

30 July 2013

**Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Community Safety – Roles,
responsibilities and statistics**

Ward(s) All

Portfolios Cllr Z Ali - Public Health and Protection

1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 This report has been prepared in order to afford members an overview of some of the partner activity currently in place across the borough to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. This is a large and varied area of work that requires input from statutory and voluntary agencies as well as our communities in order to tackle its many strands. Most of this activity is carried out through the agencies that form Safer Walsall Partnership and is overseen by the Safer Walsall Policing and Crime Board.

1.2 The recently launched Community Safety Plan (2013 refresh) outlines the strategic priorities for the borough as identified within the latest strategic assessment, an analytical document that uses intelligence and data from partner agencies to identify key and emerging issues, priority areas and performance levels.

Anti-social behaviour remains one of these strategic priorities and features in all six are plans. Despite a reduction in reporting levels, the perception of residents is that ASB remains a big issue in our neighbourhoods. These perceptions are usually influenced by things that have happened in the past, the media and often a misconception of what actually constitutes ASB.

Agencies currently working together to tackle ASB include the Police, Local Authority, West Midlands Fire and Rescue, whg and our other registered social landlords, who have a range of specific tools and powers that can be used to tackle behaviour that may constitute a breach of tenancy conditions.

1.3 Future development in this area of work includes a focus group consisting of the local authority, police and representatives from our RSLs who are working together to develop better coordination of activity and an improved customer experience.

The planned co-location of police and council officers will further enhance this coordination by improving direct communication and tasking.

1.4 The council's Community Safety Team also delivers a number of key activities, such as the delivery of domestic homicide reviews, community cohesion

and counter terrorism work and security improvement projects (gates, fences etc.,) In addition, colleagues in Regulatory Services and Clean and Green make a significant contribution to this agenda by tackling environmental nuisance such as fly-tipping and graffiti, doorstep crime and alcohol related issues. A key piece of work currently underway is the development of an enforcement working group tasked with increasing, coordinating and improving our enforcement activity through utilising the skills and potential of our existing teams.

1.5 The role of PCSOs will be a key part of this work as they hold a number of enforcement powers, particularly in terms of their powers to issue fixed penalty notices.

2.0 Reason for scrutiny

Members have expressed a wish to understand who is responsible for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and have specifically requested information on the role of Police Community Support Officers.

3.0 Recommendations

Panel is asked to note the contents of this report

4.0 Background papers

The most up to date performance data will be tabled at the meeting. In addition, the latest Community Safety Plan will shortly be available at www.walsallpartnership.org.uk

5.0 Resource and legal considerations

5.1 Walsall Council has a statutory requirement under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to bring responsible authorities together to tackle crime and disorder. The community safety partnership (CSP) in Walsall is the Safer Walsall Partnership. This consists of the Local Authority, Police, Probation Services, Public Health, Fire and Rescue Service and NHS, as well as representation from whg and the voluntary sector. The work of the Partnership is overseen by Walsall's Policing and Crime Board which consists of the responsible authorities and representatives from the area partnerships, voluntary and business sector. An operations core group of the responsible authorities meets to discuss issues of a restricted nature, such as domestic homicide reviews and community cohesion / counter terrorism matters.

5.2 The Partnership receives a grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner which it allocates amongst agencies to support activities such as domestic abuse commissioning, drug and alcohol services, the youth offending team and the borough analyst. These grants previously came directly from the Home Office and have been reduced significantly over recent years. The latest

combined grant has been reduced by 12% on the 2012/2013 allocation.

6.0 Citizen impact:

Crime and disorder have a huge impact on every aspect of our communities from the health and well-being of our residents to the boroughs economy. Strong, cohesive communities where people get along and take responsibility for themselves and each other are less likely to be the location for crime and disorder. The 'broken window' effect can quickly lead to areas becoming targets for crime, where residents live in fear and isolation. Such areas can negatively impact upon perceptions and may ultimately affect economic confidence and potential investment.

7.0 Environmental impact:

There are many types of crime and disorder that affect the environment. The obvious offences include fly-tipping, littering, noise, graffiti and vandalism. However, activity such as prostitution and drug and alcohol misuse have had a considerable impact in some communities and have required significant partner resources to reduce the impact in vulnerable areas, through the provision of security improvements, clean-ups and specialist removal of detritus that could present a risk to residents.

8.0 Performance management:

Performance is monitored through the Safer Walsall Crime and Policing Board. Strategic priorities are reviewed each year through the boroughs strategic assessment

9.0 Equality Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been carried out. However, equality implications are considered across Partnership activity.

10.0 Consultation:

This report has been prepared with the support of West Midlands Police and information provided through Safer Walsall Partnership.

Contact Officer:

Lynne Hughes – Area Manager Community Safety
☐. 01922 654289
hugheslynne@walsall.gov.uk

REPORT

1.0 Introduction

1.1 It is the statutory role of Safer Walsall Partnership to bring appropriate agencies together at a strategic level to tackle crime and disorder across the borough.

1.2 Each year, a strategic assessment compiled by our Partnership Analyst, identifies the key strategic priorities for the year ahead. In Walsall, these have changed very little over recent years and currently consist of:

- 1. Tackle violent crime with a specific focus on domestic abuse, town centre violence and serious youth violence.**
- 2. Tackle anti-social behaviour.**
- 3. Address the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse.**
- 4. Community - with a specific focus on counter terrorism, community cohesion and public perceptions.**
- 5. Tackle serious acquisitive crime with a specific focus on reducing domestic burglary.**
- 6. Reduce re-offending – a cross-cutting theme across all other priorities.**

These priorities form the basis of the Partnership Community Safety Plan which is refreshed on an annual basis in order to reflect emerging issues within the priority themes, local operational changes and national developments, such as the recent introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners.

1.3 Governance is through the community-led Policing and Crime Board, with an Operations Group overseeing restricted issues such as the statutory delivery of domestic homicide reviews and community cohesion/tensions issues. This format dovetails with the overall corporate delivery and borough management structure.

In Walsall, local delivery against crime and disorder issues that require a multi-agency approach is identified, targeted and coordinated at an operational level through our area partnership meetings.

1.4 Voluntary sector groups such as Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers are active across the borough and contribute significantly to this agenda by enabling residents to become actively involved in dialogue with agencies to tackle issues in their neighbourhood and beyond. Our Street Champions continue to be the 'eyes and ears' of the council and are active in reporting issues, particularly environmental crime.

2.0 Performance

2.1 Walsall's latest strategic assessment, upon which the Partnerships current community safety plan is based, presented the following data on overall crime.

WALSALL				
Crime / Incident Type	2011/12	2012/13	Change	% Change
Total Recorded Crime	18232	15425	-2807	-15.4
Serious Acquisitive Crime	3733	3433	-300	-8.0
Anti Social Behaviour (Police Reported)	9082	6621	-2461	-27.1
Youth Related ASB (Police Reported)	3714	2345	-1369	-36.9
Domestic Burglary	1441	1261	-180	-12.5
Burglary Other Building	1522	1275	-247	-16.2
Criminal Damage	3348	2553	-795	-23.7
Vehicle Crime	1923	1892	-31	-1.6
Violence Against the Person	3396	2861	-535	-15.8
Robbery	388	311	-77	-19.8
Deliberate Primary Fires (WMFS Data)	405	287	-118	-29.1
Deliberate Secondary Fires (WMFS data)	1472	623	-849	-57.7
Drug Offences	628	566	-62	-9.9

These results have come at a time of increasing economic hardship when resources continue to be stretched across all public sector agencies. The reduction in police officers across many parts of the country has been well documented and many funding sources have either been removed or significantly reduced.

2.2 Over the period in question total recorded crime (TRC) fell by a further 15.4% which in real terms means 2807 fewer victims, this being the biggest reduction for any of the Local Policing Units in the West Midlands region. Anti-Social Behaviour fell by over 27% meaning Walsall had 2461 fewer victims. These reductions are in addition to previous substantial year on year reductions that have seen total recorded crime fall by just over 13,500 offences (47%) since 2002-03 and anti-social behaviour by around 10800 offences (62%) since 2008 -09.

2.3 In order to achieve these results the Partnership has continued to work collectively to target its resources at areas of greatest need.

Activities undertaken include:

- Operation Intrusive – A high profile police campaign that targeted burglary, vehicle and violent crime. This involved the specific targeting of known offenders and preventative work which included target hardening and a supporting media/information campaign.
- Domestic Abuse Commissioning – The continued development of a completely new approach to engaging services to tackle domestic abuse, bringing resources together to be targeted where there is clearly identified need.
- Substance Misuse -The on going delivery of a range of successful substance misuse treatment services that have delivered above national average results. During 2012–13 Walsall had 143 successful community based detox's, 270 individuals left treatment alcohol free and as a borough we have seen a reduction in specific alcohol based hospital admissions. Up until March 2013 48% (408) individuals left drug treatment in a planned way compared to a national figure of 43% and 16% of individuals successfully completed their treatment journey compared to a national average of 14.8%.
- Community Cohesion – The commissioning of Stop Hate UK offering 24 hour multi-lingual support to anyone suffering from a hate crime and the establishment of hate crime reporting centres in community venues across the borough. Last year, Walsall also enjoyed a range of multicultural events that brought together residents from across our diverse communities.. Recent events have underlined the need for strong, cohesive communities and there is a robust focus on supporting cross-cultural initiatives that bring people together.
- Walsall Intelligence Network continues to develop and supports multi agency cross cutting delivery groups that exist to support partnership working. This includes an analytical and performance function that collates data and intelligence from across the partnership to support targeted delivery across all identified priorities.
- Integrated Offender Management – A joined up approach to offender management coordinated through 'One Day One Conversation' monthly meetings. These multi agency forums ensure that managed offenders are given every opportunity to address their offending behaviour, avoid duplication of effort and provide a greater understanding of the re offending threat posed by an individual. The meeting looks at support and also targeted enforcement for those who fail to engage. The successful implementation of this model means that Walsall's re offending rate puts the borough at 11th in the country in terms of reducing reoffending.
- Situational Interventions - The implementation of a range of practical situational interventions (fences, gates and vehicle barriers) that protect vulnerable locations and buildings and reduce the opportunity for crime and anti-social behaviour.

2.4 In addition to actual reported figures the perceptions of our residents, how safe they feel and the level of confidence they have in public service providers are important drivers for partnership activity. It is often the case that perceptions do not actually reflect crime trends. These can be influenced by a wide range of factors in addition to the level of crime or anti-social behaviour that is actually taking place. In Walsall we

have two key mechanisms for measuring perceptions and confidence. The 'Your Place, Your Wellbeing' survey carried out jointly by Walsall Council and NHS Walsall in February to May 2012 and the West Midlands Police 'Feeling the Difference' survey, the most recent findings coming from December 2012-February 2013. Both surveys consider perceptions, quality of life, confidence and reassurance issues and provide a valuable insight into how residents actually feel about the place in which they live and their relationship with service providers. The following figures and all others reported throughout this plan relating to perceptions are based on the respondents to these surveys.

- One in four residents (24%) still feel that ASB is high in their area.
- 52% of residents are concerned about litter and graffiti
- Two in five (40%) perceive drugs to be a problem in their area.
- 30% perceive drunk or disorderly behaviour and litter lying around to be a problem.
- More than four in five (83%) Walsall residents have confidence in the police
- The majority of Walsall residents (97%) feel safe during the day and night (83%). Feelings of safety after dark have increased by 8% and are above the West Midlands Police Force average.
- 14% of Walsall residents think the level of crime in their neighbourhood has increased over the last 12 months, 74% thought it had remained the same and 11% thought it had decreased
- 47% of Walsall respondents agreed they can influence decisions affecting their neighbourhood
- Three quarters (74%) of residents feel the police are doing a good job
- 65% of Walsall residents agree that people in the neighbourhood pull together to improve the neighbourhood

3.0 Anti-social Behaviour

3.1 ASB remains a key priority across partner agencies. Despite police reports falling year on year, it should be noted that less than half of the reports made are actually to the police. The council, registered social landlords and West Midlands Fire and Rescue Services also take reports and make a significant contribution to tackling nuisance behaviour. In the case of our RSL's many of them deliver a wide variety of services to tackle crime and ASB such as mediation, support for victims of crime and domestic abuse services as well as supporting local initiatives. ASB covers a wide range of behaviours and can be reported to a number of agencies who will often use different definitions and categories. This is an issue common across the country making it difficult to get a clear picture of the problem.

3.2 Although the councils ASB Unit receives around 800 reports each year, colleagues in Regulatory Services and Clean and Green also deliver services that tackle issues such as fly tipping, noise nuisance, doorstep crime, graffiti and the environmental effects of prostitution, drug and alcohol misuse which all fall within the definition of ASB.

3.3 Significant reductions in resources across agencies continue to drive the need for greater coordination and innovation in how services are delivered.

In order to tackle some of the incongruities amongst agencies that tackle ASB, a group consisting of the council, police, whg and other RSL colleagues is currently working together on developing a more joined-up approach aiming to reduce duplication, improve coordination and ensure victims have a clearer pathway to services. To assist intelligence gathering, the group is working towards the adoption of a shared definition and categorisation model which will assist the WIN in developing a more accurate picture of ASB across the borough. This will ultimately support the effective targeting of resources.

3.4 One aspect of this work already in place is a protocol between the councils ASB Unit and whg to formalise working practices and address issues that sometimes arise when a whg tenant comes directly to the council or an owner-occupier seeks a service from whg. This area can become quite complicated but by adopting this protocol it is hoped that any anomalies are resolved and customers have an improved service. It is hoped that a similar protocol may be put in place with other local registered providers. RSLs have specific duties to their tenants, which the councils ASB Unit often support, if required to do so and vice versa.

3.5 A multi-agency Vulnerability Forum, which is led by the councils ASB Unit, brings partners together at a senior level to discuss specific cases where there are particular concerns about the victim and/or perpetrator.

4.0 Police Community Support Officers

4.1 PCSOs were introduced under the Police Reform Act 2002 and are employed, directed and managed by their respective forces.

Their role is to support regular police officers and provide reassurance by providing a visible and accessible presence on the streets. PCSOs work with neighbourhood teams to tackle issues of principle concern to communities, which usually relate to low-level crime and anti-social behaviour.

These functions support the West Midlands Force's overall deployment principles which include: supporting victims of anti-social behaviour and working with partners to tackle neighbourhood issues, providing a high visibility presence and providing engagement with communities. They support partnership working towards key agendas such as troubled families and community cohesion.

4.2 There are currently 42 PCSO's assigned to Walsall. They are deployed evenly across the borough, with slightly more officers deployed specifically to Walsall town centre.

4.3 West Midlands Police provides a list of **standard powers** that apply to all PCSOs. These include:

- Power to issue fixed penalty notices for offences such as littering or cycling on a footpath.

- Power to require persons drinking in a designated place to surrender alcohol.
- Power to require persons under 18 to surrender alcohol.

4.4 In addition, there are **discretionary powers** designated by the Chief Constable.

These include:

- Power to issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling, graffiti and fly-posting.
- Power to disperse groups and remove persons under 16 to their place of residence.
- Power to issue penalty notices in respect of certain offences of disorder.

These include:

Sale of alcohol to a person under 18

Purchase of alcohol for a person under 18

Throwing fireworks

Drinking in a designated public place