

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
SOCIAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 21 JANUARY 2019
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 District Councils have a mandatory duty to act as a “responsible authority” on their local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), in order to plan and deliver measures to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, to reduce offending and promote assurances to the public whilst working together with other statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- 1.2 The Welwyn Hatfield CSP, over the past twelve months, has had major successes in tackling youth anti-social behaviour (ASB), delivering the borough’s first Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) and the implementation of the Police and Crime Commissioner funded youth engagement project ‘Positive Pathways’.
- 1.3 The Partnership developed an area based approach this year, which has focused activity on priority areas which have been identified as needing focussed attention in order to reduce crime and disorder. The CSP Action Plan has been shared publicly to increase visibility of the work of the partnership within the communities it is set up to help. It also launched its first Three Year Plan in December 2018 (attached at Appendix Two).

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee note the report of the Community Safety Partnership’s successful work over the past 12 months.
- 2.2 That the committee note that the risk of crime locally remains low, however the Partnership still works to continue to both reduce crime and the affect crime has on residents of the borough.
- 2.3 The committee formally supports the partnership’s ongoing commitment and work to reduce youth ASB and to tackle emerging issues such as ‘county lines’ and serious violence.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The composition of the CSP can be found in Appendix One which also sets out the variety of subgroups that form the CSP. Appendix Two sets out a copy of the CSP’s Three Year Plan, which provides the partnership with some strategic direction as it works to make this borough a safer place to live and work.

Crime Statistics

- 3.2 Current trends with regards to crime within the borough in 2018

Crimes compared between the following dates:

01/04/2017-10/12/2017 and 01/04/18-10/12/2018

- **Burglary (Residential)**

275 this year compared with 274 last year. An increase of 0.4%.

Burglary residential has fallen across the county by 8.9%.

78 offences have taken place within Welwyn Hatfield West Ward. This is the highest concentration of offences across the district. This ward contains areas such as the University Halls and multi occupancy residencies which traditionally suffer an increase in burglary at the start of University term.

The rural area of the South of the district has suffered 68 offences and Welwyn North (WGC) has had 71 offences.

Proactive operations have taken place this year around dwelling burglary such as Operation Guardian – we have deployed 25 Ring CCTV doorbell cameras across the district in high risk areas, following the successful arrest of a prolific burglar whose image was taken at the scene of a burglary of an elderly male with dementia.

- **Burglary (Business and community)**

112 this year compared with 92 last year. An increase of 21.7%

Burglary (business and community) has reduced across the county by 12.3%

Burglary (business and community) has fallen across the county, however we have seen an increase locally - in particular in Welwyn Garden City. The industrial parks and commercial units in the Mundells and Bessemer Road were targeted in the autumn. This was an issue across the South East with Screwfix premises in particular being targeted which has caused the increase locally.

- **Robbery**

66 offences compares with 86 last year. A decrease of 23.3%.

Hertfordshire has seen a reduction in robbery offences of 5.2%.

At the start of the year there was a particular focus on prevention of robbery within the CSP; an influx of 'out of county' offenders to the district caused concern, over the winter they seem to have dropped off. Robust management of known offenders have seen these offences decrease over the last few months.

- **Shoplifting**

620 offences compares with 607 last year. An increase of 2.1%

Hertfordshire as a whole has seen an increase of 8.5%.

The district has seen a slight increase in shoplifting year to date, most notably in the Hatfield West area which include Asda, Hatfield town Centre and the Galleria. More resources have been put into the Town Centre as a deterrent and to enable a robust approach to repeat offenders. New processes have been introduced to improve the management of prolific offenders. Proactive 'Operation Shave' took

place over the Christmas period, where we historically see a rise in the number of offences. This has involved both plain clothes enforcement and crime prevention. Better engagement with business has also taken place with more signing up to Business Watch.

- **All Crime**

Welwyn Hatfield is currently 4 out of 10 for crime volume across the county. We are also 4th with regard to our crime reduction over the year.

Crime is currently 1% under what it was at this point last year. Again the highest proportion by a small margin is Hatfield West.

Nearly 40% of the crime reported within the CSP is detected.

Various initiatives across the year have all contributed to these steady figures and an uplift in Safer Neighbourhood Team numbers, as vacancies have been filled, has also had an impact.

Closer working with partners on projects such as Woodhall Shopping Parade and Parkhouse Court have all seen a reduction in demand on police resources and crime levels.

Safeguarding remains one of the Constabulary's key priorities, this includes ongoing work with the care homes in the district including managing vulnerable people placed in district from outside boroughs.

3.3 **Public order and harassment offences**

- **Harassment**

417 compared to 316 last year. An increase of 13.9%

Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 20%.

A change in the way these offences are recorded has caused a slight increase across the county and this borough. Stalking and harassment legislation now run hand in hand, meaning every time a report is received, a crime of harassment is now recorded as well as a crime of stalking. This is in essence a good news story, as we encourage these reports to ensure victims are appropriately safeguarded.

- **Public Fear, Alarm or Distress**

444 offences compared to 395 last year. An increase of 12.4%.

Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 10.3% across the county.

An increase in public order offences in Hatfield West and Hatfield North can be attributed to several reasons. Woodhall and the Town Centre in Welwyn Garden City has contributed to these rises, with longer term work taking place to manage these issues. We have also seen an increase in offences in places such as the Galleria, with large groups of youths congregating; the implementation/enforcement of the PSPO has meant more confrontational engagement with the public, leading to an increase in recorded crimes.

- **Violence Against the Person (victim based)**

2001 offences compared to 1920. An increase of 4.2%

Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 9.3%.

Improved reporting of assaults and incidents of domestic abuse, as well as the rise in youth crime, has contributed to this rise in victim based violence. Whilst there has been an increase of 4.2% since last year, some areas of the County have experienced an increase in violent crime of up to 16%. The local increase is in part due to the multi-agency work taking place within schools and with young people and more scrutiny and robust management of licenced premises.

- **Criminal Damage**

751 compared to 786 last year. A decrease of 4.5%.

Hertfordshire has seen a reduction of criminal damage offences of 9.6%.

The work undertaken in Woodhall and through community resolutions has contributed to this reduction in reported damage. Increased awareness of what constitutes ASB has been fed into schools through the mini police programme and young people have fed back that they were unaware how ASB and criminal damage are intrinsically linked.

3.4 **Motor vehicle related crime stats**

- **Theft From Vehicle**

313 offences compared to 383 last year. A decrease in of 18.3%.

Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 8.5%.

Whilst Hertfordshire as a whole is experiencing high volumes of vehicle crime, Welwyn Hatfield has continued to produce good performance with regard to this crime type. Prevention messages, events and robust investigation have all contributed to this significant reduction in offences. Theft from vans is to be noted; events such as tool marking and advice around security have been positively received by the public.

- **Theft Of Vehicles**

92 offences compared to 85 last year. An increase of 8.2%.

Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 11.1%.

The South East has seen an increase in Theft of Motor vehicles. In particular, high value keyless thefts. These are committed by organised crime groups and crime prevention messages have regularly been advertised in order to combat this.

3.5 **Drug and substance abuse stats**

- **Drug Possession**

204 offences compare to 238 last year. A decrease of 14.3%.

Hertfordshire has seen a reduction of 11.8%.

Continuity of local scorpion officers has contributed to this reduction. Local 'users' are well known to the police and prevention measures are also now backed up with the assistance of the council around assistance and referrals. Improved management of initial logs coming into the police and the implementing of the victim service team (VST) dept. has enabled officers to be more proactive in stop and search.

- **Drug Trafficking**

46 offences compared to 44 last year. An increase of 4.5%

Hertfordshire has seen an increase of 13.8%.

Concerns around county lines have emerged within these figures with an increase in drugs trafficking. However this is only a slight increase when compared to other boroughs who have seen upwards of a 70% increase in drug trafficking in the last year. Enforcement measures such as Closure Orders have made it more difficult for Dealers to establish themselves locally. Tackling drug offences is a large piece of work which includes education, prevention and enforcement and will continue to be undertaken by the CSP to ensure our vulnerable residents do not become victims.

Community Safety Priorities

- 3.6 Priorities for 2018 were set by the CSP's Responsible Authorities Group in March of this year. The group made a judgement based on local knowledge and data to focus on different strands relating to community safety which would be taken forward by the officers best placed locally to ensure effective change and management of those areas.

1. Keep Down Crime, especially burglary at home

This priority area is led by the Herts Constabulary (Lead officer is SNT Inspector Sophia Adams).

2. Prevent Antisocial Behaviour

This priority area is led by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Lead officer is Neighbourhood and Enforcement Manager Kerry Clifford).

3. Reduce the likelihood of drugs and alcohol misuse and its impact to the community.

This priority is led by Joint Agency Group Chair (Lead officer is Community Safety Coordinator Zoe Keyte).

4. Protect Vulnerable People

This priority is led by Herts Fire and Rescue Service (Lead officer Community Engagement Officer Zoe Crossan).

5. Support People enduring or escaping Domestic Abuse, Intimidation and Harassment.

This priority is led by Joint Agency Group Chair (Lead officer Community Safety Coordinator Zoe Keyte).

2018 saw the delivery of some new projects and initiatives as well as the development and improvement of some of our annual events.

- 3.7 The Annual **Crew Crucial** event continues to educate and equip all Year Six students within the borough for the challenging transition from primary to secondary education. The Council leads on the planning of the event, which is delivered via a series of workshops, and the logistics of the day ensuring that each school is fully briefed before attending and is given where possible a time slot best suited to them. The Council engages with partners to ensure appropriate delivery of each workshop.
- 3.8 The Borough's **Community Information Days (CID)** sees very specific areas of the borough targeted. In 2018 there were five CIDs, including a full week of engagement in Welwyn Garden City during August. From these the CSP have spoken to over 520 residents and 45 businesses. The results of the surveys show that on average 32% of residents feel **very satisfied** with their local area, 52% are **fairly satisfied** and only 7.8% are **not satisfied**. In terms of safety, on average 57% of residents feel **very safe** in their local area in the daytime, 36% feel **fairly safe** and only 2% feel **very unsafe**.
- 3.9 A new 5 year **CCTV** contract/service level agreement between the council, St Albans Council and Videcom started on the 1st April 2018. This has enabled some old cameras to be updated to new modern digital cameras, as well as the recent installation of new cameras in Hatfield Town Centre.
- 3.10 The **Hatfield PSPO** was implemented during August 2018 which was managed by the borough council's Community Partnership's team, which included the development of multi-language leaflets to ensure that all members of the community understood the terms of the Order.
- 3.11 The CSP, through its partnership with the YMCA and through funding from the PCC, completed the largest **youth survey** to be undertaken across the borough in recent years. The youth survey had 2,200 responses and has enabled officers and professionals to re-look at youth provision. The survey also provides a significant evidence base, which has been used to support the recent funding application to the PCC, to help continue with our strategic approach to tackling youth ASB.
- 3.12 In addition to the youth survey, YMCA were also commissioned to complete a youth provision audit which highlighted the huge variation in activities across the borough, but showed that more free activities and opportunities need to be provided for young people.

- 3.13 The CSP were successful in a second PCC bid to attract funding to support the work of a new initiative called '**Positive Pathways**'. The initiative is a referrals process for young people who are at risk of or who have been involved in ASB, but who are willing to engage in some 121 mentoring or willing to look at different way to divert away from this behaviour. The success of this project to date is the basis of the December 2018 application to the PCC.
- 3.14 **Friday Night KICKS** was a pilot project funded by the Council to engage with young people at Gosling Sports Park. The success of the project has since attracted £15,000 of match funding to continue the project until September 2019.
- 3.15 **Woodhall** in 2016 was a key hot spot of youth level ASB, but due to the implementation of a borough 'operational group' formed to tackle lots of different issues such as waste/refuse, CCTV coverage, access, environment and diversion the ASB incidents in the area have significantly dropped. The work undertaken, especially by the Police and council, was noted when the CSP won a Chief Constables Award for the work. Work still continues in this area and officers are aware that this is a long term project.

A **Road Safety Event**, which was coordinated and pulled together by Hertfordshire Fire Service, was a huge success. The fire service tasked college students to produce a short video highlighting the risks of driving dangerously. This project tied in with their Driving Home for Christmas Campaign. Oaklands College were the overall winners with their impactful video. The event was funded by the CSP.

- 3.16 The CSP still continues its support of the Welwyn Hatfield Domestic Abuse forum, which put on several different events/promotion to tie in with **16 Days of Action against Domestic Abuse**. During the 16 days the CSP held two awareness events in both Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City town centres, Safer Places and Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline were in attendance. The CSP also promoted messages through social media and the council's clock was lit up in purple in recognition of the campaign.
- 3.17 In April 2018 the CSP held its annual Tri-District Domestic Abuse Conference with Hertsmere and St Albans Domestic Abuse Forum. The theme for the conference was Coercive Control – Making the Invisible Visible. In total there were over 180 delegates. Those in attendance heard presentations from two survivors, ManKind, Herts Police and the Crown Prosecution Service.

Other CSP items to note

- 3.18 Other significant events and projects which the partnership has been a part of through 2018 include the following:

BIG Summer
Christmas Lights Events (November)
Prince's Trust – Team Project
Hoarding Project
Operation Balsam
Local Litter Collections
Student House Visits
Heads Up Magazine
Community Champion Training
Year 9 Crucial Crew

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by subsequent Acts), district councils have a duty to plan jointly with other named responsible authorities to table the incidence of, and fear of, crime, anti-social behaviour and the misuse of drugs. This complements the council's duty under the same Act to consider the implications for crime and disorder arising from its operations, and to take account of those implications in any decisions it takes. National guidance requires that the relevant Executive Member formally represents the council on the strategic body.
- 4.2 Under the Police and Justice Act 2006 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Public Health Act 2007, district councils have a duty to scrutinise the work of the local CSP through a nominated committee, which for WHBC is the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 There are no financial implications directly related to the content of this report.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 The recognised risk that a partner might disengage from joint work is reduced in the case of the CSP because each responsible authority has a statutory duty to take part. Partners recognise the value of the CSP, and the main threat to partners' involvement arises from major legislative or organisational changes. The most significant change has been the County Community Safety Unit re-structure changes, which has seen the change in working relations between Welwyn Hatfield CSP and its County equivalent.
- 6.2 The CSP's priorities and programmes are well aligned with those of the Police and Crime Commissioner, although the CSP rightly retains its autonomy and legal accountability. Important to note that the delivery of the current Positive Pathway project is funded by the PCC and the CSP has put in a new funding application for the development of the current initiative for a further 3 years. Should this funding not be received this will reduce the resources available to assist in the delivery of the CSP's target to reduce ASB, serious violence, county-lines and knife crime.

7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 There are no implications for security and terrorism arising from this report.
- 7.2 The CSP support the governments CONTEST strategy and the Prevent agenda. The CSP delivers WRAP training to professionals and staff as well as 'Me and You' Ideology Training. WHBC sit on the County Prevent Board and also co-ordinate information requests from the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

10 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 10.1 The content of this report is linked to the council's corporate priority to '*Maintain a safe and healthy community*', however it is also linked to 'Protect and enhance the environment' and to 'engage with our communities and provide value for money'

11 Communications Plan

- 11.1 Providing community assurance is a key target of the CSP. This is done via campaigns and initiatives, as well as attending community events and delivering targeted events, such as Community Information Days. This year we have also produced the 3 Year Plan and increased visibility amongst the community of the annual Action Plan.

12 Health and Wellbeing

- 12.1 Residents of the borough should feel safe at all times and that is our key aim as a Community Safety Partnership. Feeling safe has a huge impact on the mental wellbeing of individuals as well as their physical health.
- 12.2 The CSP has also been committed to raising awareness of mental health and the issues and implications. In July the CSP held suicide prevention training for partners and staff.

13 Equality and Diversity

- 13.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with this report, as it is for information only.

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