

SCRUTINY PANEL 2 – The Move of the University of Northampton

Response from Sgt Lorna CLARKE – University Policing Team

CORE QUESTIONS:

- 1 Please provide information of the work being undertaken by:

The University of Northampton, Northampton Borough Council (NBC), and other partners to support the relocation of the University (*specific organisation to be put to the specific expert advisor e.g NBC to the Cabinet Member*)

I manage a team of 5 PC's who all work solely within the University of Northampton. We are based at the Waterside Campus, but cover all 5 University sites across Northampton. My team works very closely with campus security supporting any issues that would affect both our departments.

Students have settled well into the Waterside Campus and are used to seeing my team out and about, we are developing a positive relationship with the students to encourage engagement and flow of information.

The bulk of our work at the University relates to crime investigation/disruption and prevention.

- 2 Please provide your opinion on the social, cultural, physical, economic and environmental effects of the move of the University. *Please can you aim to keep your response to this question to a maximum of 250 words*

The University has a unique demographic in that the bulk of the students living on site are aged 18-21. Although they live across 4 of the University sites their move onto waterside has been the most disruptive for the residents of this area as they are not at all used to this.

There is increased tensions between residents off the New South Bridge Road entrance to the University and they have raised several complaints with police and the University about parking and anti-social behaviour. The University has arranged residents meeting to acknowledge and then try and address these concerns, but this will be an ongoing piece of work.

Police are supporting by disrupting any criminal behaviour on the campus, we have taken steps wherever possible to identify suspects and proceed against them where evidence supports. Where this is not possible we assist with collating the evidence for the discipline procedures. This supports the university by enabling them to take tough action against those few students who are intent on causing disturbance to others and in the long term will make for a better environment at the University for both the students and the residents.

The students do spend their money in the local area, they can often be seen off campus in the nearby shops, which supports the local business to this site. I am not aware on an increase in criminality at these business.

- 3 Please provide your views on the positive impact and challenges, across the various areas of the town, in respect of the move of the University. *(NB the various areas such as town centre, Bedford Road, Far Cotton, Beckett's Park, Avenue Campus, Park Campus, Kingsthorpe village will be included in this core question to the relevant expert advisor)*

This move has increased the footfall to all local business, St Leonards Road is nearby and contains a lot of small 'unbranded' business and students can often be seen in and around this area and will shop local to this site. They also now have easy access to the town centre and I understand the night-time economy has seen additional numbers especially around student nights, which is now Monday and Wednesday.

Becketts Park has also had an increase of CCTV and lighting as a result of the move with the 'safe-route' for students running up the westerly edge. During the daytime the park also has more people using it from the students attending the site.

The main challenges are around the parking and anti-social behaviour that local residents are struggling with. Police and the University are working with residents to work through solutions to try and tackle this issue.

My team specifically are looking to disrupt drug dealing in this area, this is not a new issue to this area, but would have increased with the move of the university.

We are tackling this on the streets around this area but also our presence on campus means we can address this from the inside. We are actively targeting anyone who has infiltrated the University purely for criminal means.

- 4 Do you have any other information, concerns or suggestions you wish to raise in relation to the move of the University of Northampton?

The move of the University has brought a huge change to the residents of Far Cotton, this was always going to happen, but the University is engaging with them to support them through. This will settle down in time but will be assisted by some positive changes, especially in terms of parking.

The other side of the University is parkland and the larger business' off Bedford Road, and there have been minimal issues this side.

The easier access to the town centre means the students can access and financially support services and business there. Them now easily accessing the 'High Street' rather than out of town shopping areas, can only bring a much needed boost to this area.

While there are clearly some challenges with putting this many students into a new location I believe the wider picture as above, and with the introduction of the policing team at the university, should result in overall this move being positive.