

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11 January 2021

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 – Priorities

The Community Safety Strategy was refreshed in March 2020. The partnership has used the Police's annual Strategic Assessment to help determine the priorities for the partnership. The Assessment collates considerable information and data, detailing levels of crime and anti-social behaviour that enables the Community Safety Partnership to consider the current position and any changing circumstances or emerging issues that could necessitate different approaches or interventions.

Certain other considerations have been considered in addition to recorded figures, that have helped to identify those areas of work that now form the priorities contained in this new Community Safety Strategy 2020-2022. Including; volume of crime, level of harm and community concern, the impact on our communities and victims and how much added value can the partnership give.

In addition, existing and emerging national priorities, policing priorities included in both Northamptonshire Police's Control Strategy and the Police and Fire Crime Commissioner's Policing and Crime Plan, are also considered.

Northampton Community Safety Partnership has established a strong Community Engagement Network. The need for local people to be given an opportunity to voice their

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views and opinions is important in achieving longer-term change and improving community safety.

The partnership regularly asks the community to identify what their greatest community safety concern is in their neighbourhood. These results are analysed every three months and used to set the locally identified priorities.

These have been reflected in the priorities going forward. A new two-year strategy has been developed to reflect the current priorities.

From the analysis undertaken, the feedback from our communities and understanding the current risks, harm and threats the following community safety priorities have been identified for 2020-22.

These have been reflected in the priorities going forward.

- 1. Serious Organised Crime – including gangs, knife crime, youth violence and modern slavery*
- 2. Interpersonal Violence – including domestic abuse and sexual violence*
- 3. Anti-Social Behaviour, Hate Crime and Town Centre Disorder – including community cohesion, alcohol related violence and prevent duty*
- 4. Serious Acquisitive Crime – Burglary, robbery and vehicle crime*

An action plan has been developed, which provides further details several SMART actions, detailing how the Partnership Strategy will be delivered. The action plan is an evolving document, which is updated bi-monthly.

Actual Performance

The Home Office places Community Safety Partnerships in groups considered to have enough similar characteristics to allow a meaningful comparison of their crime rates: this is known as the Most Similar Group.

Using data obtained from the Home Office iQuanta system we are able to produce the table below. There are thirteen crime types on the table and a headline category of all crime.

The Current Position column tells us whether performance is in line with, Above or Below the upper and lower control limits from the average for the Group; the Distance column gives the difference between our crime rate and that average, with the arrow indicating whether this distance has improved or worsened compared to the year-end figure.

Next we have our Rank within the Group, with lower numbers indicating better comparative crime figures. The final column shows the current Crime Rate per 1,000 head of population and the same measure at the 2019/20 year-end.

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Crime Type	Most Similar Group			Crime Rate (per 1,000)	
	Current Position	Distance from Average	Rank	current	2019/20
All Crime	Inline	5.5%	10	107.74	110.36
Robbery	Inline	8.9%	10	1.54	1.89
Theft from Vehicle	Inline	27.9%	12	6.31	7.92
Theft of Vehicle	Below	-25.9%	5	1.42	1.55
Theft from the Person	Below	-40.2%	2	0.70	0.98
Shoplifting	Inline	-17.7%	6	5.57	7.09
All Other Theft	Inline	-3.3%	6	7.32	8.01
Violent Crime	Inline	6.2%	10	50.31	46.53
Sexual Offences	Above	51.5%	14	4.91	4.64
Racially Aggravated Offences	Inline	9.4%	11	1.72	1.42
Drug Offences	Inline	17.9%	14	4.90	4.52
Criminal Damage	Inline	-2.9%	7	9.94	10.68
Burglary - Residential	Below	-20.7%	6	9.20	10.85
Burglary - Business/Community	Above	50.8%	15	2.61	3.59

Data from the Home Office lags by a month; the table above shows data for the twelve months to the end of August 2020, while the rest of the figures quoted in this report come from Northamptonshire Police and are for the year to the end of September.

The picture from this table is positive, with the overall crime rate falling despite the increase in violent crime.

Public disorder offences have risen and while some are attributable to COVID breaches, the upward trend preceded lockdown. The rise in drug offences is attributable to an increase in enforcement. There has been a significant drop in burglary residential; this occurred across the county and, while the lockdown has obviously had an effect, it should be noted that this type of crime reduced by 32.0% in 2019/20, as the result of a Police initiative which devoted more resources. Burglary residential is now 20% below the average for the Group. Burglary business has also fallen, although this decrease only began in March 2020.

Violent crime accounted for 41.8% of the crime recorded in the town, making it the most significant category. Recorded violent offences for the year rose by 17.5% and the Partnership's crime rate is now 6.2% above the average for our Most Similar Group. Violent crime breaks down as 43.4% without injury, 29.0% with injury and 27.4% stalking and harassment.

Domestic violence accounts for 35.0% of all violent offences: offences with a domestic flag rose by 23.2% in the year to the end of September, while the figures for other violent offences increased by 14.6%.

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Incidents of anti-social behaviour recorded by Northamptonshire Police increased by 27.8% during the year to the end of September. Police have been recording reports of breaches of the COVID regulations as anti-social behaviour offences and it is this which has been the main driver behind the increase in anti-social behaviour reports in the first four months of 2020/21.

A secondary measure for anti-social behaviour is criminal damage: figures for the Partnership decreased by 8.2% compared with 2019/20.

Impact of COVID-19

The coronavirus pandemic has created huge and immediate challenges across the country. Many organisations have had to adapt swiftly to continue supporting the people who need them.

Over the past few months, with the support of a network of key officers, partners and the community and voluntary sector we have been providing support and coordinating requests to support those most vulnerable in our communities.

In response to the COVID19 pandemic, the Community Safety and Engagement Team, since March have been coordinating the requests that have been coming into Northampton's community resilience hub.

More than 1,200 vulnerable people in Northampton have requested help and been supported with emergency food deliveries, food collection, shopping, furniture collection, prescription collections, emotional and mental health issues, loneliness and social isolation and financial support.

We are working with several organisations, we recognise the importance in continuing these relationships and providing support to these groups at neighbourhood level post COVID19 – we are looking to do this through the community safety and engagement team and our existing multi-agency neighbourhood working groups.

We will work with our local infrastructure organisations, to ensure we support new and existing groups and volunteers and identify emerging issues around health inequalities, community cohesion and mental health, all of which have a significant impact on the delivery of our Community Safety Strategy as they are causal factors towards crime and anti-social behaviour.

Specific pieces of work that have taken place in the last six months, since the last report in July 2020 include:

- Delivered and supported the following community engagement events, bringing our communities together, including; International Day for Persons with a Disability **virtual event**, International Men's Day **virtual event**, Windrush **virtual event**, Srebrenica **virtual event**.
- In addition to the £982,410 administered to the community and voluntary sector, through Direct Grants, Cllrs Community Fund, Small Grants Fund and the

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Partnership Grant. £90,000 has been distributed to community and voluntary organisations across the borough through Cllr COVID specific grants. These organisations are delivering positive outcomes to improve the quality of life of our residents living in the Town, many of which have an impact on reducing crime and improving community safety.

- Street Pastor Scheme continues to operate in the Town Centre, on bank holidays and pay weekends.
- Taxi Marshal Scheme, two taxi marshals providing cover Friday and Saturday evenings, pay weekends and bank holidays resumed.
- Purple Flag reaccreditation scheme for the Town Centre achieved.
- Renewal of the Town wide Public Spaces Protection Order, giving additional enforcement powers, to tackle varying forms of anti-social behavior including street drinking.
- Renewal of PSPO for the gating of Marble Arch.
- Jeyes Jetty Public Spaces Protection Order approved as well as planning permission for the gates granted. Gates are being made and installation to occur imminently.
- Installation of gate at Wilson Farm Track. This, along with continuous enforcement from both the police and wardens, has been done to help prevent issues surrounding constant fly tipping and fires, which on average occurs twice a week. Issues are still on going but CCTV is due to be installed in the new year.
- The multi-agency case management meetings for Anti-Social Behaviour and Hate Crime, Cuckooing and Youth Violence – all taking place via the zoom platform.
- Our Anti-Social Behaviour Officers are working in partnership with the local policing team, in tackling anti-social behaviour, serious organised crime, and begging and youth violence, they have achieved the following:
 - There are currently 25 active cases being managed by the Anti-Social Behaviour Case Managers.
 - 31 CPW's (Community Protection Warning Letters) have been issued – 21 for neighbour disputes, 7 for verbal abuse and threatening behaviour, 1 for cuckooing, 1 for aggressive begging and 1 for an out of control dog.
 - 8 CPN's (Community Protection Notices) have been issued – 2 for neighbour disputes, 3 for verbal abuse and threatening behaviour and 3 for aggressive begging
 - 2 x Cuckooing injunctions have been obtained on 2 prolific offenders who have been persistently targeting the most vulnerable residents in Northampton.
 - A 3 month Closure Notice and a 3 month Closure Order extension was obtained on a property which had caused high levels of alarm and distress to other residents due to the many incidents of ASB, crime, drug taking and drug dealing.
 - 10 x neighbour disputes (13 CPW's (Community Protection Warning's) and 1

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- CPN (Community Protection Notice) issued)
 - 6 x street drinkers/beggars (2 CPW and 2 CPN's issued)
 - 2 x female perpetrator targeting vulnerable individuals for money/place to stay etc (1 CPW and 1 CPN issued)
 - 1 x youth nuisance (1 Acceptable Behaviour Contract issued)
 - 3 x perpetrators causing harassment, verbal abuse, threatening behaviour (2 CPN's issued)
 - 4 x gang related/ASB injunctions have been submitted to deal with gang violence on the Eastern part of the Town.
 - 7 x CPW's issued and 1 ASB injunction and 1 Cuckooing injunction being progressed to tackle issues on the North East part of the Town.
- Youth Providers Network is working to identify gaps in youth services/provision in the Borough. Coordinating the activity and youth spaces that are developing in the Town. Bringing partners together to work collaboratively as our youth offer continues to grow and develop.
- Through the funding secured from the Home Office's Trusted Relationships Fund, Free2Talk continue to deliver youth services in four of our priority neighbourhood areas, increasing the support available to the town's most vulnerable young people. Delivering interventions and mentoring to young people most at risk of getting involved in knife crime and anti-social behaviour. Including the recently established 'safe zone' in McDonalds in the Town Centre, part of our focus on contextual safeguarding.
- Specific engagement work, in Thorplands (due to being identified as a police priority area and recognising the need for a multi-agency approach to build community resilience). Including hand delivered letters to residents, engagement sessions and bike marking session, designed to improve confidence and increase reporting. Funding secured for joint basketball/youth worker project.
- Support given to police for St David's Day of Action in May. Environmental work planned for the New Year.
- Development work of the augmented reality app for the Knife Angel started including filming interviews with key people involved in tackling violence and gang related issues.
- Promoted and supported Police knife amnesty events in Town Centre in December.
- Supported police with a number of bike marking events, in Abington Park (July & August) with approx. 120 bikes marked over the 2 sessions. In Wootton, Briair Hill, St James. Each session had over 60 bikes marked with Wootton receiving over 80.
- Target hardening continues of properties of vulnerable residents, that have been victims of anti-social behaviour, hate crime or domestic abuse.

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- Community and engagement newsletter – issued weekly through our community engagement network, providing community safety messages and campaigns, details of events and general updates.

Specific pieces of work that will take place in the next three months:

- Develop virtual community safety package for schools, with partners – to be rolled out in our primary schools.
- Develop a programme of days and weeks of action.
- Continue to plan with partners a range of activity, focusing on anti-violence messages and activity to coincide with the arrival of the knife angel which has been put back to May 2021.
- Youth forum have started planning the ‘youth app’ in partnership with communication and digital teams at NBC, the app will allow young people to see what youth provision there is in the Town, searchable by location.
- Environmental works in St David’s (cutting down and removal of shrubbery) to be undertaken in January.
- Youth project to start in Thorplands (joint basketball/youth worker led) and will be tackling issues like team building and conflict management.
- Concentrated community resilience and engagement work planned for Blackthorn similar to that recently carried out in Thorplands.
- Community engagement sessions booked for Thorplands and Blackthorn in January (and ongoing).
- Planning for a month-long campaign for West Northamptonshire against violence and aggression continues for the Knife Angel visit in May 2021 and coordinating activities with those planned by North Northamptonshire.
- Coordinated joint enforcement day across the south west targeted untaxed vehicles and fly tipping. Key areas included Kings Heath, Briar Hill, St James and St Crispins.
- Installation of gates at Jeyes Jetty under the PSPO.
- PSPO going to Cabinet in January 2021 with view to gate Dunster Street alley in March 2021 as part of the OPFCC ‘Safer Streets’ project.
- Supporting the OPFCC to deliver on the Safer Streets project delivering home and vehicle security packs to 1900 homes in the Castle Ward (Wellingborough Road area)

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Conclusion

We have seen an overall crime reduction in the Town, for many of the individual specific crime types. However violent crime continues to be an issue for the partnership and a focus for the strategy going forward.

The CSP continues to work closely with partner agencies, particularly the Police, the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, East Midlands Ambulance Service, Youth Offending Service, University of Northampton and Community and Voluntary Organisations to deliver activities that will tackle our key issues.

Despite the COVID pandemic, the partnership has been able to deliver against the priorities set out in the Community Safety Strategy 2020-22, whilst supporting the response offered through the community resilience hub and engaging with our communities to ensure the public health messages are being received.

There are several planned actions as set out above to be delivered over the next 3-6 months.

Brief Author: Vicki Rockall, Community Safety & Engagement Manager on behalf of Councillor Anna King, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety & Engagement – December 2020