

Briefing note for Cllr Hunter 19th January 2016

Community Safety information

The Community Safety function

- To effectively co-ordinate, both at a strategic and organisational level, the Council's involvement in the North Herts Community Safety Partnership (NHCSP).
 - NH CSP partnership includes the Council, police, fire and rescue service and other partners who work together to keep North Herts a safe place to live, work and visit
 - Production of Strategic Assessment – annual review of crime and disorder and community safety trends which supports the development of the CSP's strategic priorities and the Community Safety Action Plan
 - To lead on and also support partners in the delivery of a wide range of Council and NH CSP projects and initiatives that address community safety issues and public concerns regarding crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental crime (e.g. Community Reassurance Events, Environmental Action Days, Responsible Dog Ownership Days, ASB projects in schools)
 - Promotion of communications and social media campaigns; '12 tweets of Christmas' social media campaign to provide community safety advice to residents, Duty of Care fly-tipping campaign to support the responsible disposal of waste so that it is not fly-tipped)
- To lead on the development of Council and NH CSP strategies, policies and plans (e.g. Strategic Assessment, Community Safety Action Plan, ASB and Enviro-crime procedures)
- To oversee the operational investigation and enforcement of relevant national and local legislation as regards anti-social behaviour and environmental crime (environmental crime part of Cllr Lovewell's portfolio)
- The Community Safety team comprises one Community Safety Manager, one Anti-social Behaviour Officer and two Enviro-crime Officers.

Current work programme (highlights only, list not exhaustive/comprehensive)

- Management of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime complaints
- Servicing the North Herts Community Safety Partnership
- Administration of the NH CSP Community Safety Fund
- Implementation of the Prevent duty following on from the Counter terrorism and Security Act 2015. Council has a legal obligation to prevent vulnerable individuals from being drawn into extremist or terrorist activity
- Supporting the corporate implementation of the new ASB, Crime and Policing legislation (e.g. management of the Community Trigger Case Review process)
- Continuing to deliver social media campaigns and communications to promote and raise awareness to a wider audience in regard to community safety issues such as

fly-tipping, dog fouling, safer internet usage, child sexual exploitation domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour

- Continuing to deliver community safety projects and initiatives (e.g. 17th February supporting the Police-led Rural Barn Meet in Royston to discuss rural crime issues with residents, 20th February leading on the delivery of the EAD on the Jackmans Estate; 28th February supporting Garden City Hospice charity dog walk on Norton Common to promote responsible dog ownership with regards to dog fouling issues; supporting the delivery of the Herts Fire and Rescue service OPALs¹ event in Royston in March; joint working with the fire service to launch the community horse watch patrol scheme in the southern rural area/outskirts of Hitchin to combat fly-tipping and other enviro-crime issues by March 2016.

Key Challenges

- The current economic climate and continued central government budget cuts may result in an increase in crime and a reduction in partner's resources to deal with crime and community safety issues
- Maintaining a strong and effective partnership to operate as a collective in delivering the community safety agenda in North Herts effectively and in a coordinated way
- North Herts is seen as a high performing Community Safety Partnership and is a low crime area, as a result there may be an additional risk of further financial cuts in organisational service areas
- The impact of the Police and Crime Commissioner's policy directives on the functioning of local Community Safety Partnership's and the likelihood of the withdrawal of the Community Safety Fund budget in the near future
- Whilst community tensions within the district are low, current government foreign policy and community tensions elsewhere within the country could contribute to raising tensions locally regarding radicalisation, terrorism and extremism
- An increase in the number of large scale events delivered within the district
- Increased population density associated with proposed new housing developments and the subsequent increase in vehicles using trunk roads
- The on-going impact of changes to social housing eligibility criteria and changes to housing benefits following on from Central Government reforms of social housing and the welfare system
- The on-going impact of Central Government's 'Transforming Rehabilitation' programme and how probation services will be delivered in North Herts in the future

¹ OPAL's – Older Peoples Activity and Learning event to provide useful community safety information

Key Performance Indicators (taken from this years NH CSP draft strategic assessment between 1st August 2014 to 31st July 2015)

- There has been a 0.9% decrease in the number of anti-social behaviour (ASB) incidents in North Herts compared to the same period last year, with 19 less reported cases.
- The NH CSP is currently showing crime reductions, year on year, in the following 'priority crime categories':
 - o Burglary Other – down 5.3% (21 offences)
 - o Dwelling Burglary – down 21.2% (73 offences)
 - o Possession of drugs – down 55.3% (226 offences)
 - o Shoplifting – down by 2.5% (13 offences)
 - o Trafficking of drugs – down 77.3% (85 offences)
 - o Vehicle Crime – down 3.7% (14 offences)
- However, offences related to, alcohol-related crime, domestic abuse, fly-tipping, violence against the person (plus also night-time violence against the person) and youth offending have increased during this period.
- The key finding from this Strategic Assessment (based on data between 1st August 2014 to 31st July 2015) is that overall reported crime in North Hertfordshire is lower than the county average with no areas experiencing severe or longstanding crime and disorder problems. North Hertfordshire is one of the highest performing Community Safety Partnerships in the county and has the second lowest crime figures compared to the rest of the county; with 40.8 crimes per 1000 of the population in comparison to 52.4 crimes per 1000 of the population for Hertfordshire. In comparison to the same period last year, total crime figures have decreased by 2.8% (149 offences). NB NH CSP priorities for 2016/17 will be set by RAG in February 2016 having regard to this public consultation and current community safety and crime and disorder issues.

Council Performance Indicators (as of December 2015 compared to the same period last year)

- ASB cases reported to the Community Safety Team have increased by 9% (+3 cases) in comparison to the same period previous year
- Abandoned Vehicle reports to the Community Safety Team have increased by 15% (+29 reports) in comparison to the same period previous year
- Dog fouling reports to the Community Safety Team has increased by 24% (+22 reports) in comparison to the same period previous year
- Fly-tipping incidents have increased by 27% (+150 incidents) in comparison to the same period previous year
- Fly-tipping investigation by the Community Safety Team have increased by 19% (+31 investigations) in comparison the same period previous year