it had differing timelines for the repair strategic routes, A-B routes and residential roads.
- The differences between a Section 106 agreement and a Section 278 agreement were set out, with the former being broader in scope and the latter being more specific to transport and the provision of the highways network.
- The town centre car parking study, which had been allocated £50,000 from the capital programme, was designed to look at parking regulation orders within the town centre as it continued to grow, to determine whether they remained appropriate. The study would look at the use of parking permits within the town centre and at the town centres stock of car parks.
- The allocation of £40,000 for Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) was to complete the programme of monitoring areas where speed had been raised as a concern. It was likely that the council would use alternative SID technology in the future.
- £80,000 had been allocated towards the Section 19 report into the New Years Day flooding, which was aimed at understanding the causes, who the responsible bodies were and potential mitigation. It was also designed to provide evidence to obtain funding from the flooding statutory agencies.
- Residents had been encouraged to contribute to that study by using the flooding email address to share their concerns and provide evidence.

RESOLVED - (1) That the programme be noted.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services be recommended to approve the programme in line with the council budget.

6. STOCKPORT COUNCIL'S PROGRESS ON THE REMOVAL ACCESS CONTROLS

The Director of Place Management submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) informing members on the Council's approach to access controls and providing

members with an update on the Council's progress since the adoption of the Access Controls Policy.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynam) attended the meeting to respond to councillors' questions.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- The report referred to 36 access controls, but there were approximately 180 known access controls across the borough, with more being added to the list as reported by the council's Public Rights of Way officer and volunteers from interest groups. It was estimated that it would take between five and ten years for the council to remove all of the access controls.
- Where access controls were found to be damaged, the relevant Area Committee would be asked to determine whether it should be repaired or removed.
- In cases where access controls were removed between a quiet and a busy route, the council would consider alternative solutions to maintain the safety of route users.
- There had been an issue in finding contractors who were willing to undertake the work of removing access controls, but a contractor had been found and the work was now progressing.
- Members requested a briefing on the council's work in removing access controls.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

7. SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL - STOCKPORT CYCLING STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Communities and Transport Review Panel submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the review carried out by the Communities and Transport Scrutiny Review Panel into Stockport Cycling Strategic Review.

The following comments were made/ issues raised:-

- It was reported that the council promoted walking and cycling in Stockport with active travel schemes, but that it would consider how active travel might be improved.
- It was also reported that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority had undertaken a review into active travel in terms of safety and accessibility for women and it was hoped that their recommendations could sit alongside those made by the Scrutiny Review Panel.
- As a borough, residents, in particular women, were cycling less. More direct cycling routes were likely to have a positive impact on the numbers who cycle.
- The importance of consulting non-cyclists and other road users on active travel schemes was noted.
- It was further noted that the Scrutiny Review had originally intended to review walking and cycling but had narrowed the scope of the review to cycling. The Scrutiny Review was interested in reviewing all forms of active travel within the borough.
- Members commented that the council should move towards segregated cycle routes and floating bus stops.
- In light of the success of cyclops junctions in the borough, members suggested that the local authority should seek funding to introduce further cyclops junctions.

- Cycling should be considered as a core skill and efforts made to encourage cycling from a young age. The Bikeability scheme was available in all schools.
- It was noted that in some London boroughs, school streets involve multiple streets which enabled children to cycle all the way into school.
- Members thanked officers for their contribution to the review, particularly citing the compilation of data and bringing representatives from TfGM along with those from cycling interest groups to meetings of the Scrutiny Review.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the recommendations be endorsed.

8. SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

A representative of the Assistant Director for Governance submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out planned agenda items for the Scrutiny Committee's next meeting and Forward Plan items that fall within the remit of the Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.25 pm