

North Somerset Council

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND CORPORATE ORGANISATION POLICY AND SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 16 JULY 2019

SUBJECT OF REPORT: COMMUNITY SAFETY SERVICES

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

OFFICER PRESENTING: HOWARD POTHECARY (COMMUNITY SAFETY MANAGER) & HARRY MILLS (COMMUNITY SAFETY OFFICER), SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SERVICE, NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL

KEY DECISION: NO

RECOMMENDATION

Members are asked to consider the community safety expectations placed on local authorities and the work undertaken by the Community Safety Team.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report, together with the planned presentation at the scrutiny panel meeting, is intended to provide an overview of work led by the council's Community Safety Team, working in partnership with other agencies, to help build safer and stronger communities across North Somerset.

2. POLICY

The council is required to work collaboratively with police, probation services, the clinical commissioning group (CCG) and fire and rescue service to address local crime and disorder issues through a statutory Community Safety Partnership.

The statutory responsibilities include identifying local crime and disorder priorities, reducing crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending in the local authority area.

There are also statutory requirements for Community Safety Partnership regarding sharing information and monitoring and reporting progress in achieving local crime and disorder issues.

3. DETAILS

The joint Police and Crime Plan highlights the key crime and disorder priorities:

- build strong, resilient communities
- tackle crime (including anti-social behaviour); and
- protect vulnerable people

Anti-social behaviour is defined by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as 'acting in a manner that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household'

The Community Safety Team is responsible for undertaking problem solving activity in relation to both people and place anti-social behaviour on behalf of the Community Safety Partnership, through:

- Responding to complaints on behalf of partner agencies, including the collation of evidence and pursuit of appropriate actions, including enforcement action.
- Increasing opportunities for victims to report anti-social behaviour and increasing levels of information and awareness about the services that are available.
- Coordinating regular meetings with partner agencies to discuss vulnerable victims and problem locations/perpetrators and agree suitable interventions.

The Community Safety Team is also responsible for coordinating activity to help ensure the Weston-super-Mare evening & night time economy is safe, vibrant and diverse. Key partnership objectives are:

- Attract residents and visitors to Weston-super-Mare in the evening and night time by improving and broadening the appeal of what is being offered
- Tackle alcohol and drug related crime and disorder issues, particularly those connected to the night-time economy, which have a detrimental impact on the reputation of Weston-super-Mare.

The work done to improve the Weston-super-Mare evening and night time economy has been recognised by achieving 'Purple Flag' status in 2015 which has been successfully renewed each of the past four years.

3.1 Building Strong Resilient Communities

The Community Safety Team helps build strong and cohesive communities across North Somerset through awareness raising and identifying local need and the response from support services. The team:

- Coordinates Hate Crime awareness raising activities to encourage victims to report hate crimes and to ensure that they can access support services.
- Leads on the Prevent Strategy within the council to ensure delivery of the multi-agency plan to prevent violent extremism. This includes a programme which focuses on providing support at an early stage to any individual in North Somerset who is identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.

The programme uses a multi-agency approach to protect vulnerable people by, identifying individuals at risk, assessing the nature and extent of that risk, developing the most appropriate support plan for the individuals concerned. We also awareness raising amongst staff to ensure that they are able to 'spot the signs' of radicalisation and extremism.

- Coordinates multi-agency meetings concerning begging and rough sleeping on streets of Weston super Mare and oversees actions to support individuals.

3.2 Working together effectively

Tackling crime and disorder relies on working in partnership with residents, businesses and other agencies. The Community Safety Team:

- Manages the Community Response team which works with communities across North Somerset with a focus on preventing and resolving anti-social behaviour. The uniformed Community Response Officers act as the 'eyes and ears' in local communities by making themselves known to residents and businesses, talking to them about local issues.
- Oversees the Serious Organised Crime Disruption Panel, a partnership board attended by Police, Social Landlords, Avon Fire and Rescue, Private Housing, Trading Standards, Planning Enforcement, Licensing, Environmental Protection, Community Safety and Adult and Child Safeguarding.
- Operates the MAVIS (Multi-Agency Vehicle in Service) bus which is used as a 'Safe Space' and multi-agency hub in Weston's Evening & Night Time Economy. MAVIS offers a safe, warm and non-judgmental place to go for help and offers general information to town centre visitors.

3.3 Supporting Vulnerable Victims

The Community Safety Team are responsible for developing partnership strategies, commissioning support services, raising awareness and managing lesson learnt reviews to support vulnerable victims.

This includes commissioning Domestic Abuse services such as:

- one to one support and advocacy services for anyone affected (women and men)
- refuges for women, men and any children affected by Domestic Abuse
- free counselling services for survivors
- the Domestic Abuse Support Line

The team coordinates Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARACs) to share information and plan support for the highest risk Domestic Abuse cases

We are also responsible for leading the council's response to Modern Slavery which includes raising awareness of Modern Slavery including how to spot the signs amongst both staff and the public and providing a point of contact for when a potential victim is identified.

3.4 CCTV

Reducing crime and disorder, including anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending in the local authority area is actively supported by the council's Control Room and CCTV services.

The Control Room is a 24/7 service which monitors almost 80 public space surveillance cameras and provides help and support through links such as Storennet, Pubwatch as well as being the council's link with the police and others when incidents happen in Weston-super-Mare, Worle, Clevedon, Nailsea and Portishead.

The Control Room is responsible for managing the council's out of hours telephone calls and is the first point of contact for emergencies, initiating the council's response.

A review of the Control Room is in progress and will be concluded shortly

4. CONSULTATION

There are statutory requirements for Community Safety Partnerships to engage and consult with the community about their priorities, and monitoring and report progress in achieving them.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The activities referred to within the report are accommodated within existing approved budgets and resources.

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (subsequently amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006) places a duty on the council to work together in a Community Safety Partnership to prevent and tackle crime and disorder.

There is a requirement for the Community Safety Partnership and Police and Crime Commissioner to have regard for each other's priorities. Including the Police and Crime Commissioner's Plans

A range of enforcement powers are available to the Council and Police to support the aims of the work described in this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

There is an increasing need to focus limited resources on more complex crime and disorder areas such as child protection, managing persistent offenders, safeguarding vulnerable adults and cyber bullying.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Being safe and feeling safe affects some communities disproportionately, particularly some types of crime. Resources and effort are therefore directed towards the highest risk areas.

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

The work undertaken by the Community Safety Team contributes to Corporate Plan priorities:

- Prosperity and opportunity
- Health and wellbeing
- Quality places

AUTHORS

Harry Mills
Community Safety Officer
Harry.Mills@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 427265

Howard Potheary,
Community Safety Manager
Howard.Potheary@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 426494

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Avon & Somerset Police Local Crime Plan for North Somerset
<https://saferstrongerns.co.uk/resources/police-and-crime-plan>

Safer & Stronger Communities North Somerset Website
www.saferstrongerns.co.uk