

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

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Wednesday, 1st November,  
2023

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Joanna Kane (Chair), and Councillors Imran Altaf, Andrew Fry and Timothy Pearman.

### Also Present:

Councillor Lucy Harrison – Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

### Officers:

Bev Houghton and Judith Willis

### Democratic Services Officers:

Mat Sliwinski

#### 1. APOLOGIES AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lovell.

#### 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 2ND NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes from the meeting held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 were submitted for Members' consideration.

#### RESOLVED that

**the minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 be approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.**

Chair

**4. NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE ON WORK IN REDDITCH 2022-23 INCLUDING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) ACTIVITY**

The Community Safety Manager provided a detailed presentation updating Members on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) in Redditch Borough.

The following was highlighted for Members' consideration:

- Local authority representation on the NWCSP consisted of the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services, the Council's Interim Chief Executive and the Community Safety Manager. 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. There was also a direct role for the Council in holding the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to account through the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP).
- The NWCSP produced a rolling three-year plan that was refreshed annually through a strategic assessment, which gathered research, evidence and intelligence along with professional expertise of those working locally. The current priorities informed by the strategic assessment were:
  - Reducing Violence and Abuse
  - Reducing Theft and Acquisitive Crime
  - Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour, Damage and Nuisance
  - Protecting Vulnerable Communities
  - The Partnership also focused on two cross cutting themes that impacted across the four priority areas, namely Reducing the Harm caused by Drug and Alcohol Misuse and Reducing Re-Offending.
- The NWCSP Plan 2021-24 was now in its last year and a new community safety action plan would be developed for 2024-27.
- Regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Members were informed that since 2017 the PCC had allocated significant funding as part of its CCTV Capital Fund to develop and upgrade CCTV across the West Mercia force area. The NWCSP used its funding allocation to upgrade and enhance the CCTV scheme across its area. No further CCTV capital funding for 2023-24 would be provided as the funding priorities of the PCC had now changed.

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

- NWCSP had been allocated an annual ring-fenced amount from the PCC of £139,250, with spend breakdown of that fund spend by NWCSP detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
- In 2023-24 new funding would be made available by the Home Office via PCCs to support Community Safety partners in Implementing the Serious Violence Duty, as laid out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act 2022.
- It was clarified that local delivery of community safety projects fell under the remit of the Community Safety Operational Groups. The Safer Redditch group was a multi-agency partnership chaired by the District Police Inspector. Appendix 1 to the report provided an update on the key community safety projects that had taken place in 2022-23.
- Tools and powers used in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases within the Borough were detailed. It was reported that in 2022-23, 15 Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) had been issued by Council service areas. 8 CPWs were issued by Planning, with one of the CPWs issued by Planning progressing to a Community Protection Notice (CPN) – a breach of which was classed as a criminal offence. 7 CPWs were issued by Environmental Services.
- No ASB Case Reviews (formally Community Triggers) were carried out in Redditch in 2022-23. It was reported that work needed to be done to promote this tool so that the public and elected members were aware of how to apply for the process, and when it could be used.
- It was explained that a Community Trigger/ASB Case Review was introduced as part of the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 and was a facility available to victims of ASB to request a review of their reported case, if they felt that no action had been taken. It was clarified that the Community Trigger/ASB Case Review was not a complaints process but a review and action planning process. Any complaints about individual agencies identified as part of the ASB Case Review should be routed through the relevant partners complaints procedure. Members were informed that CPWs were effective in deescalating situations that could become more serious.
- With regards to the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) proposed for Redditch Town Centre, it was noted that the statutory public consultation on the proposal ended on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> October and this proposal, including the results of the consultation, would be submitted before the Executive Committee at its meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> December.

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

- It was reported that the Community Safety Team was a small coordinating team that received calls for advice and support from numerous sources. Between September 2022 and August 2023, the Team received 19 requests from Residents, 13 from Elected Members, 24 from Partner Agencies, and 52 Requests from Internal Service with most requests relating to domestic violence, multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC) and sanctuary queries including home security assessment.
- It was highlighted that within Redditch Council there were two fully qualified Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCOs) who provided specialist advice and guidance as it pertains to the built environment.
- One of the responsibilities of the NWCSP was to reduce fear of crime and raising awareness in communities was part of that. The Community Safety Team worked to promote key community safety and crime reduction messages and promote the work of NWCSP members. This was mainly done through social media campaigns. Some examples of these campaigns were Ask for Angela (NTE Safety Campaign), Domestic Abuse 16 Days of Action and the Nominated Neighbour Scheme.

Following the presentation of the main report, the Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services was invited to address the Panel and in doing so thanked the Officers for providing a thorough report. She added that Redditch was lucky to have the specialist Community Safety Team and the Design Out Crime Officers and with this support the work of the Partnership continued to make a real difference to Redditch residents. The Portfolio Holder commented that despite the excellent work by the Partnership it was felt more emphasis still needed to be placed on the impact of crime on victims, which was the approach that she would champion.

Members were keen to understand further some of the areas highlighted within the report. These areas were as follows:

- Promotion of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP). It was felt that there needed to be a greater promotion of NWCSP among elected members, council staff, and the public. It was noted that whilst it was difficult for the small Community Safety Team to devote many resources to publicity work there would soon be more regular briefings including to other service managers as a starting point.

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

- Formulation of the NWCSP Plan. It was explained that the Plan was refreshed annually and priorities of the NWCSP were established through interrogation of crime and ASB data. Data from the West Mercia Police Partnership Analyst was assessed, combined with local, regional, and national surveys (such as Redditch Community Survey / the National Crime Survey of England and Wales, etc). Police intelligence and local knowledge was also used to formulate the NWCSP priorities. An annual refresh of the Plan allowed amendments and additions to be made, if necessary. This was particularly useful when dealing with emerging crimes and issues.
- Elected Member involvement in formulating the NWCSP Plan. The draft Plan was circulated to all Members who could comment and request changes to the Plan. In addition, Members could submit comments and suggestions to the Community Safety Team at any time.
- Breakdown of crime incident figures per ward. Officers noted that data provided to the NWCSP from the Police was restricted. The authorised and sanitised data (i.e. not containing confidential information) on crime across Redditch was available to view via police.uk website (areas corresponded with West Mercia Police boundaries). In addition, the Council's corporate performance dashboard included some community safety data and metrics such as on anti-social behaviour incidents by ward. Members could also request that a specific topic be scrutinised in more depth by the scrutiny panel as was done by this Panel at this meeting in relation to County Lines Drug Activity.
- West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner (PCC) Fly Tipping Prevention Fund. It was reported that this was a three-year fund which was available to private landowners only. It was noted that at the next meeting of NWCSP there would be a final report around funding for tackling fly tipping and notes from that meeting could be shared with Members.
- Domestic Violence Support – local and regional support agencies and whether support was provided across boundary areas. Officers reported that nationally the funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was very specific in terms of only allowing funding to be utilised within administrative boundaries (such as county and local authority boundaries). Support provided by some Domestic Violence agencies was restricted to specific boundaries, for example county-wide or district specific delivery and this did create challenges in providing support where cases crossed geographical areas.

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

There were, however, local reciprocal arrangements between support agencies which enabled victims of domestic violence, for example, to receive support from a service outside of their normal place of residence.

- Some Members expressed concern about the domestic violence support provided in cross-boundary cases and reported that as part of their casework there had been a case where the victim had been treated badly by the local support agencies and wanted to go elsewhere. Members also reported that there was a taboo associated with reporting domestic violence in BAME communities and the support agencies needed to be better equipped to be able to offer meaningful assistance to people from these communities.
- Officers responded that some survivor-led support groups were in place, such as the Lived Experience Advisory Group, where people could offer feedback on their experience of using local support agencies and offer improvement suggestions. However, there were very few BAME-led groups. Work was being developed to ensure that there were more domestic violence support groups led by persons from these communities.
- Members were asked to report any issues with equality of access to support services directly to Community Safety Manager.
- Process of undertaking a Community Trigger/ASB Case Review. Officers explained that this was implemented when a person felt no action was being taken on a case that had already been opened. The numbers fluctuated in Redditch with some years seeing around three to four case reviews and in other years there were none. It was noted that in many cases rather than there being no action being taken, individuals triggered case reviews because they were unhappy with certain actions. However, as long as the application criteria were met, an ASB review had to be undertaken.
- It was noted that the case review was generally successful in resolving ASB issues and it involved inviting the applicant to a case review meeting to share their experiences directly with the agencies involved. Following this there is a discussion between partner agencies to identify solutions to tackle the ASB issue.

Following the overview report discussion in respect of the work of the NWCSP, Officers provided further information on the work of the Partnership, the Community Safety Team and partners in 2021-

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

2022. During this presentation Members' attention was drawn to the following:

- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 provided statutory guidance in respect of standards and best practice for Responsible Authorities with statutory duties to support and assist victims of domestic abuse. As a result of this guidance a domestic abuse partnership board had been established at County level and a Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy had been developed.
- Changes to the law as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSS) Act 2022 focused on the overhaul of sentencing laws and measures to equip the police with more powers and tools to combat crime. The Serious Violence Duty, as laid out in the PCSS Act 2022, placed a requirement on Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to formulate and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence. Worcestershire CSPs were currently working together to establish how best to exercise this duty in a consistent and collaborative manner across Worcestershire.
- It was noted that as part of the Government's vision to reduce supply and demand for illegal drugs, there were now discussions underway to develop local strategies through the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Combating Drugs Partnership which covers Redditch Borough.
- Details of the NWCSP core funding allocation from the PCC was provided, in addition to funding for Safer Redditch Tasking Group for 2022-23.

Details of specific community safety programmes delivered by NWCSP were provided as follows:

- The Respect Programme – this programme delivered bespoke one-to-one mentoring, classroom sessions and whole school assemblies. The mentoring programme provided weekly sessions to young people who had been referred to the scheme as they were at risk of becoming victims or perpetrators of crime. Members were informed that there had been 30-60 referrals each half term and there were 155 open cases at any one time. The programme was now able to expand its current team of qualified mentors, following year-on-year increases in referrals. It was noted that Redditch was one of only two areas in Worcestershire to have such mentor project.

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

- Community Safety Enhanced Youth Support Workers – in 2021-22 a three year Public Health Grant of £83k per annum for Redditch had been received from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF). This had been extended for a further year from the Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Public Health ring-fenced grant. The funding had been used to provide dedicated youth workers in Redditch.
- The Empowering Young People Programme - This was an 11-week programme of arts and crafts, issue-based activities addressing life skills, confidence building and self-esteem work. Some topics that had been covered over the previous year had been ASB, County Lines Drug Dealing and Hate Crime Awareness. It was reported that 5 EYP programmes had been delivered in 2022-23.
- Redditch Youth Outreach - Community Safety Team were working in conjunction with a local youth provider UP Foundation to deliver outreach and detached youth work across the Borough. Through these outreach patrols, at the height of summer, youth workers were engaging with up to 200 to 250 young people per month.
- Youth Scape Project in Redditch – Following a successful bid by Young Solutions Worcestershire to the Big Lottery fund for countrywide Youth Scape project, the Community Safety Team hosted the project for Redditch, working with the local youth provider Your Ideas to provide a youth worker post for three years. Through this project, a new youth club had been established in Woodrow Community Centre with well over 30 young people attending each week. With regard to the Your Ideas youth centre in Bengrove Close in Woodrow, Members noted that it was only through cross-party work to allow a significant upgrade to the centre, that it was still able to operate as initially the planning application for this was recommended for refusal.
- The Young Citizens Challenge – The Annual Redditch and Bromsgrove Young Citizen's Challenge (YCC) was held at the Bromsgrove Police and Fire Station from 22<sup>nd</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> May. The initiative offered all year 6 students from Redditch and Bromsgrove the opportunity to take part in a series of challenges and take quizzes on what to do in various situations, where they might be exposed to different risks.
- Support from Community Safety Team to several voluntary youth providers with funding applications. In 2022-23 the Team provided support to multiple organisations, helping them secure grant funding for important youth projects.



# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

- The Nominated Neighbour Scheme had continued throughout 2022-23. This scheme was available to vulnerable residents across Redditch. It was reported that there were now 137 residents enrolled in the scheme.
- Planning Consultations – Two Officers within the Community Safety Team were College of Policing qualified Designing Out Crime Officers (DOCO). This qualification meant that they were able to review planning applications and make crime prevention and security recommendations. In 2022-23, these Officers examined 34 applications, 22 of which related to Redditch developments.
- Crime Risk Surveys – The Community Safety Team had carried out 32 Home Security Assessments, of which 19 were Sanctuary assessments at the properties of the high-risk victims of domestic abuse.
- Redditch Town Centre Environment Visual Audit – A sub-group of Safer Redditch had been set up to look specifically at issues within Redditch Town Centre. The Group had made recommendations for changes to the local environment that were designed to reduce incidents of ASB.
- Operation Sceptre – Knife Crime Awareness Campaign which took place from 15<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023. During the week, members of the public were encouraged to hand-in unwanted knives to prevent them from getting into the wrong hands and being used in crime. NWCSF supported a number of operations to prevent knife crime throughout the year.
- ASB Awareness Week - took place from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> July 2023 in Redditch, including the opportunity for Community Safety Officers, the Police and Housing Providers to discuss with residents their experiences and concerns about ASB locally.
- Hate Crime Awareness Week 2023 – The Conference took place on Thursday 19th October with a focus on disability. The About Face Theatre Group delivered acting performances which engaged the audience, asking key questions about what residents with disabilities and special educational needs could do to seek help if they were experiencing hate crime. Different scenarios were enacted on stage taken from real life experiences.
- Annual White Ribbon Domestic Abuse Campaign – This campaign was currently being planned and was due to take place from 25<sup>th</sup> November to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- Safe Places Scheme – this scheme was designed to offer people with a disability, illness or learning difficulty, or

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

anyone else who felt in danger a safe place. It was somewhere they could go to for help if they were feeling bullied or harassed while out and about. Members noted that publicity about the scheme seemed to have dropped off and Officers reported that it was a relatively small charity that ran the project and it needed support with ongoing publicity and promotion. This would hopefully now happen with the funding streams available.

## **RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

### **5. COUNTY LINES DRUG ACTIVITY - AN UPDATE ON PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

The Community Safety Manager provided an overview of the activity undertaken by local agencies in Worcestershire to tackle and disrupt county lines drug activity.

The definition of county lines was provided and the process of how this crime was undertaken was explained to Members. It was reported that various agencies coordinated their work to tackle county lines gang activity and there were national, regional, and local responses. Multiple organisations were involved in coordination and delivery of prevention strategies in Redditch.

It was explained that on a regional and local level the tackling of county lines drug activity was led by the West Mercia Police County Lines Team (CLT). The Team worked to the Four-P Plan to Pursue offenders, Prevent victimisation, Prepare agencies and organisations for action, and Protect communities and neighbourhoods. It was reported that the main aim of the County Lines Team was to obtain, submit, receive and review intelligence to target individual drug lines.

The process for targeting county lines was explained and it was noted that once a line holder was arrested, and the phone taken out of circulation, a message would be sent to all the drug users in the phone to notify them of drug support agencies for them to contact. It was noted that this was a new system designed to play a preventive role. When children were being identified as involved in county lines gang, then referrals were made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), the Police Child Exploitation team and GetSafe (multi-agency support and protection for children and young people at risk

# Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Panel

---

Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

of criminal exploitation in Worcestershire) – the use of the NRM had not been required in the Redditch area to date.

The details of initiatives to target and prevent county lines drug activity were given including the West Mercia Police's Neighbourhood Crime Fighting Team (NCFT), County Lines – Weeks of Action (intensification weeks), and the County Lines – Protect, Prevent and Prepare Strands.

Details of recent actions and interventions undertaken by the North Worcestershire County Lines Team were provided and it was highlighted that there were several recent successes in catching County Lines drug offenders.

Details were also provided to Members on the reporting mechanisms for raising a county lines activity concern, particularly in cases where a child might be involved.

Following the presentation, Members asked for clarification with respect to a number of areas as follows:

- Mode of operation of county lines – It was explained that past victims report that county lines gangs are operated like a business with different levels of operation. There is also psychological element whereby 'employees' at the bottom of the operation are threatened with violence and become too afraid to report. It was noted that county lines gangs were also shifting their tactics, for example, with the gangs now more often targeting young people from relatively affluent areas/neighbourhoods than was the case before.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Services and Regulatory Services addressed the Panel and in doing so thanked the Community Safety Manager for bringing this topic for discussion by the Panel and, through the presentation, for providing some reassurance to Members that much work was done to tackle county lines activity at the regional and local levels.

In concluding this item, Members placed on record their thanks for the work of the Community Safety Team and the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership.

**RESOLVED that**

**the report be noted.**

# **Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**

Panel

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Wednesday, 1st November, 2023

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 8.28 pm