

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services  
the Executive Director Adults & Communities  
to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC)  
on 21 July 2020**

**Community Safety in Barnsley and the Impact of COVID-19**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) with an update on the work of the Community Safety Partnership in Barnsley including the impact of the current COVID-19 emergency.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The Safer Barnsley Partnership is a multi-agency partnership working to make Barnsley a safer place for local people and communities. It tackles crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending. The Partnership is made up of a range of organisations and voluntary groups including:

- Barnsley Council
- South Yorkshire Police
- South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue
- South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit
- NHS Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group
- National Probation Service
- Community Rehabilitation Company
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Berneslai Homes
- Office of the Police Crime Commissioner
- Youth Offending Team

- 2.2 The Safer Barnsley Partnership's key role is to understand the community safety issues and produce a needs assessment, use this evidence base and develop a plan to collectively address these community safety issues.

- 2.3 The Partnership strongly believes that working together with organisations and the community is the best way to deal with crime, anti-social behaviour and disorder. Their approach goes far beyond enforcement actions as they believe in dealing with the root causes. They have a strong focus on prevention and tackling the broader determinants of crime.

**3.0 Delivering Against Strategic Priorities 2019-20**

- 3.1 The Safer Barnsley Partnership Board reviews its plans on an annual basis to make sure it meets local needs and can influence how community safety resources are used within the borough. The latest board plan for 2020-21 (Item 4b - attached) reviews the work of the four sub-groups during 2019-20 as well as outlining the priorities for the coming year. The key priorities are delivered through four sub-groups, each tackling specific areas. These include: Tackling Crime; Protecting Vulnerable People; Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour; and Promoting Community Tolerance and Respect. The following sections outline the work of each of these sub-groups during 2019-20.

Tackling Crime Sub-group

- 3.2 In 2019-20, this group focused on protecting victims and communities through a partnership approach to the identification and prevention of crime and targeted offender management. This included:

- Delivering and excellent victim focused service
- Developing the multi-agency response to victims of domestic violence
- Ensuring effective multi-agency oversight of prolific offenders and management of organised crime groups
- Ensuring effective understanding and subsequent management of children's vulnerabilities emerging from issues around knife crime and exploitation by criminal gangs
- Working with communities to identify emerging themes and crime trends that cause the most harm

#### Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Sub-group

3.3 In 2019-20, this group focused on minimising the threat, risk and harm to vulnerable people, families and communities. This included:-

- Promoting the domestic violence service and reducing risk to vulnerable people
- Developing a women's centre and gender specific female offender accommodation
- Undertaking a strategic review of domestic services
- Raising awareness of Cuckooing and develop pathways of support for those at risk
- Ensuring substance misuse and domestic violence services meet the needs of the community

#### Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Sub-group

3.4 In 2019-20, this group focused on the reduction of the impact of anti-social behaviour on residents and visitors to Barnsley. This included:-

- Delivering an outstanding service, particularly with regards to neighbourhood policing and intensive case management
- Ensuring vulnerable communities and individuals are protected and supported
- Ensuring the public is reassured that their concerns are listened to and acted upon
- Working in partnership to deliver a problem-solving approach to tackling ASB
- Identifying key risk and vulnerabilities to facilitate early intervention & prevention activity
- Building public confidence and improve perceptions of safety
- Supporting the transformation of the town centre by ensuring it is, and feels a safe place to work, live and visit

#### Promoting Community Tolerance and Respect Sub-group

3.5 In 2019-20 this group focused on ensuring that communities are safer, cohesive and more resilient. This included:-

- Working in partnership to promote a more tolerant and resilient society
- Delivering an inclusive and fair service to meet the needs of all members of the community
- Ensuring that communities and partners have the strength, capacity and capability to identify and respond to share concerns

#### Child Exploitation (CE) & Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

3.6 In addition to the above-mentioned sub-groups, the Safer Barnsley Partnership works with the Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership Board to tackle child exploitation (CE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE).

3.7 The CE work plan sits alongside the BSCP Strategy and aims to prevent and protect children and young people from exploitation. It also provides support for all victims of CE and their families. The work plan is led by the CE sub-group, which has representation from all key statutory agencies and partners in Barnsley, and they regularly report into the Crime Sub-group and the wider Safer Barnsley Partnership Board.

- 3.8 Work around CCE is being co-ordinated by police and local authorities across Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham to develop multi-agency strategies to tackle CCE. Work is also being done to develop a cross-boundary agreement to tackle CCE across the three boroughs.
- 3.9 Achievements in Barnsley include:-
- Mapping activity relating to organised criminal gangs, resulting in ‘targeted disruption activities’ across the borough
  - The creation of ‘Positive Activities Teams’ to help and prevent young people becoming involved in CCE, deployed in high risk areas
  - An established South Yorkshire wide CCE strategy and intervention offer, supporting young people with locally based services
  - The development of a CCE/crime prevention offer to be delivered in schools where issues are identified
  - Commissioning local voluntary, community and faith groups for ongoing aftercare and support to young people
- 4.0 Impact of COVID-19**
- 4.1 The sections below outline the impact of COVID-19 on the work of each of the four Safer Barnsley Partnership sub-groups:
- Tackling Crime Sub-group
- 4.2 The impact on crime/organised crime in relation to the virus was positive at the height of the lockdown. The group have seen a 40% drop in crime through the lockdown and across Barnsley this has shown the lowest recorded crime levels for a number of years. Organised crime targeting has continued, as police business has continued throughout the current crisis.
- 4.3 The levels of burglary and serious acquisitive crime were very low through lockdown, although demand on policing is steadily rising towards normal levels, but crime demand still remains low.
- 4.4 In the last few weeks a dedicated domestic violence team has been launched that offers a greater support to the most vulnerable across Barnsley, with additional support through dedicated staff with partnership support.
- Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) Sub-group
- 4.5 The core business of the PVP sub-group is to help minimise the threat, risk and harm to vulnerable people, families and communities. During and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we have continued to:
- Work closely with all support providers to ensure they have robust business continuity plans.
  - Increase funding to IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Service) the domestic violence support provider for additional target hardening measures.
  - Closely monitor Domestic Violence referrals, police figures & agency response as well as referrals to the perpetrator ‘Inspire to Change’ project.
  - Support our communications strategy to promote a zero-tolerance approach to domestic violence.
  - Support the measures taken by support providers to put in place support mechanisms that protect staff and services users. This includes an increase in telephone support and digital support solutions.
  - Monitor any additional funding opportunities available to help providers during the pandemic.
  - Monitor any financial requests for support from providers; at this stage none have been identified.
- Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Sub-group
- 4.6 Tackling ASB continues to remain a priority. COVID-19 and the resultant implementation of restrictions has driven people away from public spaces and more into the confines of their own homes. In this

environment, what is perceived to be unacceptable behaviour of others can become more protracted and pronounced with little opportunity for respite, which is reflected in the data recorded.

- 4.7 For a 15 week period from 27<sup>th</sup> January 2020 upto 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020, which includes the lockdown commencing on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, there was a continuing increase in recorded ASB across the borough. Recorded incidents increased most significantly during the 8-week lockdown period from 23rd March. The table below shows the incident types which were in the highest volumes during the 15 week period outlined above:

<b>Category of Recorded Incident</b>	<b>Number of Recorded Incidents</b>	<b>% Of Overall Incidents</b>	<b>% Increase/Decrease on previous year 15-week period</b>
Rowdy and Inconsiderate Behaviour	522	51%	+ 4%
Neighbour Nuisance	141	14%	+14%
Off Road Bike/Quad Vehicle Nuisance	121	12%	+69%
Vehicle Nuisance and Inappropriate Use	111	11%	-13%
Abandoned or Stolen Vehicles	42	4%	-10%
Noise	34	3%	-11%

- 4.8 Nationally, incidents of recorded environmental crime by all categories appear to have increased quite significantly during the lockdown period. This has been attributed to a range of factors including increased time spent within homes resulting in the increased creation of household waste, reduced normal services to both removal and disposal of waste legitimately and more acute environmental decline in more deprived locations.
- 4.9 During April 2020, the Council recorded a 40% increase in incidents of fly-tipping compared with the same period last year. This is in addition to the increases in domestic waste being identified proactively by the Council's Housing and Environment Teams specifically in more high-density residential areas, indicating the negative impact COVID-19 is having on environmental crime.

#### Promoting Community Tolerance and Respect Sub-group

- 4.10 In terms of COVID-19 regulation breaches, these have been monitored, with an average of 30 reports being received each day in Barnsley at the height of the lockdown period. These largely relate to the following three areas of concern:
- 1) Public spaces where people have been failing to adhere to social distancing measures and associating with others not from their household (24% of reports). These reports were dealt with by increasing patrols in the 'hotspot' areas.
  - 2) Visitors to private dwellings (73% of reports). This category accounted for the majority of reports and were dealt with by police deployment to the identified addresses to advise the occupants accordingly.
  - 3) Prohibited businesses remaining open (3% of reports). These reports were referred to Barnsley Council Regulatory Services Department for follow-up action.

- 4.11 The 4 E's approach has been adopted from the outset by South Yorkshire Police in responding to COVID-19 breaches. Through this, the Police have sought to **Engage** the public, **Explain** the new regulations and guidance, **Encourage** compliance, and where these measures have failed and as a last resort, **Enforce**. This is consistent with the ethos of policing by consent and is mindful of avoiding 'criminalising' behaviour that, in normal times, would not be an issue. This approach will hopefully maintain the trust and confidence of the public when 'normality' resumes.
- 4.12 Police have only had to resort to issuing Fixed Penalty Tickets to 23 people. These were in circumstances where numerous warnings had been issued to no avail. Finally, during this period, there have only been three COVID19-related Hate Crimes reported in Barnsley.

## 5.0 Future Plans & Challenges

- 5.1 To allow the partnership to focus their work for 2020-21, they have used data from the police, council and partner agencies, along with the views of the public, to form a Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment (JSIA) which identifies existing and emerging issues within the borough.
- 5.2 As a result of this information gathering, four themes have been identified as important issues which need to be tackled as a priority.
- 5.3 The strategic priorities of the Safer Barnsley Partnership will continue to be delivered through the four sub-groups with the exception of child abuse and child sexual exploitation which are already key priorities for the Barnsley Safeguarding Children's Partnership.
- 5.4 The sub-groups' actions continue to promote a holistic and multi-agency approach with a clear focus on harm reduction and prevention. This approach is important because, for example, the harm caused by substance misuse and drug dealing has far reaching consequences. There are also significant implications for health and wellbeing in respect of the individual, families and the wider community, all of which have to be taken into account with equal importance.
- 5.5 The Safer Barnsley Partnership's plan on a page, shown in the diagram below, outlines:-
- Their strategic vision
  - The priorities for 2020-21
  - The four sub-groups used to deliver the priorities
  - The outcomes to be achieved by each of the sub-groups
  - How they will measure their achievements

## **Strategic vision**

Our strategic vision for Barnsley people and communities is to be:

- *Safe.*
- *Able to contribute to community life.*
- *Able to take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others.*

## **Priorities for the period between 1 april 2020 and 30 march 2021**

Our main priorities for this period, as recommended by the JSIA findings are:

- *Acquisitive Crime.*
- *Environmental Crime.*
- *Substance Misuse and Drug Offences.*
- *Vulnerability and Safeguarding*

## **Delivering against the priorities**

Our priorities will be delivered by four sub-groups, which are:

- *Crime.*
- *Protecting Vulnerable People.*
- *Anti-social Behaviour.*
- *Promoting Community Tolerance and Respect.*

## **Outcomes to be achieved by each sub-group**

Each sub-group will achieve the following outcomes by the year end:

- *Crime - "Victims and communities are protected through a partnership approach to the identification and prevention of crime and targeted offender management".*
- *Protecting Vulnerable People - "The threat, harm and risk to vulnerable people, families and communities are minimised".*
- *Anti-social Behaviour - "The impact of anti-social behaviour on residents and visitors to Barnsley is reduced".*
- *Promoting Community Tolerance and Respect - "Communities are safer, cohesive and more resilient".*

## **How we will measure our achievements**

We will measure our achievements through key performance indicators and case studies that demonstrate:

- *The impact of joined-up approach with all our partners.*
- *That the person in need is placed at the centre of their support planning process.*
- *An increase in user satisfaction with the support they have received.*
- *A reduction in the level of crime and anti-social behaviour compared to previous periods.*

## **6.0 Invited Witnesses**

6.1 The following witnesses have been invited to attend to answer questions from the committee:-

- Wendy Lowder, Executive Director Communities, BMBC
- Paul Brannan, Head of Safer Barnsley, BMBC
- Cllr Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson - Adults & Communities, BMBC
- Chief Inspector Mark James, South Yorkshire Police

## **7.0 Possible Areas for Investigation**

7.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:-

- What have been the biggest challenges in responding to the pandemic?
- What are your key concerns for the future for both the community and the partnership organisations involved?
- How effective is the sharing of data and intelligence amongst agencies?
- What areas of performance are you most proud of and how can the learning from these be utilised in other areas of operation?
- Are current partnership working arrangements effective or are there areas where there is scope for clarification, simplification or rationalisation?
- What areas of performance are you most concerned about and why?
- How do you ensure local voices and concerns influence the work of the Safer Barnsley Partnership?
- How do services in Barnsley compare with others in the region in terms of both demand and performance?
- What key lessons have been learnt in managing community safety over the last few weeks?
- What can Members do to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership and delivering the strategic outcomes for 2020-21?

## **8.0 Background Papers**

- Item 4b (attached) - Safer Barnsley Partnership Annual Plan 2020-21
- Safer Barnsley Partnership Plan 2016-2020:  
<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/3336/safer-barnsley-partnership-plan.pdf>

## **9.0 Glossary**

ASB	Anti-social behaviour
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CE	Child Exploitation
JSIA	Joint Strategic Intelligence Assessment
OSC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
PVP	Protecting Vulnerable People

## **10.0 Officer Contact**

Anna Marshall, Overview & Scrutiny Team, 13 July 2020