

Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

Thursday, 27th November,
2025

MINUTES

Present:

Councillor Craig Warhurst (Chair) and Councillors Andrew Fry and Joanna Kane

Also Present:

Councillor Monica Stringfellow – Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Safeguarding Responsibilities
Inspector Richard Field – West Mercia Police

Officers:

Mark Cox, Bev Houghton and Judith Willis

Democratic Services Officers:

M Sliwinski

1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker and Rogers.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND OF PARTY WHIP

There were no declarations of interest nor of party whip.

3. TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 3RD DECEMBER 2024

Minutes of the meeting of Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd December 2024 were submitted for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

Chair

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the minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on 3rd December 2024 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

4. **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES (WRS) ENFORCEMENT WORK ON COMMUNITY PROTECTION NOTICES IN REDDITCH**

Following a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Members considered a report on the use of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) and the impact of recent adoption of £100 fixed penalty notice for breaches of CPN, on influencing repeat and potential offenders' behaviours and on reduction of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Redditch.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, introduced the item by stating that the meeting provided an opportunity to promote the work of WRS in Redditch. Clarification was provided in that since June 2024 the remit of WRS within Redditch Borough was to undertake enforcement of Planning and Environmental matters such as fly tipping, littering, duty of care of waste offences and dog fouling and the report focused on the issuing of CPNs and fixed penalty notices in relation to these matters. It was highlighted that CPNs were also being used for a wider range of anti-social behaviours by the Police and other Council departments.

Community Protection Notices (CPNs) were intended to stop a person or business continuing with conduct which unacceptably affected victims and the community. CPNs could only be served where there were reasonable grounds to believe the offender's conduct had a detrimental impact on the quality of life of those in the locality. Before a CPN could be served, the offender must be given a formal written warning, the Community Protection Warning (CPW), stating that a CPN would be issued unless the offender's conduct ceases to have a detrimental impact.

It was noted that failure to comply with a CPN was a summary offence under Section 48 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 that was punishable on conviction by a fine not exceeding level 4 on the standard scale (£2,500) for an individual or an unlimited fine in the case of a body/business. In September 2025, Redditch Borough Council adopted the maximum permitted £100 charge for any Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) which, as per

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Section 52 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, might be served by an authorised person as an alternative to prosecution for breach of a CPN.

The Technical Services Manager, WRS, explained that WRS utilised an informal approach to change offenders' behaviours prior to issuing Community Protection Warnings (CPWs). A recent example was cited of low-level fly tipping issues in Winyates East, Redditch, where WRS enforcement officers undertook letter drops to remind residents that items of waste, such as white goods left outside properties were a form of fly-tipping. This approach usually had led to resolution of issues as often the breach is inadvertent and/or the prospect of potential criminal sanction deters the continuation of a breach.

It was highlighted that service of a CPN was not widely publicised and there was little information that could be proactively published relating to specific cases, due to data protection implications. The only exception was that the law encouraged sharing of information with victims that a notice had been served so that they had knowledge of action taken, compliance periods and any restrictions or requirements put in place by the notice.

Data for the numbers of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs) served in the last years was provided. It was noted that since June 2024 when WRS took responsibility for enforcement of Planning and Environment matters, the Service had not issued any CPWs or CPNs in Redditch Borough, although WRS had served 12 CPWs and 11 CPNs in the neighbouring district of Bromsgrove which demonstrated that WRS could utilise these when necessary.

It was explained that in Redditch Borough the need for issuing CPNs had been avoided for low-level environmental offences, whilst Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) had been served in Redditch Borough within the last year with 3 FPNs issued for littering and 4 for fly-tipping. There were further cases currently ongoing which involved witnesses being interviewed under caution. In response to a question, it was clarified that when WRS possessed clear evidence of an offence, such as video footage of the offence taking place, the FPN could be served immediately. In more complex cases, for example where a householder might unknowingly passed waste to an unregistered waste carrier who committed a fly-tip, then there might be a significant period between the committal of an offence and the eventual issuing of fine.

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During the discussion of the report, Members expressed concern with the level of resources allocated to enforcement of environment-related issues and the lack of visible enforcement action in some areas of the Borough. The Technical Services Manager, WRS, explained that WRS had 3 dedicated enviro-crime officers working across Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils areas, and which were deployed to cases in these areas as and when they arise. It was highlighted that levels of fly tipping / littering in Redditch were high but in order to enforce the WRS had to collate evidence that led to the ability to enforce against an individual or a body/business. The time taken to obtain sufficient evidence to proceed with formal enforcement often resulted in a time lag between the offence and the actual enforcement action being taken. It was highlighted that informal approaches were often successful in preventing issues from escalating and this was the approach taken by WRS where possible.

Members expressed the need for enforcement in relation to low-level environmental issues to be increased within residential areas as in relation to environmental matters Redditch suffered mainly from issues such as household fly-tipping or littering rather than larger scale, 'industrial' fly tipping.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

5. REVIEW OF THE WORK OF NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - DECEMBER 2024 TO OCTOBER 2025

The Community Safety Manager provided a detailed presentation on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) in Redditch Borough from December 2024 to October 2025. It was noted that at its planning meeting in March 2025, NWCSP reviewed and confirmed its priorities for the following two-year period which would remain as per those adopted in April 2024 for the period up to March 2027. The priorities were outlined as follows:

- Public, Place Violence & the Serious Violence Duty
- Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Nuisance and Environmental Issues

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- Shoplifting and Neighbourhood Crime: (Neighbourhood Crime was defined by West Mercia Police for this definition as domestic burglary, robbery [against the individual/household], theft from a person and vehicle crime)
- Protecting Vulnerable Communities including Hate Crime & Targeted Harassment, Domestic Abuse & DHRs and Sexual Violence
- Serious Organised Crime via a Joint Action Group (SOCJAG).

Alongside the local priorities, NWCSP worked closely with the South Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership, through the countywide Safer Communities Board (SCB), which identified and addressed countywide issues. Through Worcestershire SCB, the two statutory Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) collaborated on key countywide projects and initiatives.

It was reiterated that local authorities had a statutory duty to scrutinise the work of its local Community Safety Partnership, under Section 19 of the Police and Justice Act 2006. The Partnership had a duty to collaborate with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and there was a direct role for the Council's elected members to scrutinise the work of the PCC through the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel.

Alongside the PCC's force-wide commissioning, NWCSP had an annual ring-fenced allocation, which for amount from the PCC of £139,250 to identify and address issues at district levels. Information about the NWCSP agreed project allocation from these funds for 2024/25 was included in Appendix 1 to the report. Details of all projects undertaken by NWCSP across the time period December 2024 to now had also been included in Appendix 1 to the report.

It was explained that from 2023-24, new funding had been made available by the Home Office via PCCs to support Community Safety partners in Implementing the Serious Violence Duty (SVD). In 2025, funding allocations for SVD interventions in Worcestershire totalled £60,141 and this funding had been used to deliver an ongoing Youth Violence Intervention Project called 'The Right Path'.

The Community Safety Manager noted that on the 13 October 2025, the Home Secretary announced the Government's decision to abolish the role of the Police and Crime Commissioner. It was envisaged that the roles would be absorbed by regional Mayors in

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devolved areas, and in areas not covered by an elected mayor, the role would be taken on by elected council leaders. In response to a Member question, it was explained that at this point the structure for non-devolved areas was unknown but a format similar to the former Police Authority structure was discussed as a possibility. It was stated that the transition to the new model would take place at the end of the national electoral cycle in 2028.

Data was provided on the use of ASB tools and powers by the Council and it was reported that within the Housing Tenancy team there were seven evictions relating to ASB, three closure orders, and six injunctions. There was a significant number of open ASB cases most of which related to nuisance.

A report by West Mercia Police was provided (appendices 2a and 2b) which was an annual update on crime data and trends within Redditch Borough. Inspector Richard Field, West Mercia Police, presented the report, noting that crime levels were generally low in Redditch.

Annual data on crime levels in Redditch Borough by type was provided, comparing recorded levels in 2024-25 with the year 2023-24. Reductions were reported for crimes classified as public order, shoplifting, burglary, and drug offences. A 6 per cent increase in robberies was recorded. It was explained that this increase was partly due to a redefinition of robbery within legislation which now defined shoplifting with the use of violence as a type of robbery. The 6 per cent increase amounted to an actual increase of three offences.

Recorded possession of weapons displayed a 24 per cent increase in 2024-25 compared with previous year and vehicle offences increased by 2 per cent. There was a 5 per cent increase in anti-social behaviour (ASB) offences, which amounted to 60 more ASB offences in 2024-25 than the previous year. It was explained that the increase was partly due to improved recording of ASB. The police had undertaken 16 more risk assessments for victims of ASB in 2024-25 than during the previous year.

In 2024-25, there were 6 Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) issued in Redditch, although it was highlighted that under-reporting of certain crimes, particularly in relation to drug offences and supply, remained an issue. Victims were often afraid to come forward with evidence for fear of repercussions from perpetrators. The Police worked to devise ways to ensure victims of crime could report in

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confidential manner and feel safe when reporting crimes to the police. In terms of Community Protection Notices (CPNs), it was noted that one of the CPNs issued was subsequently overturned by the court.

It was reported that there had been an expansion of Neighbourhood Policing with West Mercia Police with additional officers being deployed across Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. The police force in Redditch was fully staffed.

In respect of Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in parts of Redditch Town Centre, it was explained that West Mercia Police launched hotspot patrols within three areas of the Town Centre, and there had been a total of 711 pro-active high visibility patrols (as of 9th November 2025). It was highlighted that there were issues with finding witnesses when anti-social behaviour cases were being reported to Police. It was highlighted that prevention strategies were preferable as these involved work with a number of partners, such as MAGG and Cranston outreach workers, to address the underlying causes of some of the complex issues and work with individuals who were active in causing anti-social behaviours.

It was highlighted there was a backlog in the legal system, which had been resulting in significant delays to prosecution. It was reported that some cases were delayed by four or more years at the Crown Court due to the backlog.

Inspector Richard Field concluded his report by thanking the Safer Redditch Partnership and Redditch Council's Community Safety Team. He highlighted the 'design out crime' work carried out by the Team had a significant impact in terms of reducing crime with an example provided of one area where landscaping works commissioned as a result of advice from the Team had resulted in a reduction to car cruising and associated issues for residents in the locality.

Following the presentation, the Chair addressed the Panel and commented that Redditch had relatively low crime rates and there was a strong partnership work in place between agencies, for example in housing. The Chair was of the view that 'low-level' crimes such as anti-social behaviour case and shoplifting were the types of crimes causing most concern to residents. It was highlighted by the Inspector that the police did tackle low-level shoplifting, and the police had power to and would make arrests and prosecute in relation to shoplifting regardless of the value of

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goods stolen. It was noted that eight arrests in relation to shoplifting had been made in the week prior to this meeting of Crime and Disorder Panel. It was highlighted that some cases could not be reported in the media for legal reasons.

A Member praised the work of the police and partners in relation to the recent incidents in Woodrow Centre. It was explained that this was a case which required extensive cooperation between West Mercia Police and local partners and which had ended in a positive outcome for the local community. Other examples of recent positive outcomes were detailed during the discussion.

A question was raised regarding whether there were plans for the West Mercia Police to provide more powers to the Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). It was explained as way of background that The Policing and Crime Act 2017, as amended Section 38 of the Police Reform Act 2002, provided powers to chief officers to decide which powers they wished to designate to their PCSOs. All police constable powers were available to be designated, with the exception of those outlined in Schedule 10 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017.

It was reported that more powers had been designated to PCSOs within West Mercia Police force a couple of years ago, however, these were rarely being utilised in practice. It was stated that it was preferable for PCSOs to fulfil the primary role of being visible in the community and prevent crimes than to act as a reactive force in response to a crime.

In relation to knife crime, it was highlighted that there had been year-on-year reductions in knife crime in Redditch Borough and that this took into account the reclassification where a domestic incident with threat of a knife was now classified as a knife crime. It was explained that knife crime was generally not tolerated by the community in Redditch, with high levels of reporting of knife crimes to the police. Early prevention projects and initiatives for young people were also highlighted as important in reducing knife crime. Details of these projects were set out in appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED that

the report be noted.

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The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm
and closed at 7.28 pm