

UPDATE ON THE COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

Summary

1. This report provides an update on work that is being delivered by the Community Safety Unit (formerly known as the ASB Hub).

Background

2. In 2013 an Anti-social Behaviour Project Board was established between North Yorkshire Police (NYP) and City of York Council (CYC) to look at the development of a joint operating model for delivery of services to tackle anti-social behaviour across both organisations in York.
3. The drivers for this work were to improve the way we collectively responded to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), improve community outcomes as a result of addressing ASB alongside the general context of austerity within the public sector and specifically a ten percent reduction in core police funding over the previous five years with expected cuts to the police funding formula in the future. In order to deliver against the above and maintain the quality of policing, in its widest sense and deliver local authority savings through the implementation of a new model of working it was agreed that there was a need for 'up stream' thinking and an innovative model to be based on collaborative working.

Consultation

4. York is an attractive tourist city, one of the most desirable places in the country to live, however in 2013-14 there were 7,550 recorded (North Yorkshire Police) incidents of anti-social behaviour. Many of these were repeat caller victims creating high demand on services and were characterised by multiple factors including health, housing and social care.

5. Consideration was also given to the risk to both City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police of a reduction in resources allowing vulnerable victims to be missed. The Independent Police Complaints Commission are particularly focused on this in the light of national high profile incidents such as Fiona Pilkington (33 incidents reported in 10 years with no calls linked) and David Aiskew (73 incidents in 3 years with confusion between agencies).

A Sustainable Concept

6. The aims of a joint City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police 'hub' were better co-ordination and access to key partners, reduction in duplication across agencies and the development of an approach based on early intervention that would reduce future demand for intensive and costly services.
7. Although the hub was primarily funded from mainstreamed resource within City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police, additional 'one-off' funding was secured from both the Police Innovation Fund (Home Office) and City of York Council Delivery and Innovation fund to ensure that the model was adequately resourced and enhanced with the necessary technology to maximise efficiencies through sharing information electronically and providing initial funding for equipment and training.
8. A robust financial model was agreed by both organisations that demonstrated long term commitment to the vision over several years and beyond and redirected existing resources to minimise the additional funding requirements for the set up of the hub. This resulted in two consecutive successful bids to the Police Innovation Fund, providing the necessary funding to create a more enhanced and sophisticated model than that which was originally envisaged.
9. In addition to the equipment and training costs, the additional Home Office funding has enabled the hub to be independently evaluated by University of York. An initial evaluation was completed in December 2014 and considered by Cabinet in March 2015¹ which resulted in some operational tweaks to the delivery model and a more comprehensive evaluation is due by the end of March 2016. To reflect the links between other types of crime and anti-social behaviour and the broad remit of the

¹ <http://democracy.york.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=733&MId=8334&Ver=4>

team in terms of the wider Community Safety Agenda it was decided to change the name of the unit to Community Safety Hub.

The Delivery Model

10. The Hub is led by the Head of Community Safety who has the strategic remit for all aspects of Community Safety. Operational delivery is split into two key service areas: Tackling ASB and Neighbourhood Enforcement.
11. The team covers all aspects of anti-social behaviour as defined by Home Office Crime Recording:
 - **Nuisance:** ASB causing suffering, trouble or annoyance to the community at large rather than a specific individual or group;
 - **Personal:** ASB targeted at an individual or group
 - **Environmental:** ASB targeting the wider environment e.g. Buildings or public spaces.
12. The ASB team within the unit includes 6 Operational Police Constables and CYC officers (formerly Tenancy Enforcement Officers). Their role is to risk assess and drive action in respect of the most serious ASB cases. They may keep a watch on potentially escalating issues but their actions should be last resort once multi-agency problem solving has tried other interventions and support.
13. Risk assessment takes place on a daily basis and all cases are managed using an electronic case management system (E-CINS). This gives access on each case to all agencies who are involved without the need for meetings or face to face discussions. It also provides a robust audit trail of actions taken and outcomes in relation to that case. A weekly meeting takes place to discuss the highest level cases and determine where enforcement action is required. The team is supported by a senior solicitor where enforcement action is taken.
14. Access to the E-CINS case management system is available to officers within CYC Housing, the Mental Health NHS team and Police Safer Neighbourhood teams. This gives them the ability to monitor partner actions and update their own actions on cases, creating a real time audit trail of all multi-agency actions taken in relation to every case. The inclusion of mental health provision within the unit has enabled the team to work with both perpetrators and victims of ASB.

15. The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team deal predominantly with environmental crime and complaints of domestic noise nuisance. They also respond to complaints of commercial noise nuisance whilst undertaking their weekend domestic noise patrols which are then passed to colleagues within the Public Protection Team for investigation. Their workload is derived from a mixture of direct calls for service made through the CYC Customer Contact Centre and planned proactive operations.
16. The enforcement officers are geographically aligned to the police Safer Neighbourhood Teams and work very closely with these teams to develop proactive operations. These operations are developed as a response to emerging issues of concern derived from analysis of local intelligence and information. The Neighbourhood Enforcement team carry out joint patrols with PCSOs in hotspot areas and carry police radios so that they can be tasked directly from the Force Control Room. This provides a much more responsive service to the community as complaints can be directed to the most appropriate agency to respond.
17. In January 2016, the Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers were granted Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) powers by the Chief Constable of North Yorkshire Police. These powers increase the range of issues that can be dealt with by the team, strengthening their links with the police and enabling them to provide support to proactive operations. Powers include the ability to deal with alcohol related anti-social behaviour, cycling on pavements and taking names and addresses of those associated with ASB.
18. Tactical tasking meetings are held monthly and involve the Community Safety managers who line manage the ASB and Neighbourhood Enforcement teams, the Safer Neighbourhood Inspectors and Sergeants. These meetings provide updates on the cases that are being dealt with by the respective teams, their priorities for the coming month and allow for requests to be made where support is required for a particular operation or campaign.
19. Examples of work undertaken within the unit
The establishment of the unit has facilitated a more effective and efficient way to tackle anti-social behaviour through a multi-agency problem solving approach. The unit has successfully achieved one Public Space Protection Order and is currently consulting on a second with two more being considered. It has driven multi-agency work to address hotspot issues in Chapelfields and Clifton. Previously issues would have taken

much longer to address, taking into consideration the timescales for setting up meetings with partners. Having access to electronically shared information and the location of the Unit within West Offices alongside key partners has substantially increased the speed at which issues can be dealt with. The Neighbourhood Enforcement and ASB teams are well engaged with police Safer Neighbourhood Teams.

20. Examples of work in practice:

Neighbourhood Enforcement Officer Cases

- Operation Erase has brought together the neighbourhood enforcement team with the City Centre Police Safer Neighbourhood Team, British Transport Police, rail providers and the universities to tackle weekend ASB associated with alcohol. Joint patrols took place at peak times throughout the summer, which resulted in a significant reduction in complaints to both the Council and the Police. The Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers (NEOs) have now been granted their CSAS powers which will further enhance their enforcement capability for the next phase of Operation Erase which will take place from March.
- The Neighbourhood Enforcement team visited a property whilst on domestic noise nuisance patrol. Information checks showed that the perpetrator had a child, and had previously been sent a warning letter and was at risk of potentially losing their tenancy due to ongoing complaints. A neighbourhood enforcement officer attended with relevant information and the child's mother disclosed that she is a victim of domestic abuse and that this is responsible for some of the reported noise complaints. She agreed to a referral to the Children's Advice Team (CAT) who was able to broker a Family Early Help Assessment. Independent Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) were informed and undertook safety planning with the mother. The school were notified and extra work was carried out with the child to ensure smooth transition to primary school. Advice was given regarding contact with father and child and arrangements established for contact to take place at a contact centre to reduce the likelihood of further issues at the property. No further incidents have been reported at this property.
- The neighbourhood enforcement team have periodically received reports of a seriously overgrown garden which is owned by an elderly gentleman. Rather than serve a Community Protection Notice given

the perpetrator's circumstances, the NEO contacted York Neighbours', a charity which does odd jobs for the elderly and they have agreed to clear out his garden in the next few weeks.

- NEOs working together with PCSO colleagues has been really useful for intelligence sharing. When working together they discuss cases and share information and local knowledge that is useful to both parties, such as dangerous dog ownership, history on ASB problems, and finding joint solutions. Having access to Safer York Partnership target hardening funding, has enabled the purchase of anti climb paint to help prevent youths from climbing onto buildings that side West Bank park, which has been a cause of concern to local residents and property owners.
- Having dedicated ASB Police Officers within the Hub has improved the speed that information can be obtained from NYP. Having access to their advice and input on cases is also great, even if its just finding out who to speak to within NYP or getting a second opinion on a case. There have also been times when they've joined up on visits where NEOs or ASB Officers have felt that police presence was necessary.
- Two NEOs attended a fly tip on Moor Lane at the end of October – the operative clearing it, had identified there was some evidence in it. Following analysis 14 students were interviewed under caution who confirmed the waste was theirs. Their information led the NEOs to a company that is believed responsible for the fly tip. This is currently being pursued. Due to the seriousness of the offence the students were very concerned and sought advice from the Student Union, who in turn contacted the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team regarding 'rogue waste collectors'. They have been provided with information about householders responsibilities with regards to waste and are assisting in getting this information circulated.
- The City and East Neighbourhood Enforcement Team have been working with police and staff of York Library Art Gallery and Museum Gardens to tackle reports of persistent antisocial behaviour. As a result of multi-agency problem solving work there has been a significant reduction of reported incidents in these locations. In addition, the team have identified rough sleepers in Castlegate spoken to them and directed them to Salvation Army, Peasholme and other charitable organisations. Reports of anti-social behaviour associated with this group of individuals have reduced significantly.

- Regular patrols of Piccadilly Multi Storey car park by NEOs have addressed issues of young people using the top floor as a skate park. The NEOs have been speaking to the young people concerned and have been able to deter them from their activity. As a result, no further complaints have been received.
- The Neighbourhood Enforcement Team played an active role in visiting victims of the floods. As the only uniformed highly visible team from CYC, their presence in the area was welcomed and they have now been delegated as Team Leaders in the event of any future floods.
- An operation is planned for late March led by the Neighbourhood Enforcement team and aimed at tackling illegal transportation and deposit of commercial waste. This operation will involve the NEOs working alongside officers from North Yorkshire Police and the Driving and Vehicle Standards Agency (formerly VOSA).

20. Anti-Social Behaviour Officers Cases

The ASB team deals with those cases of ASB which are deemed high risk through a vulnerability risk assessment process. These are the most complex cases and often involve a range of issues including domestic abuse, criminality, substance misuse and mental health. However, since the establishment of the Unit, repeat calls for service to North Yorkshire Police have significantly reduced.

- Over a twelve month period Caller A reduced repeat calls from 102 to 31. Caller B reduced repeat calls from 106 to 22, Caller C reduced repeat calls from 41 to 9 and Caller D from 42 calls to 0. These are all cases which have been dealt with by both City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police for a number of years, involving considerable time and resource from both organisations.
- A case came to the ASB Team due to criminal activity at and in the vicinity of a property. The occupier had served three months of a six month sentence for fraudulently using a card belonging to a vulnerable person in her care to pay £3100.00 to her rent account. During investigation the ASB Officer contacted neighbours whom it turned out were being threatened and harassed by this tenant. Police issued her with a harassment information notice and the ASB team served her with a Civil Injunction. They also referred the case to Children's Social Care in relation to a child living in the property. One

of the Police ASB Officers has worked to gather evidence in relation to the criminal aspects of the case, he has liaised with Police Officers in the Safer Neighbourhood team dealing with particular incidents and maintained contact with a witness who was extremely stressed about criminal activity at this location. The case was brought before court on 16th December 2015 both CYC and NYP members of the ASB team gave evidence along with the neighbour. CYC were granted possession of the property and able to evict the tenant on 16th February.

- A tenant moved into a property in March 2015.. The tenant was meant to be living in the house with his 17 year old son. Complaints were received within the first couple of weeks about noise. Allegations were made that the father had not moved in, and that the son was living in the property with his friend. There were issues in obtaining evidence from the neighbours due to concerns about reprisals, and a joint meeting was called between, Housing, Community Safety Unit, City of York Council Legal and North Yorkshire Police's Safer Neighbourhood Team. At the meeting a joint action plan was agreed to try to resolve the problem. However, the problems continued to increase and more of the neighbours started to complain about noise and associated anti social behaviour. At the following joint meeting it was agreed that Housing would serve an Introductory Tenancy Notice of Seeking Possession and the Community Safety Unit would look to obtain a Premises Closure Order. On Sunday 12th July 15, the Premises Closure Order was served on the tenant, both at the address of his ex-partner and the current tenancy. He agreed to terminate the tenancy immediately to ensure that additional court costs were not charged. During a two month period there had been 26 separate phone calls to NYP to advise about the problems.
- A case was referred to the ASB Team following the execution of police drug warrants at a property. Criminal proceedings were ongoing but there were also reports of noise nuisance which were being addressed by the Neighbourhood Enforcement Team. The neighbour was being disturbed by the sound of DIY from within the property, during the day and night and despite warnings and early attempts to address the issue it continued. The neighbour also reported that a high volume of people would visit the property, believed to be related to drug activity and this was reported to the police SNT via the Community Safety Hub.

Attempts were made by the tenant to reduce the impact of the noise on the neighbour following suggestions from the ASB team. He moved his DIY hobby to a nearby garage and laid carpet over his laminate floor to reduce the noise transference but complaints continued. The nuisance was having a detrimental affect on the neighbour's health and well being.

Despite no outcome from the drug charges the matter was entered in to court for civil action - a possession claim. A noise abatement notice was served on the tenant shortly before the case was due at County Court and at the trial for possession of the property the court granted an outright order for possession due to the ASB and noise. The criminal matters in relation to drug charges are still under investigation.

- An elderly male living in a one bedroom single flat, was targeted for many years due to his age and vulnerability. Prostitutes took over his house forcing him to sleep on the sofa in the living room and taking control of his benefits. The property became a drugs den and was raided on several occasions by the police.

For years he would accept no assistance despite many calls for help made on his behalf by concerned friends. An ASB Officer paid him numerous visits with the Adult safeguarding team to build up a rapport. The Community Safety Unit then took over and worked with various agencies to provide support for him to change his life. Meetings took place away from his property involving police and council officers until eventually, he recognised the scale of the problem, and asked for help to get a fresh start.

A management transfer move took place and he was moved to sheltered accommodation. This was intended to be temporary but he enjoyed it so much that he did not want to move. As a result the solution was made permanent and there have been no further calls to either the council or police

Ongoing Development

21. The University of York is due to complete their full evaluation of the unit by the end of March 2016. This together with regular reviews of working practices will drive the future development of the team. Based on the success of the model in York, North Yorkshire Police are planning to extend the model to other parts of the force through the development of

integrated neighbourhood management, recognising that collaborative work between the police and local authorities is an effective and efficient way of problem solving. The team is currently providing support to other local authorities who are in the planning stages of setting up a similar approach.

22. The success of the team has been largely due to the fact that it has been driven from the bottom up, with staff heavily involved in the development and shaping of service delivery to meet the strategic objectives. This approach continues with the regular team meeting structure being used to continue to improve quality of service and explore further opportunities for collaborative working both across services within CYC and also with partners.

Options

23. Having considered the update information provided, Members may choose to:
 - Request further detailed information on the work of the Community Safety Unit.
 - Receive further updates bi-annually, in line with the bi-annual SYP updates.
 - Request a future update at a time appropriate for the committee.
 - Receive no further updates.

Council Plan

24. The work of the community safety unit relates to the following priorities within the Council Plan:
 - A focus on frontline services
 - A council that listens to residents

Implications

25. **Equalities** – the work of the community safety unit complies with the Council's equalities framework.
26. **Legal** – much of the work carried out within the unit involves support from the Council's legal team

27. **Crime and Disorder** – The unit sits within the delivery structure of Safer York Partnership and delivers outcomes against priorities within the Community Safety Plan 2014-17.
28. There are no financial, HR, IT, Property or other implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Risk Management

29. The only risk relating to the work of the Community Safety Unit is the possible impact of future reductions in budgets or the withdrawal of one or more organisations commitment to a collaborative working approach.

Recommendations

30. Members are asked to note the changes which have been introduced to the way in which crime and community safety is tackled in York through an innovative and collaborative relationship between City of York Council and North Yorkshire Police.

Contact Details

Author:

Jane Mowat
Head of Community Safety
CANS
Tel No. 01904 555742

Chief Officer responsible for the report:

Steve Waddington
Assistant Director Housing & Community
Safety

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Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Glossary

ASB – Anti Social Behaviour
CAT – Children’s Advice Team
CSAS – Community Safety Accreditation Scheme
CYC – City of York Council
E-CINS – Electronic Case Management System
IDAS – Independent Domestic Abuse Service

NEOs – neighbourhood Enforcement Officers
NYP – North Yorkshire Police
PCSOs – Police Community Support Officers