

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

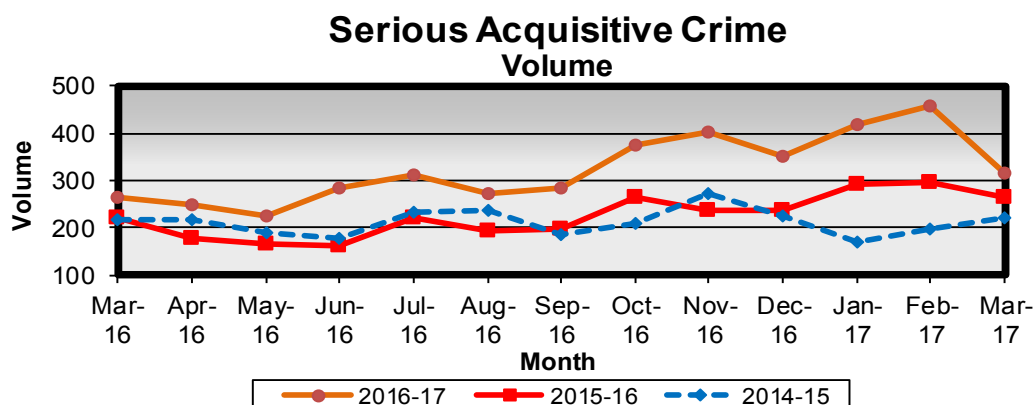
Briefing paper – Serious Acquisitive Crime

Background

All crime levels in Northampton have fluctuated considerably over the past five years. Rates were relatively stable between March 2011 and March 2013, but a significant reduction in all recorded crime followed until March 2014. All crime has risen steadily since then with March 2016 seeing similar levels of recorded crime as in March 2011. Most aspects of the local picture generally reflect national crime trends, with some common patterns due to key changes in police recording of crime. The Police recorded 4.4 million offences nationally in the year ending December 2015 which was an increase of over 7.0% in comparison to the previous year when just over 4.1 million offences were recorded. 39 of the 44 forces of saw an increase in total recorded crimes.

Serious Acquisitive Crime (SAC) is a crime group consisting of theft from and theft of motor vehicles, domestic burglary and robbery offences (personal and business). There have been fluctuations in levels of SAC over the last five years. There was a steady increase in SAC offences recorded between mid-2011 and February 2013 (+30.5% / +953 offences). Strong reductions were seen in the following two and a half years and by August 2015 SAC offences had reduced by over 40% (-1647 crimes). Rates of SAC have since begun to rise with an increase of 46% (+1,239 crimes) when comparing 2016/17 to 2015/16, which has largely been attributed to an increase in vehicle offences.

Figures for 2016/17 are, 2087 thefts from vehicle, 437 thefts of vehicle, 277 robberies and 1029 domestic burglaries. In total a 45.3% increase in Serious Acquisitive Crime



www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Call 01604 837046 or 01604 837408

E-mail: scrutiny@northampton.gov.uk

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

Facts & Actions

- Gender is a significant factor within the SAC offender cohort, with males being by far the most likely to commit acquisitive offences. Comparatively, gender doesn't appear to be such a key indicator in relation to victims, as the gender split between males and females becomes more aligned.
- Offenders are most likely to be aged 15-19 years for all three crime types within SAC, however, victims are more likely to be within a wider age group of 20-49 years.
- Robbery is the only crime type where offending peaks at a particular age group with 15-19 year olds most likely to be victims of robbery offences.
- Mixed race ethnicities are significantly overrepresented in the offender cohort in comparison to the general population where as white other, black and Asian ethnic groups all account for a greater percentage of victims in comparison to their population sizes within Northampton.
- There is a well evidenced link between serious acquisitive crime and illegal drug use, with daily users likely to be responsible for half of all serious acquisitive crime in an area. That said, recent analysis of those arrested for serious acquisitive crime offences indicates that there has been an increase in non-drug users being arrested, suggesting perhaps that the economic recession may be impacting additionally on serious acquisitive crime rate.
- Given that a significant proportion of residential burglars gain access through open windows and unlocked doors, our approach to tackling burglary involves large scale public education about how to reduce risk and prevent burglary. We also undertake a programme of property marking and target hardening of vulnerable households, including those that are victims of burglary in order to prevent re-victimisation. This approach is further supported by partnership Weeks of Action in priority locations.
- Focus is also placed on ensuring that drug offenders involved in burglary are prioritised for attention by drug treatment providers and the management of offenders is supported through improving access to housing and employment opportunities.
- Targeting of known serious acquisitive crime offenders continues, with a number of successful arrests and prosecutions being achieved this year.
- Early intervention work with young people and their families is key in addressing youth crime. A multi-agency Early Intervention Hub is being piloted in the east of Northampton. The purpose of the 'Hib' is to make contact with young people at risk of involvement in crime and gang related activity, to engage with them and their families, providing support and diverting them into other more constructive pursuits.
- Work with known young offenders to reduce their likelihood of re-offending is led by the Youth Offending Service. Key areas of focus have included: working with

www.northampton.gov.uk/scrutiny

Call 01604 837046 or 01604 837408

E-mail: scrutiny@northampton.gov.uk

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny

parents and other family members to improve outcomes for young offenders; ensuring that young offenders are engaged meaningfully in education, training or employment; and working to improve their sense of identity.

- Tackling vehicle crime is largely restricted to public information campaigns warning of the dangers on leaving vehicles unlocked with property on display. In addition, Car Safe operations, supported by high visibility patrols are being run in hot spot locations.

Conclusion

Serious Acquisitive Crime still remains a priority for the Community Safety Partnership, and partners continue to work together to tackle the underlying issues.

Debbie Ferguson
Community Safety Manager