

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

13 June 2016

Briefing Note – Crime & Disorder, Overview & Scrutiny

Summary

On the 3 February 2011 it was agreed that as part of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee role, that in meeting their responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder (Overview and Scrutiny) Regulations 2009, an annual report from the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) would be provided. The report would focus on the levels of CSP performance and whether crime has increased in the light of reduced resources, and if so what measures have been taken to meet any shortfall in performance. The report was to advise the Committee of work undertaken, thereby informing Overview and Scrutiny of further review or scrutiny that may be required.

Community Safety Partnership – Performance Overview

The CSP continue to prioritise issues that are most likely to affect people in their day to day lives, including violent crime (including domestic abuse), anti-social behaviour, domestic burglary and vehicle crime, ensuring that our town and communities are safe places in which to live and enjoy themselves.

Performance has seen a downward trend for 2015/16, seeing increases in Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC) and continued increases in Violent Crime. However, we are continuing to see reductions in some crime types such as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), non-domestic burglary, shoplifting, cycle theft. Overall crime has continued to increase.

Actual Performance – April 2015 to March 2016

There's been an increase in overall crime in Northampton of 4.6% (+884 crimes) from the baseline during the year. Performance has varied significantly between different crime types/groups. The increases seen within violent crime and serious acquisitive crime types have impacted on the overall crime figure which has meant that the majority of targets set by the CSP at the beginning of the year have not been achieved.

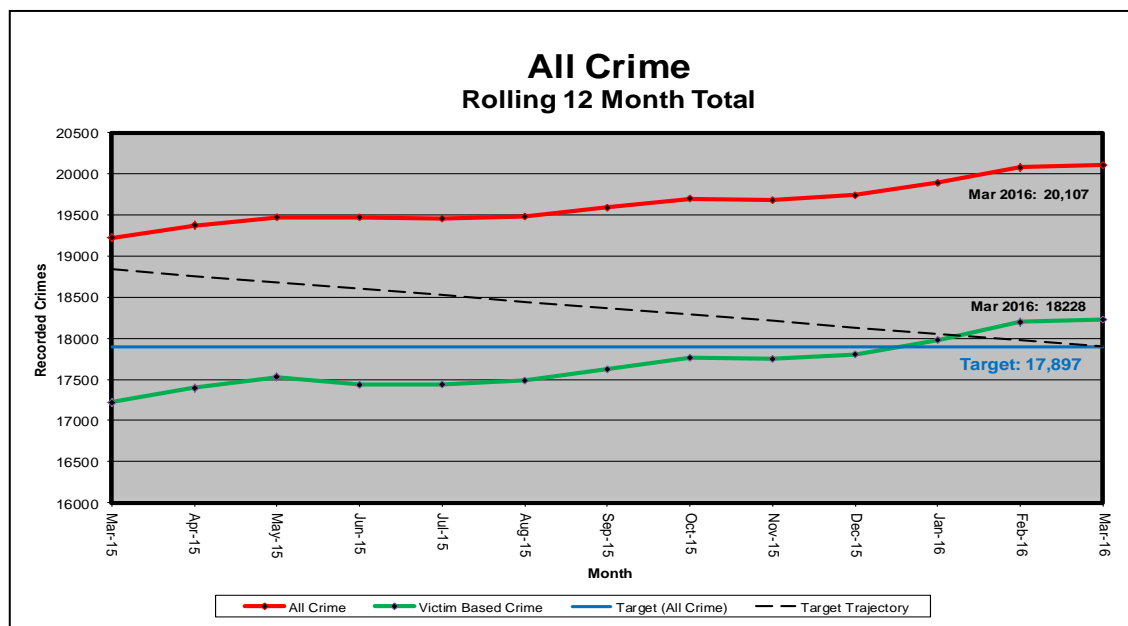
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Overall crime is used as a proxy measure for crime relating to drugs and alcohol misuse. Improved comparative performance has been seen in *five* crime types/groups; violence against the person, violence without injury, sexual offences, racially aggravated offences and drug offences. All sexual offences increased by 27.7% during the year (+100 offences) however the rate at which how many of these reports are historic is not yet known. An increase in reports of sexual offences should not necessarily be viewed negatively as it may be as a result of improved confidence in being able to report offences.



Northampton has seen a 25.3% increase (+1194 crimes) in violence offences during 2015/16. This includes a 23.3% increase (+618 crimes) in violence without injury and a 27.9% increase (+27.9%) in violence with injury. Northampton ranked 15th within the Most Similar Group of CSPs throughout the year for all violence, however, there was an improvement in relation to violence without injury from 15th to 14th during the year. However, the rate of increase has slowed during the year and appears to be reaching a plateau. There are a significant amount of initiatives being implemented which should in turn have an impact upon these figures.

Due to changes in Police systems the data in relation to first time & repeat victims is currently under review. Northampton saw a higher reduction rate in relation to domestic non-crimes (-26.4% / -998) in comparison to the Force as a whole which saw a 23.4% reduction (-2271) during 2015/16. There was a 36.8% increase (+789 crimes) in domestic abuse related crimes compared to a Force increase of 27.9% (+1537 crimes). However there are indications that there has been an increase in first time reporting, which is seen as a positive.

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SAC did see good reductions between April and August; however there was an overall increase of 6.0% (+158 crimes) during the year. Vehicle crime has been the primary performance issue in relation to acquisitive crime, with theft of motor vehicles increasing by 26.5% (+82 crimes) and theft from motor vehicles increasing by 5.3% (+54 crimes). Robbery and domestic burglary increased by 2.3% (+7 crimes) and 1.5% (+15 crimes) respectively. There are a number of initiatives specifically focussed on vehicle crime now taking place.

Performance in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour, particularly reported incidents to the Police has been extremely positive with an overall reduction of 14.3% (-1895 incidents) during the year compared to the 1.5% reduction seen in 2014/15. All three ASB incident types have seen fewer incidents this year than last with reductions of 29.8% (-552 incidents) in environmental ASB, 13.8% (-623 incidents) in personal ASB and 10.4% (-720 incidents) in nuisance ASB. Criminal damage offences did however increase slightly by 3.6% (+100 crimes). The resolved case rate for Northamptonshire Partnership Homes has also exceeded the target set, with 94.9% of cases being resolved successfully during 2015/16 (280 of 295 cases closed). The data relating to the Police public attitudes survey shows that the percentage of respondents who agreed that the Police and Council were dealing with ASB & crime issues had increased from 55.1% in 2014/15 to 57.9% in 2015/16, albeit the 59.0% target set at the beginning of the year hasn't been achieved. Performance has also declined in relation to the percentage of those surveyed reporting ASB as an issue which has increased from 5.6% in 2014/15 to 8.7% in 2015/16.

| Crime Type | 2014/15 Baseline | 2015/16 Target Reduction | Year end performance |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| All crime | 19223 recorded crimes | 5% | 4.6% increase, 884 more crimes than previous year |
| Violent Crime (including domestic abuse) | 4720 recorded crimes | 5% | 25.3% increase, 1194 more crimes than previous year |
| Serious Acquisitive Crime | 2620 recorded crimes | 6.5% | 6% increase, 158 more crimes than previous year |
| Anti-Social Behaviour incidents | 13269 recorded incidents | 5% | 14.3% reduction, 1895 less incidents than previous year |

Specific pieces of work that took place:

- Priority location work in relation to violent crime and serious acquisitive crime and target hardening for victims of burglary. Main areas for focus were Blackthorn, The Mounts/Abington Square, Spring Boroughs/Semilong, Kingsheath.

- The key focus was on violent crime for Partnership 'Weeks of Action'. With www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny
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serious acquisitive crime, anti-social behaviour, drugs & alcohol and environmental issues being included. These weeks resulted in over 1,360 face to face interactions with local residents, 142 Home Fire Safety Checks and the removal of over 8 tonnes of waste.

- Community Payback undertook 27 specific projects during the year and also supported work during all four 'Weeks of Action'. Specific multi-agency focused work on alcohol related violent crime. Closer working between Police, NBC and NGH looking at frequent flyers.
- Personal Safety awareness sessions were delivered to local businesses and schools.
- 'Prevent' training (statutory legal duty) on counter terrorism and implementing effective safeguarding systems has been delivered to the majority of NBC staff.
- The CSP Street Drinkers/Beggars/Rough Sleepers Multi-Agency meetings continue, with a case management approach being taken to provide support and address any offending behaviour. There are currently 40 individuals being monitored and case managed through this process.
- Awareness training on Child Sexual Exploitation has been provided for all NBC front line officers and Councilor's. Specific training and awareness raising has also been provided for taxi operators and drivers, seeing over 200 people attending. Supplementing this awareness raising materials have also been distributed to all taxi operators premises and is displayed within NBC premises.
- Target Hardening of properties at risk of burglary continues. 52 properties had improved security measures implemented.
- Target hardening for victims of Domestic Abuse being provided. Over 80 victims received security improvements to their home.
- Street Football continued in hot spot locations.
- School Pastors continue to operate at Northampton Academy and have also been launched at Weston Favell Academy, with regular patrols taking place on Thursday's and Friday's with pastoral support being provided as and when required. The team have been well received and feedback from pupils and staff has been positive. Excellent working with Weston Favell Centre.
- Kingsheath Community Hub was launched in June 2015, headed up by the local Police Sector, NBC Wardens and Housing. To date over 181 residents have utilised the resource. Data collected for both the Kingsheath and the Spring Borough's 'Hub' locations has shown a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour.

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- Killing with Kindness campaign continues, raising awareness around street begging issues, and encouraging people to donate to local charities who provide support for this group.
- Specific events held at University of Northampton and Northampton College, providing crime prevention and personal safety advice, support and guidance to students. Security marking of property and bicycles was also undertaken.
- Work on anti-social behaviour cases continues with 107 referrals being received by ASBU in 2015/16, a 34% increase on referrals received for the previous year. This resulted in the 26 warning letters being issued and 2 Criminal Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, 2 Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, 2 Criminal Behaviour Orders, 11 Community Protection Warning letters and Notices and 1 Injunction to Prevent Nuisance & Annoyance being granted.
- Junior Warden's scheme continues, with a further 3 primary schools taking part.
- Through the Partnership Grants process, funding has been allocated to domestic abuse support agencies to provide support for victims and their families.
- Language Café continues in the Mounts/Spring Boroughs/Semilong area linking in with individuals who are experiencing difficulty in communicating, as English is not their first language. The project now runs from the Good Loaf. The first 6 months of the project saw 27 people taking part, with excellent results. 1 person has found employment, with a further 2 about to commence a work programme. The majority are now able to communicate at a good level and have more confidence in speaking with professionals. The sessions give the opportunity to provide information on benefits, health and welfare issues and the support that is available, with other voluntary sector groups providing support.

Partnership Weeks of Action

Partnership Weeks of Action have been a key delivery model during 2015/16. These 'Weeks' were held in the four priority areas as identified by the police and NCSP as high in Violent Crime, Serious Acquisitive Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour. The areas also mirrored the authority's hotspots for fly-tipping and other social disorder.

During the weeks there were a number of coordinated activities across each of the areas which included:

- Community Engagement
- Personal Safety
- Awareness raising around drug and alcohol abuse
- Crime prevention and home security advice
- Target Hardening & Home Security Checks
- Property and bicycle marking

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- Dog chipping
- Rubbish removal and community clean-up activities
- Community Payback carrying out landscaping improvements and other clean-up activities
- Environmental improvements
- Fire Service carrying out Home Fire Safety checks and fitting smoke alarms
- Housing enforcement activity
- Police enforcement activity
- Multi-agency Licensing checks
- Promotion and education around recycling and the Green Bag system and Euro-bins
- Family Fun Days – linking in with the ‘Our Place’ programme and local community centres
- Youth engagement and supporting activities
- Sports activities

It is important to note that up to 2014/15 Community Safety Partnerships received government funding that sat with the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. This funding was withdrawn for 2015/16, therefore all activity delivered has mainly been supported from existing NBC resources.

Conclusion

The Community Safety Partnership has seen reduced performance against the majority of targets during 2015/16 performance. However, good reductions have been achieved in anti-social behaviour. Overall crime is continuing to increase, but at a slower rate than 2014/15. Violent crime continues to increase, alongside an increase in Serious Acquisitve Crime for the first time in 5 years. The CSP are working closely with partners agencies. There are a number of initiatives being implemented that should have a positive impact and ensure that an effective multi-agency approach will be taken in tackling crime and disorder issues during 2016/17.

Brief Author: Debbie Ferguson, Community Safety Partnership Manager on behalf of Councillor Mike Hallam, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety – June 2016

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