



COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY PANEL

20th November 2025 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Councillor Aisthorpe (in the Chair)
Councillors Bonner, Lindley, Kazmarek (substitute for Patrick), Shutt and Silvester.

Officers in attendance:

- Paul Caswell (Head of Safer Towns and Communities)
- Drew Hughes (Head of Strategy, Policy and Performance)
- Spencer Hunt (Assistant Director Safer and Stronger Place)
- Kath Jickells (Assistant Director Environment)
- Joanne Paterson (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Eve Richardson Smith (Head of Law and Governance and Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Anthony Snell (Traffic and Transport Manager)
- Claire Swainson (Strategic Lead, Finance)

Also in attendance:

- Leo Hammond (Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Humberside Police)
- Councillor Hudson (Portfolio Holder for Environment and Net Zero)
- Councillor Swinburn (Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport)
- Councillor Shepherd (Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities)

SPC.24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for this meeting from Councillors Patrick and Brookes.

SPC.25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received in respect of any item on the agenda for this meeting.

SPC.26 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting of the Communities Scrutiny Panel held on 4th September 2025 be approved as a correct record.

SPC.27 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for the panel.

SPC.28 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the current Forward Plan, and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

SPC.29 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Communities Scrutiny Panel.

At SPC.28, CCTV Update, Ms Paterson reported that there would be some quarterly performance updates to come forward.

At SPC.64, Weed Control, Ms Paterson noted that the trials would not be commencing until the new season in 2026.

A short discussion took place with members enquiring whether other members had put forward an area for the trials. Some members had yet to identify areas for the trials.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Net Zero outlined the challenges in trying to find a solution to the problem. Members asked officers how this could be progressed. Members suggested completing a survey and encouraging wider publicity through the council's communications team. It was agreed to ask people to identify suitable areas and share them with ward members via a communication message.

Under SPC.19, Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), Ms Paterson noted that progress against the action plan had been built into this panel's work programme. The Chair wished to ensure that both design out crime and VAWG was considered as part of the design phase of the Transport Hub project and that this be referenced in the forthcoming Cabinet report early next year. Officers confirmed that they would inform relevant officers of the need to include a paragraph which confirmed this had been or would be considered.

At JSPCT.16, Calling In of Decisions - Selective Licensing, Ms Paterson updated the panel with the outcome of the Cabinet decision from the 14th November 2025. The Chair noted that at a previous call-in, it had been agreed that a further update be brought back to this panel within a year of selective licensing being implemented. Officers agreed that this was acceptable.

AT JSPCT.17, Housing Overview, Ms Paterson noted that the housing register data was going to take a few months to cleanse and that details would be forwarded in due course.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That it be requested that both design out crime and Violence Against Women and Girls be considered as part of the design phase of the Transport Hub project and that this be referenced in the forthcoming Cabinet report early in 2026.
3. That a further update on Selective Licensing be brought back to this panel within a year of it being implemented.
4. That the Assistant Director Environment speak with relevant officers and arrange for a suitable communication message to be issued for residents regarding the weed control trials.

SPC.30 UPDATE FROM DEPUTY POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

The panel received a presentation from the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner on the work being undertaken and the commissioner's priorities.

The presentation covered the following:-

- Police and Crime Plan Aims
- Anti-social behaviour and crime performance
- Response performance
- Role of the Police and Crime Commissioner and work undertaken

Mr Hammond referred to the recent announcement from government that Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) would be abolished by 2028. The responsibilities of the role would move to either an Elected Mayor or council leaders at the end of the commissioners' terms in 2028. It was noted that for the Humberside area there were currently two Elected Mayors.

Members raised the following queries:-

- Members wished to clarify how the responsibilities of the PCC would be managed under two Mayors spread over two authorities, noting this could become quite complex given all the different governance arrangements in place.

Mr Hammond stated that a recent paper around government bodies had been released but did not make clear what an alternative future model would look like. Currently with an elected PCC it was clear who was accountable. Mr Hammond also emphasised that many police priorities had been shaped by PCCs.

- A member wished to compliment Mr Hammond on a great report but had concerns that the report stated that anti-social behaviour had reduced. He did not feel this was an accurate reflection of what was happening within his ward. He stated that most of his residents were not reporting crimes due to the lengthy process of reporting. He wished to understand whether this had dropped due to more people not reporting.
- The member also had concerns about e-scooters referring to a recent accident involving a teenager and wished to understand what more could be done to crack down on this issue.

Mr Hammond stated that with anti-social behaviour there would always be an element of underreporting. It was now about how the police would help to build back confidence in residents reporting. Mr Hammond felt the police needed to become more visible on social media which would help reduce negative comments.

In terms of e-scooters, they could only be used on private land and therefore could be confiscated and crushed if found by the police being used on public land, including on roads and footpaths. The PCC had also been trying to lobby government to tighten up legislation around purchasing these devices.

A member asked if Mr Caswell and his team worked closely with the PCCs office. Mr Caswell confirmed that they had a positive working relationship with the PCCs office and had worked with them closely on Safer Streets projects. The council also worked with them on investment and funding opportunities that were available.

Another member was concerned about future plans given that the current system worked well with Humberside being one of the best performing police authorities in the country. Mr Hammond outlined his concerns with any change to police boundaries.

The Chair suggested the panel visit the force control room. The panel agreed that a site visit would be beneficial.

RESOLVED –

1. That the presentation and update be noted.

2. That a site visit to the Humberside Police control room be arranged for members of this panel.

SPC.31 2025/26 QUARTER 2 COUNCIL PLAN RESOURCES AND FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The panel received a report from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Resources and Assets providing key information and analysis of the council's performance and resources position at the end of quarter two.

A member referred to the quarter two recycling rate being 38% and wished to clarify if this was still the figure. Ms Jickells advised that the council were operating around 38% across the board, but added that they did not hold this data on a ward level due to how the rounds were designed, although it was something they had looked at previously.

The Chair recalled that in previous years the East Marsh was identified as one of the lowest performing wards for recycling and asked if this could be looked into further. Ms Jickells advised that the council's Insights Team were looking at the data to identify feedback from the contractor, and some targeted work had already taken place around this.

Members discussed the challenges with the collection system, particularly within terrace housing as there was often no front garden, making it difficult to present bins for collection. The council needed to consider how this could best be addressed. Ms Jickells stated that there were alternative methods, however, these required significant capital investment.

The Chair concurred with the view that this was a key piece of work that needed to take place. Ms Jickells acknowledged the concerns raised but noted that the council was due to come to the end of its waste disposal contract in 2029 and it was possible that this may impact on future arrangements as waste collection and disposal was a whole system.

The Chair therefore suggested that a briefing note be provided to include improvements to and understanding about recycling rates in different communities, thereby allowing members the opportunity to consider further.

A member asked about enforcement of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) around schools, enquiring whether schools where CCTV had been installed had shown improvements. Mr Hunt explained where cameras had been installed, there was an initial spike in PCNs issued around non-compliance. These reduced over time demonstrating that these schemes were effective in terms of encouraging parents not to park outside schools.

A member asked about the Depot Rationalisation project and whether this was on track. Officers advised that there was some further work that was delaying things, however, it was hoped that by the end of the financial year this would be complete.

A member asked about the council's Tree Strategy stating that it seemed more focused on planting new trees. The member felt the tree strategy should also be focused on looking after mature trees and asked that this be applied more fairly.

Ms Jickells advised that the tree strategy worked on a risk-based approach, focusing on those trees that were presenting a higher risk from a safety perspective. Cllr Hudson provided information about the current extent of tree work waiting to be actioned.

The Chair referred to the environment revenue budget forecast variance of £3m, equating to a revenue underspend of 15.1%. The Chair noted that the report outlined a range of operational measures however wished to understand how these pressures resulted in such a large underspend.

In terms of the underspend, Ms Jickells advised that this came from income received through, for example, increased work at the port.

In addition, the Chair asked how the £3m helped with other pressures. Ms Jickells stated that it had to be looked at in the round as part of the budget monitoring processes.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a briefing note be provided for members of this panel to cover improvements to and understanding of recycling rates in different communities.

SPC.32 CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV) UPDATE

The panel considered a report from the Director Economy, Environment and Infrastructure that provided an update on the Council's Public Space CCTV function, including performance information which had been developed to meet the aims of the Council's Public Space CCTV Strategy 2024-2027.

Mr Caswell set out the background to the report and highlighted some key points for consideration.

Members felt there appeared to be a rise in fly tipping locally and emphasised the need for more cameras. Mr Caswell explained that with any cameras there was always a risk of damage which came at a considerable cost. However, most cameras were protected by anti-climbing paint which acted as a deterrent.

Members were aware of the resource implications of deploying more cameras but wished to understand the process to request additional surveillance in a particular area. Mr Hunt encouraged members to use the council's online portal to raise concerns within their wards, as sometimes there were other ways to deal with certain issues.

Mr Caswell stressed the importance of encouraging residents to report crimes through 101 and *my community alert* as this helped build up a clearer picture of hot spot areas. He further added that the more intelligence the council received, the better response that could be deployed.

Mr Hunt also added that there was a fine balance between capital investment of new cameras and the resources required to operate it, and that any future investment would need to take ongoing revenue costs into consideration.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a site visit to the CCTV control room be arranged for members of this panel and that this be extended out to all elected members.

SPC.33 REFERRAL FROM EQUANS WORKING GROUP

The panel received the following referral from the Equans Working Group meeting held on 22nd October 2025:

The Communities Scrutiny Panel are requested to support a recommendation that a conversation be had with the three relevant Portfolio Holders as part of the process for the fifth Gateway Review. This was with a view to ensuring the relevant portfolio holders involvement in the review.

RESOLVED – That the recommendation from the Equans Working Group requesting that a conversation be had with the three relevant Portfolio Holders as part of the process for the fifth Gateway Review be supported by this panel.

SPC.34 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE 2025/26

The panel considered a report from the Interim Chief Executive providing panel members with the opportunity to reflect on the progress of the panel's work programme at the half year stage and providing a formal opportunity for the panel to update its work programme.

Ms Paterson advised the panel that a number of new requests for agenda items had come forward for the panel meeting in January 2026. Ms Paterson was conscious that there was already a lot on the agenda and asked the panel which items they would like to prioritise.

The panel agreed to remove Homelessness and Rough Sleeping from the work programme. The panel also agreed that Housing Enforcement issues be brought forward as a briefing note rather than a report to a future meeting.

The panel agreed to prioritise two upcoming pre-Cabinet reports and wished to add both the PSPSO Review (Operation Yellow Fin) and the Salix and

Crematorium report to their work programme. The panel also wished to prioritise the Local Nature Recovery Strategy prior to it going out for consultation. This was also added to the work programme.

In terms of the Clean and Green Initiative, the panel felt this could be dealt with via the Street Scene and Enforcement Cabinet Working Party and therefore did not necessarily feel it warranted inclusion on the work plan.

Ms Paterson noted that she would also add into the work programme the two additional site visits requested to both the CCTV control room and Police control room.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That Homelessness/Rough Sleeping be removed from this panel's work programme.
3. That housing enforcement issues be brought forward as a briefing note rather than a report to a future meeting of this panel.
4. That both the PSPSO Review (Operation Yellow Fin) and the Salix and Crematorium pre-Cabinet reports and also the Local Nature Recovery Strategy be added to this panel's work programme.

SPC.35 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were four questions for the Portfolio Holder at this meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities received the following question from Councillor Bonner:

"As a Councillor, I'm bringing forward concerns about public safety at taxi ranks in North-East Lincolnshire received from residents. These areas, especially late at night and after licensed establishments close, can unfortunately become focal points for incidents affecting the safety of both taxi drivers and members of the public. As North East Lincolnshire Council is a member of White Ribbon UK, the leading charity in England and Wales, which works to prevent violence against women and girls', this is timely due to the closeness to White Ribbon Day, which this year falls on November 25th.

I am asking the portfolio holder to carry out the following actions:

1. *Carry out a review of the current street lighting at taxi ranks throughout North East Lincolnshire and make improvements where necessary.*
2. *Explore the possibility of installing CCTV at strategic taxi rank locations.*
3. *Report back to this panel any recommendations arising from the above actions.*

The intention is to enhance safety and deter undesirable behaviour at our taxi ranks, benefiting the public, particularly lone women and girls and those working in the taxi trade."

Councillor Shepherd responded that he would refer this question to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) operational group for further investigation. He advised that he did not have the statistics to support the concerns raised by Councillor Bonner at present. However, when further evidence was available a further report could be brought back to this panel.

The Portfolio Holder for Safer and Stronger Communities received the following question from Councillor Aisthorpe:

The recent Youth Justice report stated that youth reoffending in North East Lincolnshire is low at 28.9%. That sounds positive, and I recognise that a lot of good work is being done to prevent young people entering the criminal system.

However, this figure only reflects proven offences and therefore only includes young people who have been caught and convicted for reoffending. It does not include missed curfews, skipped programmes, breaches of Youth Justice plans, or persistent antisocial behaviour that never reaches the courts. These are often managed through warnings or additional support, meaning the headline percentage may not fully reflect what communities are experiencing.

I raise this because these patterns still indicate that behaviour is continuing, even if it has not resulted in a new conviction. This isn't about denying young people the chance to change, early support is essential, but for residents who face repeated antisocial behaviour, these 'non-conviction' incidents matter just as much, and they give a fuller picture of what is happening on the ground.

This context also raises a wider question about why the youth reoffending figure appears low. Is it the result of successful intervention work and a change of behaviour, or are some young people continuing to cause harm without escalation and remaining on support plans instead?

In the East Marsh ward, for example, we have seen repeated and serious youth-related incidents over the past year. These involve a small number of young people, but the impact on residents has been significant. Incidents include arsons, fireworks thrown at people, vehicles vandalised or broken into, homes targeted, windows smashed, cars being stolen, knife carrying and drug-related activity. Residents describe the situation as the worst they have ever known.

While national policy rightly focuses on prevention and giving young people the chance to turn things around, for residents living with constant damage and fear, the approach can sometimes feel very one-sided. People want to see support for young people who are trying to change, but also clear and timely consequences when behaviour continues or escalates.

My concern is that, in the effort to keep reoffending figures low, the balance may have tipped too far towards ongoing support without escalation. When young people repeatedly breach plans or curfews despite multiple interventions, it raises reasonable questions about whether the current approach is providing enough consequence or incentive to change.

I would therefore ask the portfolio holder to bring a further report to scrutiny, with anonymised data, which helps identify any patterns or gaps in how persistent youth antisocial behaviour and repeated breaches of Youth Justice plans are handled in practice.

This should include how often cases are escalated, how often they remain on support-only plans, how long young people stay on support without improvement, and the criteria used to decide whether escalation should take place.

This would help scrutiny, and the public, gain a clearer understanding of what is happening in practice. We all want young people to receive the right support, but we also need confidence that when interventions are not working, the system is strong enough to act in a timely and effective way to protect both them and the wider community.

Councillor Shepherd responded that the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team led initial prevention work, with the Youth Justice Service (YJS) and police supporting children through Acceptable Behaviour Contracts when there is no offence or insufficient evidence. Formal referrals to YJS came only from the police when a child was linked to an offence, admitted involvement, or could be prosecuted. A key focus was diversion, which kept children out of court and the criminal justice system. This approach was quicker, helped children understand the consequences of their actions, repaired harm, and avoided the damaging effects of convictions, which research showed increased the likelihood of re-offending. Diversion also supported families by addressing behaviour, education, health, and wellbeing, while offering restorative justice opportunities such as community projects or direct engagement with victims.

Diversion could be informal and voluntary or formal through youth conditional cautions, which may include monitored curfews, though compliance rates were high. All outcomes were agreed in multi-agency decision meetings chaired by the police. Re-offending was tracked nationally by the Ministry of Justice and locally through internal systems, with only confirmed offences counted. Bail curfews remained a police responsibility, while electronic curfews managed by YJS were overseen by the courts. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child underlined that custody should be a last resort, used only for serious offences, and children should retain their liberty unless they posed a clear danger.

Youth Justice plans were tailored to each child, with interventions intensified when needed to reduce offending and promote a pro-social identity, guided by child-first principles and timely support. For a small group of frequent re-offenders, some offences were linked to exploitation and modern slavery, meaning these children were also considered victims, with strategic

partnerships meeting weekly to address their needs. Overall, while a minority of children did re-offend, the majority benefitted from YJS interventions, which delivered positive outcomes and helped prevent further offending.

Councillor Shepherd advised that a further report could be brought back to scrutiny as requested, with anonymised data showing how persistent antisocial behaviour and repeated breaches were handled.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Infrastructure and Transport received the following question from Councillor Kazmarek:

“With the recent article in the Grimsby Telegraph highlighting the rise in homeless prevention duties to this council. What is the portfolio holder doing to ensure nobody facing eviction will be homeless this winter?”

Councillor Swinburn responded that at present, the Renters Rights Act had not led to a significant rise in households owed a housing duty, whether for prevention or relief. The housing team continued to manage cases effectively, working with households served with section 21, section 8, or notices to quit, and offering support to prevent homelessness.

While there was a slight increase in section 21 approaches between Q4 2024/25 and Q1 2025/26, this was not substantial enough to suggest an impact from the Act. Fluctuations in section 21 approaches occurred throughout the year without clear cause, and the average of 34.4 cases per quarter remained manageable for the authority.

The service encouraged anyone at risk of homelessness to make contact as early as possible, allowing maximum time to intervene and prevent loss of housing, whether the notice comes from landlords or family and friends. Currently, Severe Weather Emergency Protocols (SWEP) were in place, ensuring that anyone facing homelessness, regardless of status or priority, was offered accommodation. Members of the public were asked to notify the housing team if they saw someone sleeping rough, providing a brief description and location so that outreach could be made and accommodation offered.

The portfolio holders present received the following question from Councillor Patrick:

“Is there any item on today's agenda that an officer of the council has requested/suggested that you do not speak on or suggested you respond to in a certain way if asked?”

The portfolio holders did not feel that the question bared any relevance.

The Chair reiterated that legal advice had been sought on the question, and it had been agreed that it could be accepted.

RESOLVED

1. That the questions and responses be noted.
2. That Councillor Bonner's question be referred to the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) operational group for further investigation.
3. That a further report be brought back to this panel with anonymised data showing how persistent antisocial behaviour and repeated breaches were handled.

SPC.36 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from members of this panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 4.00 p.m.