

## NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 SERIOUS ACQUISITIVE CRIME AND VIOLENT CRIME/ COMMUNITY SAFETY

Thursday, 21 March 2013

**COUNCILLORS PRESENT:** Councillor Danielle Stone (Chair), Councillors Mick Ford and Brian Sargeant

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** Chief Inspector Max Williams Northants Police  
Neil Bartholomey Chair Northampton Pub watch

**Officers** Debbie Ferguson Safer Stronger Partnership Manager  
Tracy Tiff Scrutiny Officer  
Joanne Birkin Democratic Services Officer

#### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence from the meeting were received from Councillor Christopher Malpas and Sharon Henley Co-optee.

#### 2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2013 were approved and signed by the Chair.

#### 3. DEPUTATIONS / PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

#### 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

#### 5. CHAIR'S DRAFT REPORT

The Panel considered the Chair's draft report.

The Scrutiny Officer confirmed that all the witness had been contacted and had confirmed the accuracy of the information given in the report. She also explained the report submission and monitoring process.

The Panel considered the conclusions and key findings of the report. The main points of their discussion were as follows:-

- Councillors needed to be given regular updates on the demographics on their wards and on the Community Safety Partnership work undertaken in their area. Additional recommendations were included to reflect this.
- Encouraging the public to use open spaces would help to reduce crime and reduce the "broken window" effect.

- Enhancement projects can be useful but proper consideration needed to be given to what happened when these projects came to an end and on-going maintenance was required.
- Information collected in Accident and Emergency departments needed to be reviewed as to how it was used. Information needed to be passed to the relevant partners in a timely manner. The proposed recommendation was strengthened to reflect this.
- The Panel discussed the town centre and the night time economy. They were advised that the street pastors were seeking a central location to act as a base. The Police were also introducing mobile custody suites to provide facilities to quickly remove people who had been detained because of drunken behaviour.
- Neighbourhood Wardens played a vital role and action needed to be taken to ensure that they were properly trained with specific focus on on-going crime prevention and community safety training.
- Members of the volunteer sector should be encouraged to become involved with the Community Safety Partnership.
- An additional recommendation was included to maximise the work done by the Community Payback scheme. Work should be targeted to agreed priorities.
- Links between Enterprise Management Services (EMS) and Northampton Borough Council be strengthened to ensure faster information sharing and faster responses to dealing with service issues.

The Chair commented that she felt that it had been a really in depth review and that she was very pleased with results. She thanked all of the Members, Co-optees, Officers and witnesses for their input into the report.

## **AGREED**

1. The final Review report: Serious Acquisitive Crime and Violent Crime/Community Safety be confirmed, subject to the additions as shown in the report attached to these minutes.
2. The Chair of the Panel will present the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 April 2013.

# Minute Item 6

## Northampton Borough Council

### Overview and Scrutiny

#### Report of Scrutiny Panel 1 – Serious Acquisitive Crime, Violent Crime and Community Safety **Final version 21 March 2013**

#### 1 Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:

- To investigate, as a benchmark, Northampton's crime statistics in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify 'hotspots' in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify the impact that serious acquisitive crime and violent crime has on the residents of Northampton
- To identify the serious acquisitive crime and violent crime issues that Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other Agencies, can have an impact upon

1.2 A copy of the scope is attached at Appendix A.

#### 2 Context and Background

2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed at its work programming event in March 2012 agreed to include a review of serious acquisitive crime, violent crime and community safety. These were issues that had been identified by a number of members of the public as key concerns. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee commissioned Scrutiny Panel 1 to undertake the review. An in-depth review commenced in May 2012 and concluded in April 2013.

2.2 A Scrutiny Panel was established comprising Councillor Danielle Stone (Chair); Councillor David Palethorpe (Vice Chair); Councillors Mick Ford, Brendan Glynane, Christopher Malpas, Dennis Meredith, Brian Sargeant and Chief Inspector Max Williams, Northants Police, Sharon Henley, Northants Police, and Neil Bartholomey, Chair, Northampton PubWatch, (Co-Optees).

2.3 This review links to the Council's corporate priorities - Corporate Priority 2 - Invest in safer, cleaner neighbourhoods, creating an attractive, clean and safe environment.

2.4 The Scrutiny Panel established that the following needed to be investigated and linked to the realisation of the Council's corporate priorities:

- Context:
  - Local statistics
  - Demographics – local and national

- Baseline data:
  - National crime statistics
  - Local crime statistics
- Synopsis of various research documents and other published documents
- Evidence from expert internal witnesses
- Evidence from expert external witnesses
- Evidence from ward Councillors
- Site visits

### **Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)**

2.5 There are four main types of Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC): -

- Burglary from Dwelling
- Theft from vehicles
- Theft of vehicles
- Robbery

2.6 Since 2008/09 there has been a decline for all four types of serious acquisitive crime. In 2011/12 however, there are increases in all categories apart from burglary of a dwelling.

2.7 Theft from vehicles has increased the largest amount; there had been a particular spike in October/ November 2012. There would be further work done to see if there were any correlations in where a car was parked, type of car etc. There are obviously many factors that could influence this.

2.8 In all areas of crime, statistics can only be based on reported crime.

2.9 Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) are placed in groups of fifteen .The groupings are defined by the Home Office as having enough similar characteristics to allow reasonable comparison of their performance, this is known as the Most Similar Group (MSG).

2.10 Northampton is very much average in its MSG in relation to SAC. In March 2012, the crime figures per thousand population detailed that Northampton was 16.447 against the group figure of 16.451.

2.11 Information on SAC trends showed that vehicle crime, which had been reducing over the last three years, has been increasing. Both thefts from motor vehicles and thefts of motor vehicles have increased by more than 20%. Northampton is below average in relation to domestic burglary at 12.739 as opposed to 14.707, and theft from vehicle at 7 rather than 7.108. It is higher in robbery at 1.772 as opposed to 1.631 and theft of vehicle 2.343 as opposed to 1.856.

2.12 Theft from vehicles had been decreasing but since 2011 it has been showing a continuous increase. Locally there has been an increase in thefts relating to improperly secured vehicles where windows or doors have been left open. There are also cycles which relate to whether criminals known for this type of activity are in custody.

2.13 Figures for violence resulting in injury have remained consistent, whereas violence without injury has increased. Numbers of serious sexual offences have also been increasing. There has been the introduction of “Serenity”, a support centre/ advice centre for women who have suffered sexual assault. This had been in operation for about 18 months, backed by funding from the NHS and the Police. It is felt that the support that they offer could be leading to maintaining the increased level of reported sexual offences.

### **Census 2011**

2.14 The Census data provided to the Scrutiny Panel detailed the estimated proportion of White British population has reduced by 3.8%, but the estimated proportion of White: Other increased from 4.2 % to 6.5%, compared to 2010 estimates. This group is the BME group most likely to be affected by crime, as both the victim and the perpetrator. Most migrants are also in the age group which is most likely to be affected by crime. It is most important to be able to identify who these individuals are and what factors affect their experience of crime. There needs to be an analysis of whether there are other factors that need to be taken into consideration, for example are there language or cultural barriers to be overcome.

2.15 Northampton has a higher than average level of males and females in the 20-40 year age category. This is the category that is statistically more likely to be the victim or perpetrator of a crime.

2.16 With regard to ethnicity, there is a perception that there is a higher proportion of white other nationals, particularly Eastern European, than actually appears to be borne out by the data.

### **Breakdown of violence by location category**

2.17 Violent crime is categorised under three location types by Northamptonshire Police; domestic violence, town centre violence and residual violence, Residual violence tends to make up 40% of all violent crime, whereas domestic and town centre comprise approximately 30%. and this has been consistent over the last three years.

- Residual violence occurs outside of the town centre and includes incidents around schools and educational premises.
- There may still be issues of non-reporting.

### **2011/12 Performance Data by sector**

2.18 The sectors are based on the neighbourhood and policing areas.

2.19 The central area demonstrates an increase in violent crime figures over the summer. Conversely, violent crime figures in the north sector, which houses the university, decreased over the summer.

2.20 There have been significant changes in the provision of night-time entertainment over the last 12 months. The closure of Lava and Ignite has meant that there is no nightclub provision in the St Peters Square area, therefore physical location of clubbers has changed. The closure of Fat Cats and the Balloon Bar on Bridge Street due to a fire in January 2012 has also affected the numbers of people on the streets in that area. Numbers had been reduced a little whilst these bars have been closed.

2.21 Northampton has a higher than average level of males and females in the 20-40 year age category. This is the category that is statistically more likely to be the victim or perpetrator of a crime.

2.22 With regard to ethnicity, there is a perception that there is a higher proportion of white other nationals, particularly Eastern European, than actually appears to be borne out by the data.

### **3. Evidence Collection**

3.1 Evidence was gathered from a variety of sources:

#### **3.2 Background data**

- Performance Data by Crime Type
- 2011/12 Performance Data by Crime Type
- 2011/12 Performance Data by Sector
- 2011/12 Hotspot Location Performance Data by Priority Wards
- Most Similar CSP Comparative Performance
- Performance Overview – SAC and Violent Crime (Details at Appendix B)
- Population Demographics:
  - Gender
  - Age
- Ethnicity
- Density (Details at Appendix C)
- Breakdown of Violence Offences in Northampton by Location Type (Details at Appendix D)
- Serious Acquisitive Crime and Violent Crime Problem Profile (Details at Appendix E)
- Northampton Population Ethnicity by country of birth. (Details at Appendix F)

#### **3.3 Core Questions**

3.3.1 The Scrutiny Panel produced a set of core questions that it put to key witnesses over a series of meetings. (Copy at Appendix G).

3.3.2 Key witnesses provided a response to these core questions at the meetings of the Scrutiny Panel held on 10 October 2012, 26 November, 10 January 2013 and 4 February.

3.3.3 Key points of evidence: -

### **Leader of the Council, Northampton Borough Council (NBC)**

#### **Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)**

- Most of the work in tackling issues in relation to SAC is through the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Leader of the Council regularly attends meetings of the CSP.
- Work is also carried out by Neighbourhood Wardens, particularly providing advice.
- When specific issues are identified, meetings are held with the relevant ward Councillors and partner Agencies, with the aim of identifying actions.
- The Leader of the Council regularly meets with the Police.
- Rigorous data analysis of reported crimes within areas is produced, which allows “hotspots” to be identified. This, together with information provided by the Neighbourhood Wardens, is used by the Police to help target resources.
- Resources are scarce for all organisations, but by using analysis of data and working in partnership, available resources are used to their maximum potential.
- There are some historical geographical and infrastructure issues that cause difficulties in certain localities. Work has been undertaken in some areas via CASPAR Projects, for example Spring Boroughs. This approach has been rolled out Borough-wide. All projects commence with an environmental audit of the area. Work is currently being undertaken in Spencer and Kings Heath wards.
- The Leader of the Council confirmed that he felt that the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner should include setting the direction of policing in Northamptonshire and bringing Partners together. There also needs to be a further exploration of the use of restorative justice and the wider criminal justice system.

#### **Violent Crime**

- Neighbourhood Wardens and the Licensing Team, NBC, work together in early recognition of problems, aiming to prevent escalation.
- The Licensing Team works with partners in inspections and enforcement.
- The Council has an important role in the enablement of data sharing. For example, accident and emergency statistics, helping the Police to identify where Officers need to be deployed.
- The Council is active in awareness campaigns. For example: “Tackle the problem before it kicks off” campaign which focussed on the increase in domestic violence during football tournaments.
- The Council is a partner in work led by Women’s Aid, helping victims of domestic violence to access safe accommodation.

- Alcohol misuse remains at the centre of a number of problems associated with violent crime. People have changed their pattern of behaviour and are coming into the town centre later at night, often after already having consumed alcohol. Since the extension of the licensing hours, the Police no longer deal with problems relating to closing time, but deal with a constant stream of incidents.
- A lot of information is available that enables partners to identify hotspots and target resources as effectively as possible.

### **Chair, Community Safety Partnership (CSP)**

- The Chair of the CSP considered that the Community Safety Partnership was strong. A robust evidence base details the difference it has made, which is further reflected by the retention of its funding.
- There is a good working relationship between Council departments, which are further enhanced in locations such as the office at Fish Street, where several Agencies are in daily contact.
- Currently Housing Services is not represented on the CSP.
- Strong working relationships with Northamptonshire County Council are in existence. There are no conflicting strategies or policies. Resources are maximised.
- Although the Police and Police Crime Commissioner would be acting for the whole of the county, they would need a strong sense of specific issues that related to Northampton town itself.
- In order to be effective at the prevention of violent and serious acquisitive crime, there needs to be more education about the kind of town that Northampton aspires to be, with a stronger sense of positive quality of life issues. How the community feels about the town will help to protect it, particularly if there is a strong positive element.

### **Director of Housing, Northampton Borough Council, (NBC)**

- The Director of Housing, NBC, has two key roles - the provider of Council housing and a wider strategic role overseeing the quality of housing and the provision of housing throughout the Borough.
- Work is carried out on Council housing to ensure that security measures such as locks and doors are fitted to a required safety standard.
- When problems or “hotspots” are identified, for example, the suitability of entrance doors to blocks of flats, they are replaced as part of a rolling programme.
- Advice is received from Crime Prevention Teams on matters such as locks and doors.
- Neighbourhood Wardens are in daily contact with Housing Officers and bring potential problems to attention at an early stage. Neighbourhood Wardens offer advice and assistance to tenants. They also help in running Crime Awareness Campaigns, such as problems relating to cold callers.
- A number of housing policies are currently at the consultation stage.
- The Council's new Tenancy Policy and Agreement will have an impact.
- Northampton Borough Council is taking part in the Chartered Institute of



Housing Cleaner and Safer Estates initiative.

## **Neighbourhood Wardens, Northampton Borough Council**

### **Serious Acquisitive Crime**

- Neighbourhood Wardens undertake the following activities which contribute to addressing issues of serious acquisitive crime:
  - uniformed patrols within their designated areas,
  - acting as a point of contact for the public,
  - relaying intelligence gathered to the Police.
  
- Neighbourhood Wardens carry out the following activities that assist in the prevention of serious acquisitive crime:
  - uniformed patrols within their designated areas,
  - providing reassurance and basic crime prevention advice to residents,
  - acting as a point of contact to refer enquiries to appropriate partner organisations including the Police,
  - participating in various joint operations with partner organisations e.g. pre-Christmas operations in town centre with police (Op Trojan etc.),
  - practical crime prevention work such as use of anti-climb paint,
  - arranging for overgrown shrubbery to be cut back, joint work in schools including Junior Warden Scheme,
  - some involvement in alley clearance and gating schemes.
  
- The Neighbourhood Warden's local knowledge and the fact that they provide a visible recognisable presence has a significant reassuring effect.
- In the town centre, Neighbourhood Wardens work together with the Town Centre Rangers who have a strong focus on retail crime prevention.
- The main issues and barriers to successfully addressing serious acquisitive crime (SAC) are reductions in funding and its impact on the resources available in all partner organisations.
- The majority of work above involves working with partner organisations.
- Northampton Borough Council can assist in tackling SAC by allowing Neighbourhood Wardens to continue to work as at present to address the issues. They can also continue the programme of installation of security measures in communal areas of NBC owned residential accommodations, for example, CCTV in lifts in flats and to ensure that suitable lighting is provided to areas of local authority owned land such as housing areas and parks.
- Neighbourhood Wardens consider that the Police and Crime Commissioner can assist in dealing with the issues of SAC by facilitating the coordination of work undertaken by various partners. The aim should be that resources are targeted effectively to allow for prevention work to be undertaken.
- Neighbourhood Wardens suggest that systems for briefing partner organisations are improved to ensure a clear two way flow of information. They further suggest that the systems for dealing with calls via 101 are

improved as Neighbourhood Wardens have received a significant amount of feedback about the length of time it takes for calls to this number to be answered.

### **Violent crime**

- Neighbourhood Wardens consider that the high visibility patrols will have some deterrent effect on violent crime. Some of the intelligence gathered and passed on by Neighbourhood Wardens will relate to violent crime.
- Some of the activities detailed above will also have an impact on the prevention of violent crime; in particular, the frequent presence of a familiar, uniformed officer in an area can act as an effective deterrent to all types of crime.
- Neighbourhood Wardens hope that the long term impact of education schemes such as the Junior Warden scheme will be effective in reducing all types of crime.
- In the town centre, in particular, Neighbourhood Wardens deal with street drinkers and rough sleepers. It is anticipated that some of the actions taken have an impact on preventing violent crime.
- Neighbourhood Wardens feel that lack of funding is the main barrier to successfully addressing violent crime.

### **Command Support section of the Crime and Justice Command, Northants Police**

#### **Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC)**

- The Crime Support department's primary role is to tackle Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC). It has a number of elements:
  - Intelligence function
  - Burglary and Autocrime Teams
  - Integrated Offender Management (IOM)
- Robbery is a crime type investigated by the core CID department.
- This investigative and diversion structure supports the District Policing model and vice versa, by default linking into the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Northampton Business Support Group (BSG) plans.
- These departments are working to priorities set by the Police Authority following wide public consultation.
- As well as prevention through detection of crime and reducing re-offending through Integrated Offender Management (IOM), the Force links in with the wider community in terms of preventative strategies via District Safer Community Teams but also its Community Safety Department with crime prevention officers, Neighbourhood Watch and other community networks. All of this work is supported by an overarching Communications Strategy, communicated to media outlets via the Media and Communications department. This includes both day to day preventative messages but also reports upon successes and operational activity in order to strengthen

community confidence.

- In terms of 'reduction of re-offending', IOM works with offenders on release from prison with licence conditions to engage with Probation. They are assessed and their needs are assessed against a number of pathways out of offending which include:

- Accommodation
- Mental and Physical Health
- Education Training and Employment
- Attitudes Thinking and Behaviours
- Drugs and Alcohol
- Finance
- Children and Families

- Various services are provided in order to tackle these aspects in order to divert offenders away from crime.
- Reduction of re-offending in Northampton could be helped if it featured as a Borough priority in support of the Community Safety Strategy linking in with the below strategic structures.
- There appears to be greater mobilisation of Borough resources in other areas outside of Northampton, with prevention of criminality in mind with dynamic mobilisation of staff to support preventative activity.
- Joint Action Groups come together in order to problem solve and activate this resource. This structure does not appear to be in place across Northampton.
- At district level, the District Commander links into the BSG and CSP and ward level engagement is managed by the relevant Sector Inspector and their teams.
- A Reducing Re-offending County Strategy now exists to ensure a joined up approach across all agencies and is built around the need and provision of the 7 pathways as outlined above.
- A County Reducing Re-offending Board (RRB) meets bi monthly as part of the new County Community Safety Coordination Group (CCSCG).
- The Board is chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable and the Northampton Borough Council representative is the Chair of the CSP and the Chief Executive with portfolio leadership relating to accommodation is the Chief Executive of Northampton Borough Council.
- The Command Support section feels that the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner in preventing and tackling SAC and violent crime is directing funding and resources against these aspects as they see fit and in line with their manifesto and mandate.
- The Command Support section feels there is potential for increased sharing of information between departments e.g. Housing in support of protecting the vulnerable and reducing risk of offending

## **Acting Deputy Head of Community Safety, Northants Police**

### **Violent Crime**

## **Background**

- Ahead of the performance year 2012/2013 the Force in setting, with the Police Authority and local communities, its local policing plan made the reduction of violence a key priority. At that time the Force appointed a Force Strategic Violence lead at Chief Superintendent level. Current Force performance showed a 9.1% reduction YTD (580+ fewer offences) and movement from 8th to 6th in MSG. The rest of the year predictions give a high level of confidence of continued sustained reductions.

## **Strategy**

- Violence reduction is highlighted as a key Force priority.
- New Force violence reduction strategy is developed, informed by analysis, professional judgement and experience. This strategy identified 5 key themes for focus (domestic abuse, serious sexual offending, night time economy, schools and young people and alcohol harm).
- Operation Challenge launched as a vehicle to drive activity to achieve the aims of the violence reduction strategy, (reduce violence, increase resolutions for violence, increase satisfaction with victims of violence).
- Chief Constable and Police Authority allocated funding to deliver strategy.

## **Governance**

- Strategic lead is appointed at Chief Superintendent level.
- Chief Inspector and Inspector investment made to drive daily activity and deliver sustainability in violence reduction.
- Operational leads identified at Chief Inspector level for each of the agreed five key themes.
- Strategy developed into a strategic performance plan, containing actions, owned by the five operational leads to deliver the aims of overall strategy and performance improvements.
- Monthly strategic violence governance process in place that identifies violence related risk issues and delivers operational responses to mitigate.
- Robust daily management places re-enforced to manage violence performance and related incidents.

## **Operational activity**

- Review and restructure of Operation Nightsafe, the Force operational response to the policing of the local night time economy. This is supported by a bespoke intelligence and briefing process - supported by individual training of Inspectors relating to the expectations required of them concerning this activity.
- Frontline officer briefings delivered focused on "Early interventions and positive action".
- Small pro-active capability created to target repeat violence offenders and those subject to use of preventative powers.

- Increased usage of preventative powers (arrest of drunken persons that present risk of vulnerability to themselves, Section 27 powers). Persons so arrested are subject to visits by this resource to reinforce earlier interventions.
- Use of custody village approach in night time economies to reduce frontline officer abstractions and deliver low tolerance message to communities.
- Robust management processes put into place to manage offenders wanted for violence offences, offenders on bail.
- Regular visits made to addresses of repeat domestic abuse victims and offenders. These are subject to risk assessment by PVP to ensure consistency and protection of vulnerability is paramount.
- Joint campaign launched with Northamptonshire Rape and Incest Crisis Centre (NRICC) to reduce sexual offending and sexual health and to undertake research with victims in order to better inform future operational activity.
- Introduction of "consequences" workshops for young people (13 to 17) as a part of CR disposals where their offending includes low level violence offences.
- Rollout of Domestic Abuse Perpetuator Scheme across Northamptonshire.
- County Schools Challenge used last academic year to deliver "One Punch" campaign and anti- violence messages and will be themed again this year in relation to violence reduction to engage with the County's secondary school pupils.
- Significant marketing of success undertaken including support from NTFC, Northampton Saints RFC and NCC as key sports venues in the County.

### **Future Sustainability**

- Literature review commissioned to provide "what works" in relation to violence reduction. Following this working group commissioned to action.
- Six month review of Operation Challenge to inform future 18 to 24 month strategy, operational activity and governance.
- Multi agency process to start in November 2012 based on MAPPA style process to try and identify and intervene with potential future violence offenders.
- Force violence reduction strategy and strategic performance plan cross referenced with six CSP action plans to ensure connectivity between partners.
- Reading project commissioned to spread sustainable anti- violence messages in the County's primary schools to support County Schools Challenge in Secondary schools.
- The Police does not foresee any particular barriers to addressing violence in the Borough. Challenges remain such as the culture of excessive alcohol consumption within the night time economy and the new phenomenon of pre-loading.
- The District Commander links into the BSG and CSP and Ward level engagement is managed by the relevant Sector Inspector and their teams.
- Operation Challenge management team have presented to each CSP the plans for tackling violence throughout 2012/13.
- A partnership has been established to tackle strategic violence issues utilising an evidenced based approach.
- Together with a continued desire to have reduction of violence high on partners priorities and a desire to work collectively.

- The Police see the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner as:
  - directing funding and resources against these aspects as they see fit and in line with their manifesto and mandate.
  - to forge strong working relationships with partners, businesses and the wider criminal justice system.
  - to act as a voice for the community/victims of crime in order to address specific issues or concerns they may have in respect of violent crime.
- Additional information that NBC can provide to the Police to further information intelligence led policing for violent crime:
  - drive information sharing protocols to inform and alert Police to potentially violent offenders and enable Police together with partners to take appropriate actions (such as enforcement).

### **Serious Acquisitive Crime**

- Different departments address different attributes of tackling Serious Acquisitive Crime, including Local Policing teams, the Crime Prevention team within community safety and the Crime Support department.
- The main functions of the Crime Support department are:-
  - Intelligence Function
  - Burglary and Autocrime Teams- two sites
  - Integrated Offender Management (IOM)
- The prevention of SAC through detection of crime and reducing reoffending is within the remit of the IOM.
- Wider preventative strategies are the responsibility of District Safer Community Teams and the Community Safety Department.
- The District Chief Inspector and Police Crime Prevention Manager attend the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and take part in identifying priority locations and then target resources accordingly.
- The Analyst Team, Northants Police, identifies crime patterns and seasonal peaks. Both local policing teams and Crime Prevention Officers work alongside NBC on areas identified for partnership working and the prevention of crime.
- Under Operation Guardian there are High Impact Days targeting specific SAC crime (burglary/vehicle crime/robbery), these are undertaken on particular areas, and include enforcement activity around offenders as well as prevention and community engagement.
- IOM works closely with the probation services to assess offender's needs and potential pathways out of offending as well as enforcement.
- There is good engagement with the Council but there needs to be further high level engagement around policies. For example, it is not understood how housing and maintenance prioritise upgrades and continued maintenance

programmes and whether these are in line with the priorities set within the CSP. It would also be useful to have more engagement prior to planning application determinations, at the pre application stage.

- There have been challenges as both partner organisations have undertaken structure changes, which do highlight gaps. There needs to be work done on how to fill the gap previously covered by Neighbourhood Coordinators.
- The Police has started an intensive engagement project, with 4 projects Countywide. The Northampton project is looking at community engagement with a view to improving SAC levels. This work has highlighted a gap with no clear partnership forum available to set community identified prioritised, and to work with partners (including the community) on the necessary solutions.
- Reduction of re-offending in Northampton could be helped if it featured as a Borough priority in support of the Community Safety Strategy.
- The Crime Prevention Officers, undertake home surveys of high risk victims of domestic abuse and utilise funding as and when available to implement safety measures in the home. In addition to ‘target hardening’, where the risk is raised further, the installation of Sanctuary’s (a safe room) is undertaken. Clarity regarding funding is required.
- A “consequences workshop” is being trialled elsewhere in the county, where youngsters who have been convicted of ABH or Common Assault are faced with the consequences of their actions. It is hoped this programme will be rolled out across Northampton.
- A key factor to success is information sharing to identify potential key violence triggers.

### **Director of Offender Management, Northants Probation Service (NPT)**

- Northants Probation Service (NPT) has overall responsibility for supervising in excess of 3,200 offenders across Northamptonshire, of which approximately 2,300 are in the community.
- The fundamental aims of the service are to offer public protection and to reduce the level of re-offending by promoting full rehabilitation. The Probation Service is also involved in the enforcement of community orders set by Courts and licence requirements for prisoners released from custody.

### **Serious Acquisitive Crime**

- The starting point is to undertake a full assessment, using the tool – “OASys”. It is very effective in profiling offenders and making evaluations. The assessment informs the involvement with internal teams and external agencies such as the Police and Drugs and Alcohol teams.
- Prevention of crime is not a key statutory requirement of the Probation Trust although NPT works closely with Police colleagues and other partners to share information about offenders and their risk of re-offending.
- A major issue is locating suitable accommodation for offenders. This is a

considerable problem for sexual and violent offenders and young offenders. Appropriate housing is critical for offenders and supporting their rehabilitation and protecting the public. Suitable accommodation assists offenders being able to find stable employment and re-integrating them back into the community.

- There are examples where persistent offending behaviour is being repeated within the same families by different generations. This is being addressed through the 'troubled families' initiative.
- Dedicated professional and qualified staff have a key responsibility of discharging offence focused work with offenders and ensuring that requirements of Court orders and Prison licences are met.
- Aspects of the work of the Probation Trust are supported by the Reach Project and other local charities. The core remit is to assist offenders in securing training and employment.
- Together with the Police, the Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Team has been formed. The Team looks to address violent and acquisitive crime with mainly male offenders. The typical age range is 18-30. Many are alcohol and/or drug dependent and commit high volumes of offences.
- It is important to maximise information sharing and ensure all relevant Agencies are provided with information in a timely manner. The most dangerous offenders are managed through the MAPPA process (multi-agency public protection arrangements), a collective body of professionals who are instrumental in managing the risks presented by such offenders.
- The Police is the organisation most responsible for tackling serious acquisitive crime. The Probation Service is committed to reducing re-offending rates and supporting the rehabilitation journey for offenders.
- The Police Crime Commissioner is there to provide the strategic overview for criminal justice as a whole and make a difference to the people of Northamptonshire. Through core briefings from lead agencies, he will be provided with a good understanding of local issues, hotspots and crime profiling.
- Agencies should be required to account for how they have spent funding and be clear about outcomes to fit and meet local priorities.

## **Violent Crime**

- The Probation Service hosts an 18-month integrated domestic violence programme (IDAP) and another programme designed to address 'anger' issues, CALM.
- Multi Agency (MAPPPA) meetings are held regularly; weekly for level 2 offenders and monthly for the small number of level 3 (more serious) offenders.
- There is a very close relationship with the Police and 'BUDDI' - a tracker system is used on some offenders to provide critical intelligence on their daily activities and whereabouts.
- The Probation Service has strong connections with the Prison Service; this focuses on our role in the planning of offenders subject to release and resettlement.
- Pressure is growing on accommodation across the county and NPT is finding it



challenging to secure accommodation, particularly for the most violent offenders. In the county we have one Approved Premises with 22 places.

- The Local Authority Chief Executives' Group is working to try and coordinate housing protocols throughout the county which is a very positive step.
- There may be issues for the Probation Service should financial support be withdrawn from local providers.
- Women Offender - It is of concern that the SWAN project has been withdrawn and NPT is seeking to secure 12 month funding to support the unique needs of women.

## **Sunflower Centre Service Manager, Sunflower Centre**

### **Violent Crime**

- The Sunflower Centre is an independent domestic violence advisory service. It is a victim focussed service providing safety advice and support including signposting to housing, criminal and civil matters and support through the court process. It is linked to multi agency risk assessment conferences putting forward the victim's voice and wishes.
- The Sunflower Centre also provides support for women whose partners are undertaking IDAP with the Probation Service, providing information and reporting breaches.
- Funding for the Sunflower Centre is received from a variety of sources. A reduction in funding could impact upon the service provided.
- The issue of inter-personal violence is vast and could be considered as a separate Scrutiny Review.
- In 2011-2012, more than 12,000 incidents of domestic abuse were reported in Northamptonshire to Northamptonshire Police, 4,997 were from the Northampton Borough area.
- In the first quarter of 2012/2013, 49% of all referrals to the Centre were from the Northampton Borough area.
- Referrals are in the main, directed from the Police (approximately 60%). The service is hosted by Northamptonshire Police.
- All information regarding risk is available to the Police on its systems.
- Whilst there are no statistics available locally on the impact of the service on repeat victimisation, national statistics provided by CAADA indicate that in 57% of cases involving IDVA's there is no further abuse or violence after intervention.
- The Centre undertakes a large amount of multi-agency liaison, including prisoner release, awareness training with other Agencies, education via schools, encouraging reporting and community involvement.
- Housing is an issue for the Sunflower Centre; it does not have any accommodation itself, but has found in the last year that it is harder to locate accommodation, both through refuge and housing services; mainly due to cuts to service.
- Some changes have been beneficial, for example, expanding the definition of domestic abuse to include coercive control. The age range is also being widened to include 16-18 year olds. In some cases restraining orders are

attached to certain offences which apply when an offender is released from prison; a victim does not then have to go through an application process.

- Cases with complex needs, such as mental health/substance misuse are often presented to the centre. These are multi-Agency problems. It is difficult to decide which Agency will take the lead.
- A Specialist Domestic Abuse Court pilot has been on-going since the middle of 2012, the aim of which is getting domestic violence cases into the court system. Due to time that it takes for a case to get to trial, many victims withdraw because of pressures from the offender. Initial hearings progress quickly but follow up trials are of a much longer timeframe.
- Countywide, approximately 25-40% of cases seen by Sunflower are repeat cases, in that they involve the same perpetrator and victim.
- Some offenders are serial offenders.
- Suggestions of how Northampton Borough Council can improve its services to victims of domestic abuse and support the Sunflower Centre/victims:-
  - A review of housing responses and consideration of perpetrator clauses, on-going use of target hardening and civil orders.
  - Improved communication channels with the Sunflower Centre and other domestic abuse services.
  - Consider funding for prevention as well as reaction.
  - Support the continuation of the Specialist Domestic Violence Court.
  - Be honest with clients about what can be done. Only realistic options need to be presented and these will differ for each person.
  - Realise that it may take a client some time before they are ready to take certain steps, such as leaving the offender.
- Certain factors contribute to the likelihood of violence being committed. In many cases alcohol is a contributory factor. This is not just a case of people drinking in pubs but increasingly frequently drinking at home, or drinking at home before going into town.
- The work of Operation Challenge has had a positive impact on incidents of domestic violence.
- In certain parts of the county, such as Corby and Kettering, prevention programmes are being carried out for perpetrators of domestic abuse .They undertake a more in depth behaviour analysis. The results are being analysed, with a view to rolling that programme out to other parts of the county.
- The Community Safety Partnership will, in December 2012, pilot work with Women's Aid regarding lower level intervention.

### **Northamptonshire Pakistani Welfare Trust**

- The local community has been instrumental in action being taken to resolve the Asian gold thefts. The Police identified patterns relating to the thefts which indicated specific targeting. There was a wide spread publicity campaign involving the targeted communities and full investigations leading to some

prosecutions.

- Currently, no checks are carried out when gold is sold. It is an easy commodity to dispose of.
- Violence to taxi drivers often starts as fare evasion, on occasions resulting in a case of serious assault.
- The installation of CCTV in taxis being introduced to a small number of vehicles as a pilot scheme was suggested. This initiative had been investigated previously for all taxis, but because of the number of taxis involved it had proved too expensive.
- It was highlighted that it is important for the Police and Northampton Borough Council to build trust and confidence with the Pakistani/Muslim community.

### **Northampton Youth Forum (NFY)**

- Some young people have experienced attacks in the street and the town parks. The impact depended upon the individual but it could affect their confidence and their willingness to go out.
- Young people are aware that there are a number of counselling groups available. They did not know how to contact them. Support through schools would be more effective.
- The perpetrator may not be ashamed of what they had done and could consider it a badge of honour. This may lead them to being part of a gang and therefore gaining the support of a group of others.
- Some young people felt that the perpetrator received support and advantages through Agency involvement, receiving additional educational support. Resources were felt to be diverted away from the victim.
- Violent crime is a problem for young people.
- It is too easy to obtain alcohol, often obtained from older siblings/friends. A minimum pricing policy for alcohol might make it more difficult to obtain alcohol.
- Young people can feel vulnerable, but the fear of crime is widespread across age ranges because of media portrayal.
- Statistics indicate that a high proportion of young people are victims of crime.
- A lot of organisations provide assistance and facilities within the borough. There was a general awareness but most young people did not feel comfortable with the idea of approaching and using alternative organisations.
- With regard to preventing crime young people felt that there needs to be better access to recreation facilities.
- There needs to be a confidence in further education, which would lead to job opportunities, giving young people an incentive to work hard at school.
- Crime affecting young people could be better prevented by providing more facilities such as youth clubs, better lighting, a more visible presence and the introduction of a curfew.
- Young people could best help themselves from falling victim of crime by education, better engagement with available facilities, greater parental involvement and greater attention to personal safety and awareness of risks.

### **Consultant in Public Health, Health Protection NHS, Northamptonshire**

- The key aspects of public health are promoting health, prolonging life and

preventing disease through organised efforts of society. These translate to health improvement, health protection, and health care service commissioning functions or teams.

- Public Health is involved in monitoring trends, which is the focus of public health analyses and epidemiology work, and involves trying to identify problems which are experienced by groups such as habitual drug users.
- Health protection work, for example, involves providing access to Hepatitis vaccinations and directing services for the rehabilitation of addicts and providing support to at-risk households and families.
- Public Health is responsible for ensuring prisoners receive the same range of health care services that they would have access to if they were living freely within the community. The range of health care services commissioned for prisoners is specified by Public Health.
- Prior to release, each prisoner is expected to have their discharge planned, including attention to their health needs and facilitated access to a GP. On discharge, the Probation Service acts as a liaison for prisoners and helps them to access health care required. There will be some people, who due to complexity of their needs or chaotic lifestyles, do not receive the required service, or are unwilling to participate in the system. They often have re-occurring problems.
- Health improvement aims to address lifestyle issues and equips individuals with necessary tools to adopt healthier lifestyles and take better control of their health.
- Each locality has a Community Safety Partnership established, and will also be setting up a local Health and Well-being Form (similar to the County Health and Wellbeing board). The Northampton Health and Well-being Board will be chaired by the Director of Housing, Northampton Borough Council.
- Public Health collaborate as partners in the Community Safety Partnership and contribute by helping to identify community needs or changes that are required to services to provide improvements in health and social outcomes.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner's role could be developing better links across newly re-organised public sector organisations to ensure potential synergies and economies are tapped into, with continuous improvement and the best targeting of resources.
- As part of the development of services by Public Health, over the last five years or so, discussions led by Public Health, scoped the feasibility and commissioned the development of an Accident and Emergency (A&E) department based alcohol nursing liaison project. This has been providing activity data relating to alcohol at Kettering and Northampton General Hospitals over the past couple of years. The programme at Kettering has had slightly more success.
- Health departments are often the first point of contact for an individual. The Health Service comprises a number of organisations with different remits and roles, and is not homogeneous. It is important that clients gain access through the most appropriate channels, to ensure that their experience of the health care journey and outcomes of care are optimised. Collection of alcohol related incidents data is carried out in A&E.
- A newly commissioned drug and alcohol service provider for Northamptonshire is scheduled to commence in February 2013. It is anticipated that this service

will make improvements to the range of specialist care provided and improve access to care for the most complex cases. People with substance misuse issues will be assessed, signposted and given options. Services provided will be structured into four tiers of complexity. If required, they will be offered 12 weeks in a detox programme. The goal of intervention is for users to attain a state of “recovery” and be able to live within society and contribute meaningfully. Drug service providers will aim to ensure problematic drug users can be given appropriate supports to enable them to do this.

### **Service Delivery Manager, Victim Support**

- Victim Support offers its services to everyone that has been affected by crime, not just victims but also families and friends.
- Victim Support is a charity and all services are delivered free of charge and are confidential.
- Central Government funding for Victim Support is ending in March 2014. It is vital that partnerships are used to their maximum capacity. Whilst there are some funds to resource victims’ practical requirements, these will only be used if there are no other sources of funding available.
- Victim Support offers a range of services including emotional support, practical help and advocacy. It works with a number of different Agencies and is aware of a rise in the number of mental health services required by clients.
- Victim Support also offers other services to witnesses, including advice on procedures, support in court and specialised services to the most vulnerable.
- Most individuals are referred from the Police, and in certain defined areas 100% of victims of particular crimes are referred. Others are not.
- Not all referrals are from the Police, they may come through other Agencies or the victim may refer themselves and do not need to report the crime to the police. If victims of other crimes were to contact Victim Support then they would not be refused assistance.
- Services are tailored to individuals. Some people prefer face to face contact, some want support via phone or E-mail or text.
- There are no time limits and often people who initially did not want to use the support service wanted help much later, often after an additional event had triggered a need.
- Direct support is offered to people over the age of 16. For younger victims, consent from persons legally responsible for them is required or a competence assessment is undertaken.
- Direct support is not offered to individuals under the age of 12. Victim Support works with Agencies that offer support to young people. Persons responsible can be supported, so they can in turn, support the young person.
- All support is offered on an individual basis.
- If a victim makes a request to change their supporter the request will be actioned if possible depending upon the circumstances.
- The impact of crime on individuals varies widely. In the case of an older person it may relate to a lack of confidence or reduction in their physical ability, meaning that they are no longer able to live independently. Other people may suffer financially if they lose items that they require for work, or the means to be able to get to work.

- Violence is a particular area which can impact the most on the wider family group leading to damaged relationships. More timely intervention will lead to more positive outcomes.
- With regard to the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner, it would be a positive step if all victims are offered some form of support and a victim centred programme of restorative justice is developed.
- Priority crimes are serious acquisitive crimes and violent crimes. In general, vehicle crimes are not referred to Victim Support although the Police will refer vulnerable people.

### **Assets Director, Enterprise Management Services (EMS)**

- EMS' approach, based upon "Situational Crime Prevention", uses techniques focused on reducing the opportunity to commit a crime, increasing the difficulty of crime, increasing the risk of crime, and reducing the rewards of crime.
- EMS engages in its working areas with Agencies such as Traveller Liaison, youth organisations and local Residents Associations to inform, educate and involve people in its prevention Strategies.
- The use of accurate and useful management information and statistics is paramount to focusing resources effectively.
- Engagement with key stakeholders and organisations across the borough must focus on reducing risk factors for youth offending, drugs and other contributory factors.
- The perceived lack of trust in the Police and other Authorities among high risk groups is a key barrier in addressing serious acquisitive crime in the borough.
- NBC can facilitate EMS' involvement with the key stakeholders and Agencies to share experience and allow dialogue. Previously the neighbourhood model would have made these links with partner organisations as a matter of course, for example, operational briefing sessions attended by Officers such as PCSOs.
- It would be beneficial for EMS and its street scene operations if EMS was to positively encourage this model approach again as it allows EMS to focus its resources on potential hot spot areas where the integrity and standards of the area have a direct influence on behaviours. This will be particularly important as EMS becomes more data rich.
- EMS sees the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner as:
  - ensuring the policing needs of the area are met in making key decisions that will impact on infrastructure such as CCTV and tackling hot spots that attract gang and drugs activity
  - responding to the needs of the public and restoring trust in the Police and other Agencies thereby reducing the risks of youth offending
  - working with partners to prevent and tackle crime and re-offending
  - ensuring that the regional/local plans align with national strategic plans for crime prevention
  - setting tougher targets within the area for detection and resolution
- EMS has no direct influence in relation to some of issues around violent crime. EMS is looking at schemes where a "don't walk by" approach is promoted and how these can be used as early warning systems within communities.

- EMS provides clean-up operations in the town centre and highlights areas with particular problems, such as drug use, that could gain better focus from Neighbourhood Wardens and the Police.
- Approximately 12,000 Housing Association properties are surrounded by green space which EMS has found it difficult to manage. Higher rates of serious acquisitive crime have been found in those areas. These areas are subject to problems such as fly tipping and general environmental abuse. Areas which appeared to be neglected proved attractive for criminal activity.
- EMS is required to respond to fly tipping incidents within 24 hours. There were 600 incidents in November 2012. Quick responses to problems such as this are vital in preventing further deterioration.
- It is important that Northampton Borough Council works with other Agencies to ensure that improvements are made patterns identified.
- It is beneficial for local communities, in particular young people, to be more actively involved in clearing up problem areas.
- It is important that there are clear lines of communication and where problems are identified action is taken quickly.
- It is important to encourage an element of self-policing and proper reporting.
- Neighbourhood Wardens are supplied with engagement forms and trained on the correct reporting routes. Neighbourhood Wardens play a vital role and this has been reflected by including them on the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) so that they can feed directly into the work of the CSP. In one case this had already led to direct action and a change of prioritisation.
- A lot of anti-social behaviour is connected to litter and environmental problems.
- A process for the information flow to be stronger and with faster responses is required.
- Work is underway regarding fly tipping incidents to ascertain whether the large number of incidents relate to problems which people have with access to home waste and recycling centres.
- There are problems with shared areas at housing complexes and in private alleyways. Those areas cause a series of problems and a process needs to be identified to remove demarcations and ensure that they are dealt with quickly when problems are reported.
- Schedules are provided to the Council providing details of the work that is being carried out in each area.
- Working with partners and other Agencies is vital in providing a holistic approach to making improvements. The Princes Trust is engaged in some work in the Bellinge area in which EMS is involved.

### **Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire**

The Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire, attended the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel on 4 February 2013.

Salient points:

- Since his election in November 2012, the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) has been compiling a work programme and associated budget. The

work programme has been informed by public consultation and will be agreed by the Police and Crime Panel (PCP) in March 2013.

- The following priorities have been set:-
  - Reduction in violent crime by 40% over a five year period
  - Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour
  - Reducing drug related crime
  - Reducing re-offending
- Originally, the PCC felt that there were too many priorities. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) will focus on three priorities for the next 18 months, aiming to deliver transformational change before moving on to any future priorities.
- The CSP is in a strong position and has been consistently delivering improvements.
- There will be a 25% overall reduction in funding. CSPs will be asked to bid for funding for their activities.
- It is vital that the makeup of CSPs is revised to ensure that membership comprises the right partners and Agencies.
- Northampton has a fundamental role to play in achieving these priorities.
- A longer term Policing Plan will extend beyond the PCC's term of office.
- The focus on drug prevention is a long term aim. There is a need to understand the reasons that individuals become addicted to drugs. Drug use often leads to a wide range of offending behaviour, including serious acquisitive crime and violent crime.
- It is a common misconception that violent crime only takes place within the town centre, on a Friday and Saturday night. A lot of violent crime takes place in domestic situations, with a high level of re-offending.
- Northampton Borough Council (NBC) has an important role to play in ensuring that families that need help are targeted early and their problems addressed holistically. Often, a range of service providers are involved in finding solutions for the problems, which may encompass a number of issues such as inadequate housing and exclusion from school. NBC could play a vital role in bringing those Agencies together.
- The Government funding for Northamptonshire Police has been reduced by £3.2 million. It is vital to ensure that partnerships deliver results, whilst accepting there would be fewer resources.
- Northampton is facing problems, some of which, such as drug trafficking, are on the same scale as inner city areas such as London, Manchester and Merseyside. There are potential opportunities for improvements and new ways of working. All partners should work together, endeavouring to give young people who have been excluded from school, a focus to aim to.
- Violent crime has been decreasing by 10% a year, and if this continues, that alone will meet the violent crime reduction targets. Violent crime has not been displaced in terms of geographical area but there are changes in the type of violent crime experienced, for example 40% of current violent crime is domestic.
- Growth in domestic violence needs to be thoroughly examined. It will need the



input and assistance of a number of different Agencies, for example the Probation Service, Health Service and Voluntary Sector. There may be many influencing factors, such as the increase in drinking at home and the impact of the economy.

- It is uncertain how often incidents of violence that present at hospitals are reported. Some may not be reported as they are dealt with internally by members of the hospital staff. On occasions, Police Officers are called to deal with incidents.
- There could be occasions where the individual involved in an incident may be suffering from an illness rather than being under the influence of alcohol. The Police and Crime Commissioner queried whether a medical card system could be introduced in a similar way to diabetics carrying an insulin alert.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner is looking to introduce a central reporting system, hosted by the Police. This system will direct queries and provide a better response time.
- A community alert system is in place which ward Councillors can subscribe to. This will keep them up to date with incidents in their area.
- A number of youth projects are in place but the Police and Crime Commissioner would like to see a much wider range of activities. It is intended to hold a youth engagement event, which will include a shadowing event, multimedia forums and entertainment, culminating in a music event.
- Organisations should be encouraging youth branches, such as the Police Cadets. The Police and Crime Commissioner is in dialogue with the Fire Service regarding the re-introduction of a young fire fighters branch.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner would like to introduce a mentoring scheme, whereby prominent people in Northampton are encouraged to mentor a young person and help them to become more ambitious. It is imperative that young people are encouraged to think about their futures and try to make positive influences on them.
- It is important to encourage proper behaviour. Wherever possible, potential problems need to be addressed at the planning stage. The Police and Crime Commissioner hoped that this would be taken into consideration during the various redevelopment projects due in the town.
- It is vital that problems are reported. The Police are currently undertaking a performance review and is looking to progress positive engagement. It had engaged Northampton University to assist it in looking at best practice in community engagement, with the aim of improving social cohesion. There needs to be a commitment to get to the route of problems within communities and to assist in this. Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) have received training on problem identification.
- There is a trial in the South West Sector of the county, whereby the community is encouraged to draw pictures of their neighbourhood. Those pictures have revealed issues that the Police was unaware of. Matters not considered to be within the Police's remit are passed to the relevant Agency.

### **3.4 Site Visit**

3.4.1 Two site visits took place. One to a locality where there were currently

problems with serious acquisitive crime (SAC) and one where improvement work had been carried out. The purpose of the visits was to concentrate on “hotspots” and focus on environmental improvements. Two site visits were therefore set up.

3.4.2 The Panel visited Spring Boroughs, Bellinge, Spencer and Kings Heath wards.

### **3.4.3 Spring Boroughs and Bellinge, Northampton**

3.4.3.1 The Panel visited Spring Boroughs and Bellinge on 13 August 2012.

Key points:

#### **Spring Boroughs**

- Major environmental improvements, as part of Cleaner, Safer Greener funding, took place a few years previously, which included new fencing, the adoption of Secured by Design principles as part of the refurbishment of Beaumont and Claremont Houses, play spaces for children, the creation of secure parking areas and a boulevard area had been created outside the local primary school. At the time of the environmental improvements there had been a sense of pride and purpose within the community. A community group had maintained Pocket’s Park. This group no longer meets and there were signs of debris, long grass and overgrown borders in the park.
- A number of issues around some of the blocks of flats, particularly around anti-social behaviour (ASB) were noted. The Police is aware of this and is working with Agencies.
- A number of supporting schemes for the area, such as the Swan Project that offers support to sex workers, and Operation Uncanny are now undertaken at a lower level. This is more related to ASB in this area.
- SAC figures for the area have started to increase.
- A vetting process for the allocation of tenancies no longer takes place across the town. It has been difficult to manage who has moved into the area.

#### **Bellinge**

- Bellinge comprises 60/40 private/social housing with a number of sheltered housing properties. There are number of walkways throughout the estate, a number of which provide anonymous routes for offenders but at the same time are legitimate routes for residents. The estate was built in ‘court style’ and each court has a walk way in, with access from any direction. This design makes it easy for crimes to be committed. There was previously a huge drug issue on the estate.
- Operation Guardian, run by the Police, has concentrated on the top ten wards for SAC, of which Bellinge was included, being the top ‘hotspot’ for SAC for the county. Operation Guardian has been a forerunner for CASPAR projects, attracting substantial funding, outreach work and re-designing. Operation Guardian has forced crime figures down and the stabilisation of tenancies. More recently, crime and drug use has increased in Bellinge; however, it is not the top ‘hotspot’ for SAC for the county anymore.
- Fencing has been erected to prevent anonymous routes, creating just one way

in and out, but there is evidence of lack of maintenance with a number of the fences either damaged or removed. It appears that some fences had been damaged or removed for some months or years. Some fencing has strengthening bars added to prevent it from being jacked open.

- On occasions, mothers lift their children over the fences so that they can go to school, rather than walk the children around, which highlights that the fencing appears to be perceived by some residents as an inconvenience.
- High fences are in situ in a number of areas, causing lack of visibility to the parking areas.
- Some of the front lawns of the properties were unkempt.

#### **3.4.4 Spencer and Kings Heath, Northampton**

3.4.4.1 The Scrutiny Panel visited Spencer and Kings Heath wards on 8 October 2012. Salient points:

- An Environment Visual Audit (EVA) of Kings Heath was undertaken approximately two years ago. It was revisited in 2012. An EVA for specific areas within Spencer was undertaken and an Action Plan produced as directed by the Northampton Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
- Some communal doors have been replaced within the ward, and some environmental improvements taken place to prohibit access to the rear of flats.
- As part of the Action Plan, the Police is working with Housing Services, NBC, regarding Secure by Design standard for access communal doors.
- During the site visit, the problem of storage cupboards within communal halls was observed, as was the condition of some of the fencing.
- A number of out of date signs in relation to crime prevention, and partnership operations are in situ around the area.
- Two sites, where pubs had originally stood, were observed. An unused open space, near to Brookside Meadows, was seen.
- Disused and unkempt garage blocks, alongside knocked down street signage, overgrown foliage and general fly-tipping were observed; as were, maintenance issues, such as the removal of gates on public rights of way, problems with communal steps in disrepair and littering within shrubbed areas.

## **4 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 4.1 Overview and Scrutiny ensures that it adheres to the Council's statutory duty to provide the public with access to Scrutiny Reports/agendas/minutes and other such documents. Meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny/Scrutiny Panels are widely publicised, i.e.: on the Council's website, copies issues to the local media and paper copies available in the Council's One Stop Shop and local libraries.
- 4.2 The Scrutiny Panel was mindful of the eight protected characteristics when undertaking scrutiny activity so that any recommendations that it made could identify potential positive and negative impacts on any particular sector of the community. This was borne in mind as the Scrutiny Review progressed and evidence gathered.

- 4.3 Any possible recommended changes may have perceived adverse and beneficial effects for all diversity groups.
- 4.4 In order that the Scrutiny Panel obtains a variety of views, a number of key witnesses provided evidence as detailed in section 3 of this report.
- 4.5 Details of the Equality Impact Assessment undertaken can be obtained from the Overview and Scrutiny [webpage](#).

## **5 Conclusions and Key Findings**

- 5.1 After all of the evidence was collated the following conclusions were drawn:
  - 5.1.1 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that this Review should concentrate on wider issues and that if initial figures indicated that the domestic abuse was disproportionately high it would be relevant for a future Scrutiny Review to be undertaken on interpersonal violence. The Scrutiny Panel felt that the remit of this Review could include how improved education on domestic violence issues could be provided for the non-British White population.
  - 5.1.2 The Scrutiny Panel felt that it would be useful for ward Councillors to have regularly updated information on the demographics of their areas. It was however noted that this information is available on the Northamptonshire Observatory and that a permanent link is detailed within each edition of the monthly Councillor E-Newsletter, (Councillor Connect).
  - 5.1.3 From the evidence provided in the statistical data there is evidence that there has been an increase in Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC), especially vehicle crime which impacts negatively upon the residents of the town.
  - 5.1.4 It was concluded that it would be useful for all Councillors to be informed of when initiatives are being undertaken in their wards by the Community Safety Partnership.
  - 5.1.5 It was concluded that target hardening of properties in hotspot locations was effective in reducing burglary.
  - 5.1.6 The need for a representative from Housing Services, Northampton Borough Council, to be a member of the Community Safety Partnership was emphasised. It was highlighted that access to safe and adequate housing is an essential element in building positive community cohesion and discouraging crime. The Scrutiny Panel further agreed that there is a need for all service areas involved in community safety activity to attend meetings of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
  - 5.1.7 The Scrutiny Panel welcomed that training will be provided to all Community Safety Partnership members who work on the frontline. It felt, however, that awareness training on domestic abuse should be made available for Councillors.
  - 5.1.8 It was recognised that when training correct use of terminology should be

emphasised.

- 5.1.9 The value of whole family interventions be emphasised and that such cases require multi-Agency intervention, including Policing, education, profiling, training and support.
- 5.1.10 It was welcomed that the CSP is currently undertaking work endeavouring to engage with Eastern/Central Europeans. Those who are economic migrants do not appear to be engaged with any community, simply being here to work. Data is showing this ethnic group as being of being vulnerable to crime either as a perpetrator or a victim. The numbers involved/affected are disproportionately higher than the population figures.
- 5.1.11 It is a statutory requirement that Accident and Emergency data is provided to the Community Safety Partnership and it was felt that data should be provided on a more regular basis.
- 5.1.12 The Scrutiny Panel noted that there appears to be a gap between Public Health and Housing Services but realised that steps were in place to address this.
- 5.1.13 The Scrutiny Panel conveyed concerns that it appeared that Neighbourhood Wardens are being expected to take on a much wider role. Whilst they have received some training the Scrutiny Panel felt that they are not crime prevention professionals and should not be giving advice on that basis. The role of the Wardens should be about working with partner Agencies and signposting the public to the correct service and not actually solving crime issues directly.
- 5.1.14 It was acknowledged that Neighbourhood Wardens sit on a number of Partnership sub groups and feed into action plans and the overarching process.
- 5.1.15 It was generally felt that members of the public will often speak to Neighbourhood Wardens when they would otherwise be reluctant to engage with the Police. Neighbourhood Wardens are in regular contact with an area and are generally trusted.
- 5.1.16 Further to the site visits undertaken by the Panel it was felt that disused property needs to be secured so that it does not become a target for vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Such sites should be protected or screened. It would be beneficial for best practice advice to be sought from the relevant department within Northampton Borough Council.
- 5.1.17 The evidence gathered from the site visits concluded that there are issues in areas where fencing has been erected in order to try and solve problems. .These had not been maintained or panels had been removed to allow easier routes through. This highlighted the need for ensuring that on-going maintenance is identified prior to any schemes being undertaken.
- 5.1.18 The evidence gathered highlighted that there is a need to reduce the impact of the “broken window syndrome” on members of the community; such issues are identified through Environmental Audits produced by Crime Prevention Officers for the

Community Safety Partnership (CSP). It was felt that a possible improvement is an enhanced, responsive maintenance service in “hotspot” areas.

- 5.1.19 Vice and drug issues appear to be prominent in some areas of the town and the ‘broken window syndrome’ appears to be the forerunner to crime.
- 5.1.20 The Scrutiny Panel felt that the unused open spaces should be utilised to create public use with a view to reducing the “broken window syndrome.”
- 5.1.21 The Scrutiny Panel highlighted the importance of educating residents in security so the purpose of security measures are understood and used. Examples such as locking doors, windows and gates, securing vehicles and the removal of visible property.
- 5.1.22 Lack of maintenance management in areas is an issue, for example:
- Access controlled car park not working
  - Lack of maintenance to fencing
  - Littering
  - Landscaping maintenance issues
- 5.1.23 The development of a Neighbourhood Forum for the Spring Boroughs area is currently taking place. There is a need for it to comprise at least 21 individuals who either work or reside in the area. The Scrutiny Panel felt it would be useful for at least one individual from each of the houses (block of flats) to be elected to the Forum.
- 5.1.24 The Scrutiny Panel agreed that there is a need to understand NBC’s maintenance programme for housing stock and estates, including communal doors, garage blocks, street cleansing, and grounds maintenance. For example - when repairs are undertaken there is a need for them to be made, not only to the front access communal doors but also to the rear.
- 5.1.25 The Panel welcomed the trial of the Intensive Community Engagement programme that is currently taking place in the South West Sector of the Northampton. Part of the programme includes ‘Rich Picturing’, where the community is asked to draw pictures of their neighbourhood currently, and also what they would like it to look like. These pictures can reveal issues that the Police are unaware of. Matters that are not considered to be within the Police’s remit will be passed to the relevant Agency. The Panel considered this initiative would help to engage with the community and identify problems and the ward Councillors could be a long term strategic link.
- 5.1.26 It was emphasised that in certain areas, the completion of a CASPAR project had been very positive but no further support was provided to the community following completion of the project. The Scrutiny Panel felt that an exit strategy should always be put in place, ensuring a level of support and on-going maintenance if required.
- 5.1.27 The Scrutiny Panel was disappointed that, due to the lack of current projects such as CASPAR in Spring Boroughs, coupled with the current economic climate and lack of officer presence, that the area had begun to deteriorate.
- 5.1.28 The previous benefits of a Community Group undertaking gardening activities in the

Pocket Park on Spring Boroughs were realised.

- 5.1.29 The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that it would be beneficial to encourage Residents Associations and Community Forums to use open space facilities which in turn would assist in developing community spirit.
- 5.1.30 Collection of alcohol related incidents data is carried out in Accident and Emergency (A&E). The value of this is limited because the data is not shared in a timely manner.
- 5.1.31 The Panel recognised that, on occasions, victims of domestic abuse presenting at A&E are not referred to supporting Agencies.
- 5.1.32 The Scrutiny Panel realised that a lot of anti-social behaviour is connected to litter and environmental problems. There needs to be a process for the information flow to Enterprise Management Services (EMS) be stronger and with faster responses.
- 5.1.33 The Scrutiny Panel noted that work is underway to ascertain whether the large number of fly tipping incidents relate to problems which people have with access to home waste and recycling centres. There are problems with shared areas at housing complexes and in private alleyways. These areas can cause a series of problems and a solution needs to be implemented to ensure that issues are dealt with quickly when reported.
- 5.1.34 EMS provides schedules to the Council detailing work that is being undertaken in each area. The Scrutiny Panel felt it would be useful for this information to be disseminated to all Council departments.
- 5.1.35 The Scrutiny Panel concluded that working with partners and other Agencies is vital in providing a holistic approach to making improvements.
- 5.1.36 Significant progress has been made regarding the issues surrounding people attending pubs and clubs in the town centre area. The introduction of Night Watch, which includes the traffic light system and the banning of some key violent offenders from the town centre, has created a positive effect, was welcomed.
- 5.1.37 Good communication between door staff and the Police was recognised.

6.1 The purpose of the Scrutiny Panel was:

- To investigate, as a benchmark, Northampton's crime statistics in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify 'hotspots' in relation to serious acquisitive and violent crime
- To identify the impact that serious acquisitive crime and violent crime has on the residents of Northampton
- To identify the serious acquisitive crime and violent crime issues that Northampton Borough Council, in partnership with other Agencies, can have an impact upon

Scrutiny Panel 1 recommends to Cabinet that:

#### **Northampton Borough Council (NBC)**

- 6.1.1 A funding pot is identified to provide target hardening for properties that are located within hot spot areas.
- 6.1.2 Northampton Borough Council ensures active engagement with the Troubled Families Agenda.
- 6.1.3 Prior to any physical works being undertaken, consideration to long-term maintenance is given and resources identified.
- 6.1.4 Councillors are issued with regular updated information on the demographics of their wards.

#### **Housing**

- 6.1.5 Obsolete signs in place around the Council's housing stock are removed and all relevant signage is in situ and is clearly visible.
- 6.1.6 An enhanced and responsive maintenance service is implemented in "hotspot" areas.
- 6.1.7 A funding pot is identified to provide target hardening on Council properties that are located within hot spot areas.

#### **Planning/Regeneration**

- 6.1.8 It is ensured that when land or buildings is transferred, it is stipulated that the land must be cleared and properly secured.



- 6.1.9 Consideration is given to utilising unused open spaces in residential areas across the town for public use.
- 6.1.10 Planning continues to work with and seek advice and guidance from the Police Architectural Liaison Officer to ensure new developments meet 'Design out Crime' standards.

### **Neighbourhood Wardens**

- 6.1.11 Clarification is given on the role of the Neighbourhood Wardens. This information is disseminated to ward Councillors.
- 6.1.12 Neighbourhood Wardens undertake annual refresher training on crime prevention matters.
- 6.1.13 An on-going professional training and development plan, with specific focus on crime prevention and community safety, for Neighbourhood Wardens is produced and implemented

### **Partners and Agencies**

- 6.1.14 Following completion of projects in hotspot locations, an exit plan is developed outlining support and maintenance post project, in order that the positive results are maintained.
- 6.1.15 On-going maintenance budgets are included with any environmental improvements such as fencing.
- 6.1.16 A directory for young people is developed that provides information on services and facilities available to young people.
- 6.1.17 There is timelier sharing of data from Accident and Emergency with the Community Safety Partnership. This means weekly highlight reports and full details on a monthly basis.
- 6.1.18 A mechanism is introduced to ensure that the Health and Wellbeing Board can provide information and feedback to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).
- 6.1.19 Membership of the CSP be revisited to ensure that it includes all relevant Agencies and service areas, including the Voluntary Sector.
- 6.1.20 When training/education around crime prevention issues is undertaken, consideration is always be given to the audience and the trainer is mindful to use appropriate language that is universally understood.

- 6.1.21 Information systems between the Police and local Councillors are reviewed and further developed.
- 6.1.22 Support is given to the Intensive Community Engagement programme hosted by Northamptonshire Police.
- 6.1.23 Formal links between Enterprise Management Services (EMS) and Northampton Borough Council are developed around situational crime to ensure faster information sharing and **faster responses to dealing with service issues, therefore resulting in a positive outcome for the community.**

### **Community Forums**

- 6.1.24 Residents Associations, Community Groups and Forums are encouraged to use open spaces which in turn will assist in community development and ownership of their local areas.

### **Northants Probation Service**

- 6.1.25 **A programme of works on the priority locations identified by Northampton Borough Council is built into the Community Pay Back Initiative.**

### **Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire**

- 6.1.26 A copy of this report is provided to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Northamptonshire.

### **Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

- 6.1.27 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to consider the inclusion of a Scrutiny Review of Interpersonal Violence in its Work Programme for 2013/2014.
- 6.1.28 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of its monitoring regime, reviews the impact of this report in six months' time.