

Report of:	To:	Date
Councillor Roger Berry, Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder	Council	26 January 2023

Executive Report: Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio Holder

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1** To inform council of progress on key objectives and the current position on issues within the Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Portfolio as set out below.

2. Community Safety

- 2.1** In partnership with Lancashire Police we hired the services of a company using a drug detection dog to visit licensed premises within Wyre over the weekends of 2 and 9 December 2022.
- 2.2** The vast majority of the licensed premises reported that it was a positive experience which helped them manage the ongoing threat of drug related crime. The plan is that this will be repeated at various times during the course of this year.
- 2.3** In the last quarter it has been reported that there has been an increase in possession of offensive weapons crime. This in part is due to the police undertaking searches relating to the misuse of drugs and during the searches weapons have been seized.
- 2.4** At the same time during the knife awareness week (14 to 20 November) the police undertook test purchasing in shops, builder's merchants, and corner shops. Even when the premises passed, the businesses were then visited to advise that the test had been undertaken, which ensures they are aware that selling such items to underage children is not tolerated.
- 2.5** Where failures were identified there was no malice intended, and the next time the business was tested it passed. The knife bin located on London Street continues to be well used and has seen machetes, lock knives and kitchen knives handed in, removing them from circulation, which can only be regarded as a positive step.
- 2.6** Following a spike in burglaries the police launched operation Top Defender, which was aimed at hot spot areas involving PCSO's

revisiting recent victims and the surrounding neighbourhood to provide safeguarding advice and cadets have also been delivering leaflets in the wider surrounding areas providing valuable information. The police have also been requesting CCTV footage in these areas to help identify those responsible. The impact of this work in the last two months has seen a reduction in the number of burglaries taking place.

- 2.7** At the Police and Crime Panel Meeting on 5 December 2022, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) mentioned how the increased uptake in policing numbers had strengthened the neighbourhood policing teams. In addition, it had enabled the extension of the proactive capability of the Force particularly in recent operations in the fight against organised crime, dealing with burglaries and robbery, the ability to give support to victims and increased road traffic policing which in many cases was indicating a linkage of untaxed, unlicensed and no MOT vehicles to serious and organised crime.
- 2.8** The next day I attended, along with our Chief Executive, a conference organised by the PCC to tackle violence against women and girls, which shared current best practice and I pledged Wyre Council's support in assisting the development of a countywide strategy to deal with the issues.

3. Housing

3.1 Homes for Ukraine Community Grant Scheme

The second panel to assess applications to the Fylde Coast Homes for Ukraine Community Grant Scheme met on 20 December 2022 to assess submissions from local community organisations supporting the integration of resettled Ukrainian guests onto the Fylde Coast.

- 3.2** There were just two bids for this funding round, both were from Wyre and both were successful. One was from the Garstang Ukraine Support Group supported by the Garstang Free Methodist Church, who were awarded eight thousand pounds and the second a further bid from the Ukrainian Community Hub at Rossall School, who were awarded ten thousand pounds. The support that both of these hubs are providing to those fleeing the war in Ukraine is invaluable in supporting our Ukrainian guests to settle into our community.

- 3.3** Support to be funded will include initiatives supporting the provision of legal and administrative advice on visas, employment, education, financial and other practical aspects of settling within the UK, additional support for children struggling with English and maths, English lessons for adults and a host of activities for Ukrainian children and support meetings for adults.

3.4 Care and Repair – Health and Housing Coordination role

Wyre Care and Repair has been funded by Lancashire County Council Adult Social Care under new Place Based Partnership arrangements to deliver a new health and housing coordination function. This service is being funded for an initial period of 18 months to work closely with the Intermediate Care Allocation Team and local hospital discharge teams to facilitate the timely hospital discharge of people who no longer need an acute hospital bed.

3.5 The service started in December and has already seen the Care and Repair Team supporting faster discharges, helping to avoid unnecessary admissions and improving outcomes for patients.

3.6 Warm Spaces

A network of warm spaces has been established across Wyre. We have worked closely with Lancashire County Council and Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) partners to establish this network and have helped many of these spaces to get established providing banners and communications support. In particular we have funded Fylde Coast YMCA to deliver a warm space at the Lofthouse Building in Fleetwood that provides a tea time warm space with a hot meal.

3.7 This warm space operates on Tuesdays and Fridays between 3.30pm and 6.30pm. It has been great to see community partners, local churches and libraries coming together to support those that need extra support to keep warm this winter.

3.8 Affordable Warmth Fund Interventions

Once again Care and Repair and the private sector housing team are supporting the delivery of affordable warmth interventions in the homes of vulnerable and low income residents. During the cold spell before Christmas a number of boiler repairs and replacements were supported in the homes of residents with acute health conditions where there was no heating.

3.9 Homelessness Grant Top Up - Support for homelessness pressures this winter

In December Government announced additional funding of £50 million that will be made available to all local housing authorities in England in 2022/23 through a top-up to the Homelessness Prevention Grant. This additional funding will be awarded to help prevent vulnerable households from becoming homeless and manage local homelessness pressures. We have been awarded an additional £41,695. This will be used to maximise upstream homelessness prevention to stop vulnerable households from becoming homeless, as well as helping to meet temporary accommodation costs where necessary.

4. Wyre Beach Management Scheme

4.1 The installation of site offices and enablement works are now underway, the widening of the access ramp is complete and the strengthening of the road and protection of services is nearing completion. The Phase 1 contract has been signed and the works are due to commence early in March 23.

4.2 As reported at the previous meeting inflation has raised the cost of the overall scheme beyond current approvals. An application for additional funding has been made and will be considered by the Environment Agency Large Project Review Group in January.

5. Emergency Response

- 5.1** The Engineering and Transport teams have been busy over the winter period ensuring the safety of our communities during the cold weather. The team gritted our car parks and public areas throughout the extended cold weather prior to Christmas including a number of council officers supporting Lancashire County Council through the gritting of footpaths in the urban centres.

6. Comments and questions

- 6.1** In accordance with procedure rule 11.3 any member of council will be able to ask me a question or make a comment on the contents of my report or on any issue, which falls within my area of responsibility. I will respond to any such questions or comments in accordance with procedure rule 11.5.