

Tackling Hate Crime and the Community Safety Plan

Summary

1. This report provides an update on tackling Hate Crime and the development of the Community Safety Plan. The topics have been combined as they are interlinked

Overview

2. 'Embracing Diversity: A Hate Crime Strategy for York 2014 -16' was written when North Yorkshire Police were updating their policies and reporting mechanisms in relation to Hate Crime. It provided an opportunity to engage with all third sector organisations involved in providing support to communities and/or engaged in work related to hate crime, equalities and diversity. It linked closely to internal work within City of York to establish a Fairness Commission. Within the local authority it supported work to achieve Equalities Excellence and it developed a more joined up approach to raising awareness of how to report hate crime how it would be addressed through collaboration with North Yorkshire Police.
 - 2.1 In March 2016, a report was provided to the Communities & Environment Policy and Scrutiny Committee, detailing that the strategic priorities, outcome and actions identified within the strategy had been completed. It was also reported that a review of the strategy would be undertaken as part of the work to develop a new over-arching three year Community Safety Plan for York to be produced for April 2017. At the time, it was suggested that a separate Hate Crime Strategy would be drafted to the same timescales.
 - 2.2 Producing a three year community safety plan is a statutory requirement for Community Safety Partnerships under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Plans should be produced following a Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment of partner information and intelligence and should reflect local community safety priorities. Plans are refreshed annually.

3. Changes in Community Safety Delivery since the Community Safety Plan 2014-17

In 2014 a review of the Community Safety team was undertaken alongside other departmental reviews within City of York Council designed to realign resources. Within that review, the post of Hate Crime/Prevent Co-ordinator, which had been funded from a time limited Home Office fund was deleted. However at the same time, a successful Home Office Funding bid had resulted in the establishment of a joint North Yorkshire Police/City of York Council Community Safety Hub designed to deliver more efficient and effective responses in relation to crime and anti-social behaviour including tackling hate crime.

4. History of Hate Crime Strategies in York

York's first Hate Crime Strategy was launched in 2008. The focus was on clarifying how hate crime could be reported and establishing third party reporting centres based in libraries across the city. This strategy was then refreshed in 2011, still with a focus on reporting and establishing clarity around the support provided by voluntary sector organisations. Much of the work was undertaken jointly with North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnerships and North Yorkshire Police ensuring that information packs, leaflets and posters were consistent across both areas.

- 4.1 The 2014 strategy 'Embracing Diversity' was undertaken at the time of a significant review into hate crime reporting being conducted by North Yorkshire Police. A large scale consultation was undertaken, ensuring a much greater understanding of support service provision through the voluntary sector. The consultation also identified that third party reporting centres had not been used and were in many cases not seen as the most appropriate locations for victims to consider reporting issues. Instead, greater emphasis was placed on the role of the voluntary sector in encouraging reporting and facilitating a closer relationship with the Community Safety Team to ensure that reports were referred as appropriate where local authority or police action was required. Stronger links with the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams were also established alongside the development of the joint Community Safety hub in West Offices.
- 4.2 The strategy established a model whereby hate crimes would be addressed through the hub as part of day to day work tackling all forms

of anti-social behaviour. The detail of how this works is provided at paragraph 5 below.

How Hate Crime is addressed

5. Reports of hate crime can be made through either City of York Council, a third party organisation or the police. Police officers working within the community safety hub also undertake a daily review of incidents over the previous 24 hours to ensure that no community safety related incidents are missed. The majority of hate crime incidents are received via the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

5.1 Incidents of hate crime are discussed at the Community Safety Unit Weekly Meeting. They are logged on the case management system (E-CINS) alongside any proposed actions. Actions are followed up on a weekly basis and may range from simply logging the issue (if details are not known) to Safer Neighbourhood Teams owning the case and supporting the victim or support being provided through third sector involvement.

5.2 Whilst the unit does receive a number of reports of hate crime, the majority contain insufficient detail to support action beyond logging with an aim of identifying any trends and/or repeat locations. However, these cases remain on the system if a repeat offence is recorded and are subject to multi-agency discussion in the weekly meetings.

6. New Approach to the Community Safety Plan

In December 2016, the Safer York Partnership Board considered a first draft of the new Community Safety Plan. The Community Safety Plan priorities are identified from a Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment produced by North Yorkshire Police and incorporating multi-agency intelligence and information. This is then cross referenced with other strategic intelligence products e.g. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment produced by the Health & Wellbeing Board, public consultation carried out by City of York Council and also by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to support the Police and Crime Plan. From these sources, the following priorities have been identified for Safer York Partnership's three year plan:

- River & Road Safety
- Making the City Centre Safer

- Protecting People from Harm
- Tackling Anti-social Behaviour
- Tackling Serious Organised Crime
- Tackling Substance Misuse (including delivery of the community safety elements of the York Alcohol Strategy)

5.1 At the Board Meeting on 6 December 2016, these priorities were approved alongside a new approach to the development and delivery of the Community Safety Plan.

5.2 In previous plans delivery and performance reporting was heavily reliant on the community safety team within City of York Council leading multi-agency groups aligned to the priorities. However, this did not accurately reflect the work that is delivered through mainstream activities of partners and did not include detail on some of the cross cutting community safety issues e.g. Domestic Abuse, Safeguarding issues and substance misuse/alcohol. Ownership of the priorities within the new plan will be provided by the most appropriate partner represented on the Safer York Partnership Board. This will ensure mainstream targets and outcomes are reflected in the plan, the contribution of all partners features in performance reports and the added benefit of a multi-agency approach to community safety through the Community Safety Partnership has a clear audit trail and governance structure.

5.3 As part of this new approach, it was agreed by the Board that Hate Crime should not be the subject of a separate strategy but should feature within the priorities for the new Community Safety Plan. This not only reflects how hate crime is tackled through the Community Safety Unit's mainstream activities, it also ensures the links between hate crime, Prevent and safeguarding issues under protecting vulnerable people are noted and addressed through future performance reports to the Board.

6. **Rationale for York's approach to tackling hate crime within community safety**

No other district within North Yorkshire has a separate Hate Crime Strategy. Hate crime features as a priority within the delivery plan for the North Yorkshire Community Safety Partnership. Some larger cities still have a separate strategy e.g. Leeds, Bradford, Manchester but these are

areas where hate crime forms a significant percentage of their overall crime. In York, hate crime is less than 1% of total crime. Anecdotal evidence suggests this may be due to under reporting. However whilst hate crime reports are captured weekly by the Community Safety Hub, suggesting that more reports are being made, they lack sufficient detail to enable action to be taken against the perpetrators. This is not a fault of the reporting system it is due to the fact that in the majority of cases the perpetrator is not known.

- 6.1 Hate crime is linked closely to the Prevent agenda, particularly in relation to the activities of far right wing groups targeting specific communities. It is also linked to wider anti-social behaviour and vulnerability where victims are persistently targeted as part of other anti-social behaviour. The Community Safety Unit carries the portfolio for both of these areas of community safety business and is best placed to make the links and drive a multi-agency response or safeguarding support when required. Cases dealt with by the unit are all logged on a case management system accessed by a range of partners including police, housing and mental health services. Hate crime will feature in the anti-social behaviour action plan aligned to the Community Safety Plan.
- 6.2 It is not just hate crime which cuts across many service areas. All priorities identified within the Community Safety Plan 2017-20 are dependent on the input of all agencies and services represented on the Safer York Partnership Board. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 established Community Safety Partnerships as the means to bring together partners to tackle issues of crime and anti-social behaviour together. Safer York Partnership is a mature partnership which has consistently delivered successful outcomes and has established very close working relationships across the city. The new plan takes this approach a step further by recognising the work that is undertaken by individual partners, and collectively, and ensures that through performance reporting the CSP is adding value to that work.

7. **Conclusion**

The draft Community Safety Plan consolidates the changes that have taken place in community safety delivery in the city since 2014. It drives a new approach where accountability sits with individual partners and strategic governance is held by the Safer York Partnership Board.

7.1 The strategy sets out the strategic priorities and objectives aligned to those priorities. However this will be underpinned by more detailed action plans which will drive delivery and performance.

7.2 The plan is in draft format and partners are working on the strategic detail for each priority. A final draft will be presented to the Safer York Partnership Board, and to this committee, in March 2017.

Recommendations

8.

- i) Members are asked to note the decisions made by the Safer York Partnership in December 2016 regarding the Community Safety Plan and incorporation of Hate Crime within that plan
- ii) Members are invited to identify particular strategic objectives relating to the priorities contained within the Community Safety Plan and any issues they would like to see reflected in the action plans.

Reason: To update the Committee on Hate Crime and the development of the Community Safety Plan.

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) N/A

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: N/A

Annexes: N/A