

# Item 4a

Report of the Executive Director Core Services  
and the Executive Director Adults and  
Communities,  
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
(OSC) on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## Violent Crime in Barnsley

### **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 and South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit in Barnsley towards tackling violent crime and its impact on the communities of Barnsley.
- 1.2 Item 4b (attached) shows the current performance against priorities and the associated actions, as at 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022, and the governance arrangements in place.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1. In April 2018 the government outlined a national commitment to addressing violence and how it affects people in England and Wales in the Serious Violence Strategy. The commitment was prompted by high profile coverage of issues of violence in the national media, including apparently worrying trends in most serious violence (MSV) including knife and gun crime (often referred to as weapon enabled violence). The strategy set out the context and aims within the following headers:-
  - Trends
  - Risk factors
  - Emerging crime types associated with drugs such as county lines
  - Early intervention and prevention approaches
  - Supporting communities and local partnerships
  - Law enforcement and criminal justice
  - Delivery
- 2.2 To support the delivery aims of the strategy in 2019 the Home Office made funding available to the 18 Constabulary areas in England and Wales identified as having the highest per capita incidents of crime. The funding was designed to enable these areas to consider developing a more systemic approach to the prevention and reduction of violence based around public health modelling and informed by learning from areas such as Glasgow where such approaches had been effectively in place for over a decade. South Yorkshire was one of the constabulary areas identified. The funding and approach required that a Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) be established in South Yorkshire and that this Unit, directed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, would be responsible for establishing a comprehensive local profile of violence across the county and develop and account for the delivery of a strategy to prevent and reduce violence in the county.
- 2.3 From the local profile, the Safer Barnsley Partnership have been able to identify the key thematic and locality problems associated with violence in Barnsley and develop and implement a targeted action plan aimed at addressing these concerns.

2.4 The key points identified in Barnsley for the Area Profile were as follows:-

- According to Hospital Episodes Statistics, those who suffer an injury from violent crime tend to be younger, with 20 to 29 year-olds over-represented by 293% in the data. This supports the conclusion of the area profile that young people are the most affected by violence.
- 'Assault by a sharp object' was less common in Barnsley hospital data, at 11%, compared to the South Yorkshire average of 16%. Whilst knife crime is still a concern in Barnsley, this also reinforces that the majority of violent crimes are committed without a weapon.
- By average rate per 10,000 population per month, Barnsley Central, Dearne North, Kingstone and Worsbrough were all in the top 20% of all South Yorkshire wards for 'violence with injury' crime.
- Suspects of 'violence with injury' crimes came from all wards, but Barnsley Central, Dearne North, Kingstone, Monk Bretton, St Helens and Worsbrough were all in the top 20% of wards in South Yorkshire for the rate at which suspects originated from them. This can be used as a rough metric for the degree to which a ward's residents are "involved in violence".
- Dearne North, St Helens and Worsbrough were in the most deprived 20% of wards in South Yorkshire, and also represent wards with high rates of 'ward of origin' for violence with injury.

2.5 Using the information gleaned in the Area Profile, and utilising the role of the Violence Reduction Link Officer who works between the VRU and the Safer Barnsley Partnership, Barnsley has been able to establish a local Violence Reduction Action Plan (Item 4b – attached). The intervention framework for the plan includes:-

- Primary prevention - stopping violence before it starts
- Secondary prevention - halting the progression of violence once it has already occurred
- Tertiary prevention - providing a way out for those already entrenched in violence
- Criminal justice and enforcement - holding people accountable when they are criminally culpable
- Attitudinal change - aiming to shift cultural norms in society

2.6 An action and delivery plan has been developed to respond to what are deemed to be the priority issues relating to violence within Barnsley. The plan has considered the comprehensive evidence produced as part of the area and ward profile work undertaken by the Violence Reduction Unit, and the strategic themes outlined within the violence reduction strategy.

2.7 The plan is underpinned by the assumption that violence is reflective of broader societal factors such as inequalities, deprivation, environmental, opportunity and economic circumstance and that broader plans already exist in the borough to action these circumstances. The action plan has also been developed in conjunction with other direct plans and activity aimed at addressing the various causal factors of violence and where appropriate such plans and existing governance arrangements have been referenced in the plan.

2.8 Additionally, the action plan attempts to incorporate a public health outlook in terms of prevention, attitudinal and causation dimensions which can influence the emergence and prevalence of violence within Barnsley and proposes interventions which are aimed to tackle both those for whom violence is already a feature of their lives and prevent others from being drawn into violence.

2.9 Within Barnsley the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit are engaged in several strategic partnerships and organisations with a view to achieving the actions of the Safer Barnsley Violence Reduction Action Plan (Item 4b). These include the Barnsley Alcohol Alliance, Alcohol Care Team, Youth Crime and Anti-social Behaviour Board, The South Yorkshire Police Serious Violence Programme and Early Help Steering Group, The Barnsley Evening and Night-Time Economy Group, amongst others.

### 3.0 Current Position

3.1 The Barnsley Violence Reduction Action (Item 4b – attached) plan is a ‘living’ document that was generated and developed in conjunction with Barnsley Council’s partner agencies. The action plan is updated and administered by the Barnsley Council/ South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit Link Officer.

3.2 There are six main themes to the action plan which were agreed via the Safer Barnsley Partnership at the outset of the action plan in early 2020. These are:-

- Neighbourhoods - Considering which locations across Barnsley have a disproportionate experience of violence and feature within the top 20% of wards in South Yorkshire.
- Alcohol – The clear correlation identified between the consumption of alcohol and the prevalence of violence in all settings.
- The Evening and Night-Time Economy – Increased levels of violence associated with interactions taking place during evening and night-time activities in the town centre and principal towns.
- Young People – The overrepresentation of young people, between the ages of 15 and 30, as both perpetrators and victims of violence.
- Domestic Abuse – Acknowledging that domestic abuse remains a priority concern in Barnsley and that increased awareness and confidence are required to ensure problems are prevented and addressed appropriately.
- Weapon Enabled Violence – Focussing on the need to continue to keep Barnsley in a relatively strong position in terms of comparatively low levels of weapon enabled violence but acknowledging the need to ensure that environments and dynamics where the use of weapons become more apparent are prevented.

All categories are in line with the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit’s 16 themes of violence.

3.3 To work to achieve the aims of the action plan, the SYVRU have initiated and funded numerous programmes including:-

- **Plan B Custody Navigators.** Based at Shepcote Lane Sheffield but deploying to Barnsley and Doncaster custody suites as necessary. This is a tertiary approach to crime reduction to pull people already entrenched in violence out of criminal activity. Navigators support detainees, arrested for violent offences, in an attempt to break offending cycles. Using Trauma Informed Practice, they explore what has happened in the detainees past that has, potentially, led to this detention. They engage young adults, offering long-term support, signposting and practical guidance, assisting them into employment, education, training, housing and towards counselling. The support provided continues after the detainees leave custody if so desired by the detainee. It is not an alternative to the criminal justice system, as any proceedings will continue to their conclusion. The ages of the young people who are able to access this service is currently being reviewed in conjunction with SYP and Operation Fortify to engage with younger people between the ages of 10 to 15 who have been arrested for offences that may indicate their involvement with Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and county lines crime.
- **Mentors in Violence Prevention Programme.** This is an initiative aimed at primary violence reduction and targets young people aged between 11 and 16 years. The Mentors in Violence Prevention programme (MVP) is a leadership and bystander programme. The programme is designed to educate schoolteachers, staff and pupils on the bystander model. (A bystander is somebody who sees or knows about a certain situation such as bullying that is happening to someone else. If a bystander does nothing about the situation,

they can be seen as condoning this behaviour.) The MVP Programme places young people within realistic and relevant scenarios. The aim of these scenarios is to: raise awareness (of the issue), challenge thinking (around the issue), open dialogue (within peer groups), and inspire individual leadership (around the issue). The discussions created within MVP permit young people to share, the often, healthy norms that most of them believe in. These discussions also aim to reassure young people. A simple but effective toolkit is shared to individuals allowing them to be the friends they want to be. A young person feeling safe and supported in any learning environment, will attain. This programme sits within the RHSE (Relationship Health and Sex Education) or PSHE (Personal Social Health Education) part of the curriculum.

- **Wrong Look, Wrong Time, Wrong Place (WLWTWP)** is an intervention arranged with and through Yorkshire Mentoring for small group work with secondary age young people (Years 9+), usually around six hours in total. In summary, this scheme is delivered through schools and youth organisations by way of a video, documenting the fatal stabbing of a young male in Bedfordshire, the aftermath of his death and the subsequent emergency services activity. A 'training for trainers' day has been commissioned by SYVRU to commence immediately and will train up to 15 employees and youth workers to deliver and facilitate the programme within their respective organisations. Barnsley College is extremely interested in delivering this resource in their establishment.
- **StreetSmart** is an initiative that provides wrap-around support for young people at street level – a setting where parents, schools and most other services have little reach. The scheme aims to contribute to a reduction in violence and crime uptake among young people and is underpinned by increased levels of knowledge and understanding of key issues, improved mental wellbeing and increased hopes and aspirations. These aims have led us to pursue the following outcomes:-
  - Young people improve understanding of crime and violence
  - Young men develop their understanding of masculinity
  - Young people improve mental wellbeing and self-awareness

At the core of the programme the aim is to improve drugs education, reduce violence against women and girls, improve mental wellbeing and challenge violence as a socio cultural norm.

- **Barnsley Evening and Night-Time Economy Group (Barnsley ENTEG)**. South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit work closely with partner agencies in this field. BMBC public health managers lead this group, and a meeting is held every quarter for all partners to discuss the running of the group and Barnsley Town Centre evening and night-time economy work. Lately, given the small increase in reports of drink spiking and violence against women and girls the SYVRU and OPCC have provided funding to the Barnsley ENTEG to purchase devices for glasses to make the administering of noxious substances much more difficult. This is a short-term solution and the longer-term remedy is being negotiated now with Yorkshire Mentoring. This initiative is aimed at a target audience of 11 to 18 year-olds to challenge inappropriate attitudes and behaviour towards their female peers and others.

3.4 To ensure that the priorities are reflective of emerging trends in violence The VRU regularly monitors rates of all types of violence across the county and any emerging national trends relating to criminality. In addition, broader societal factors such as the impact of the pandemic, local economic circumstances, local community dynamics and any other contributory factors are considered within the context of how these may contribute towards impacting upon the likelihood of violence. It is hoped that by operating in this way the local plan to reduce violence, the impact of violence and the causal factors of violence can be delivered most effectively.

## 4.0 Future Plans & Challenges

- 4.1 Work has started with Targeted Youth Support and the Youth Justice Service to fund and appoint a Navigator within the Barnsley Hospital Emergency department. This Navigator will offer support and signposting to victims of assault using the hospital. The role will bring many advantages to all services including early identification of young, vulnerable and repeat victims; resource usage reduction and intelligence for all services and partners. Work continues to involve Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) from secondary schools in and around Barnsley to improve the early involvement of bespoke resources with young people. Meeting with DSLs from all schools is planned for the next quarterly meeting for all such leads.
- 4.2 More recent national profile has been given to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) with a number of horrific stranger related incidents of violence against women receiving significant media attention. In addition, “drink spiking” which is usually (not exclusively) associated with offending against women and girls has also hit the headlines in recent months. The VAWG agenda remains an area which requires further understanding and dissemination to enable effective actions are put in place to prevent and deal with it. A key aim for the VRU is to refresh all local plans to consider the evidence in relation to violence against women and girls and how best local partnerships can tackle this.
- 4.3 Most Serious Violent Crime (MSV) is defined as crime which causes the most harm to an individual or attempts to cause serious harm. **Barnsley typically has lower rates of MSV than the rest of South Yorkshire.** Figures 1 and 2 below show the rates of Most Serious Violence in Barnsley and the breakdown of Most Serious Violence by ward. Central Ward has the highest rate of MSV. However, this is usual as there are far more people using the area than its resident population would suggest, and town centres are typically the focus of the night-time economy which increases the possibility of violent interactions. Notwithstanding Barnsley’s relatively positive position in comparison to our near neighbours it is apparent that the trend for MSV has been increasing over the past 3 years and as such the Violence Reduction Action Plan will be reviewed to reflect this and focus more specifically on the causes of MSV.

Figure 1. Rate of Most Serious Violence in Barnsley

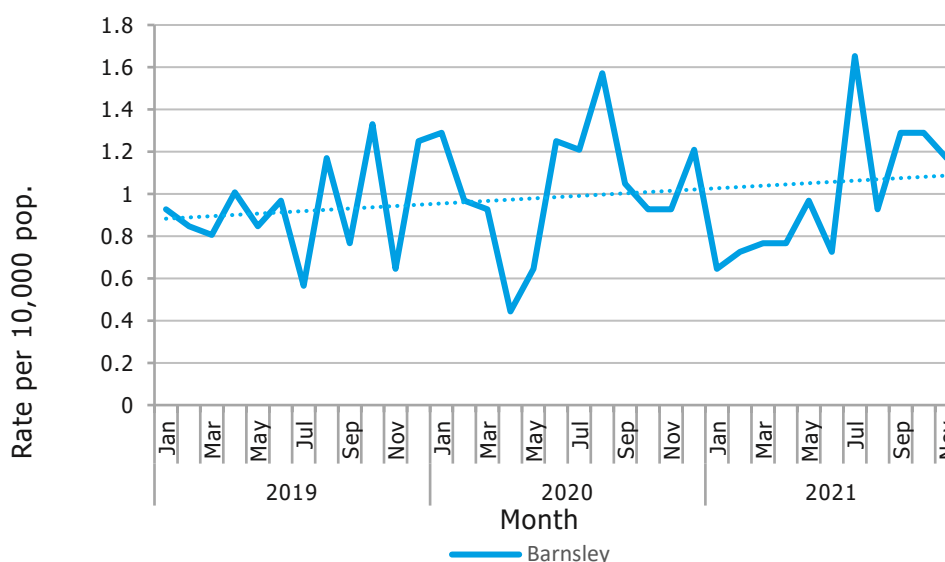
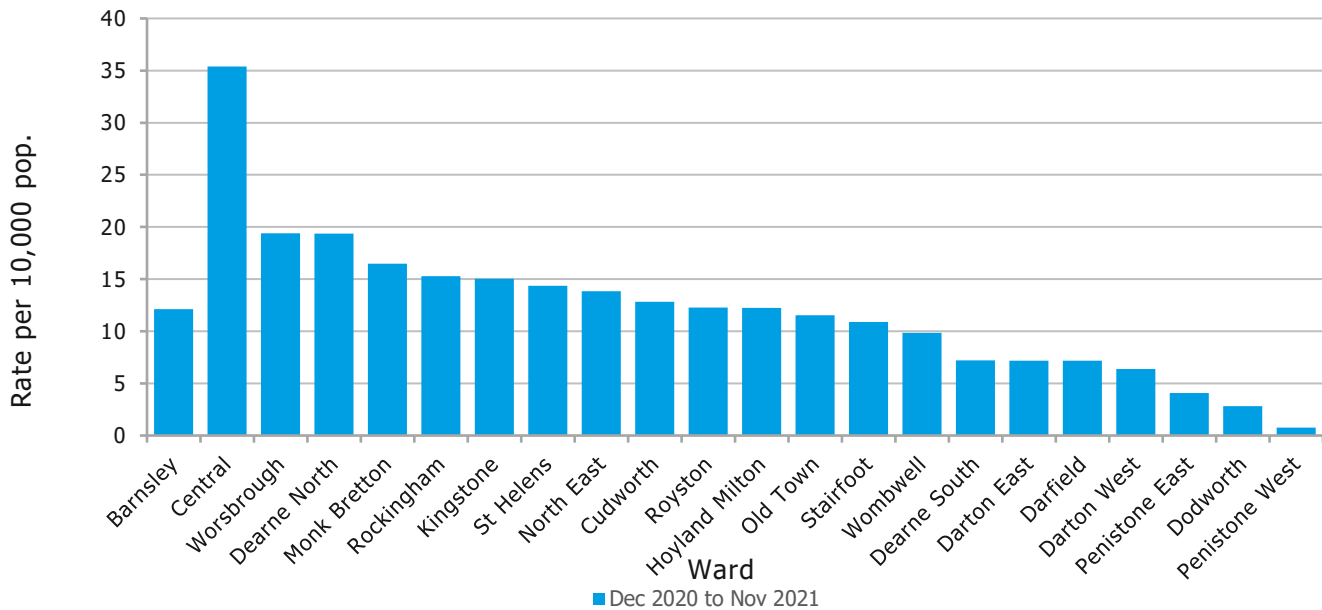


Figure 2. Rate of Most Serious Violence by Ward



4.4 Barnsley is a safe area in which to work and live. The Area Profile clearly evidences a correlation between social and economic deprivation and violence. To this extent, it is likely that any worsening of circumstances in any of our communities could potentially result in increases in violence and the impact of violence. The legacy of COVID, and the fact that negative outcomes from COVID seem to have widened the equalities gap, may indeed create a greater challenge for our aims to prevent and reduce violence. However, it should further emphasise why a systemic model is required which considers violence as one of the range of symptoms associated with overall social and economic circumstances.

## 5.0 Invited Witnesses

5.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today’s meeting to answer questions from the committee:-

- Paul Brannan, Head of Safer Barnsley, Bernaslai Homes
- Phil Hollingsworth, Service Director Safer Stronger Healthier Communities, BMBC
- James Aaby, Detective Chief Superintendent, South Yorkshire Police
- Mark Miller, Violence Reduction Unit, South Yorkshire Police
- Ian Bailey, Violence Reduction Unit Partnership Manager, South Yorkshire Police
- Rosemary Clewer, Senior Commissioning Manager, BMBC
- Wendy Lowder, Executive Director Adults and Communities, BMBC
- Cllr Jenny Platts, Cabinet Spokesperson Adults and Communities, BMBC

## 6.0 Possible Areas for Investigation

6.1 Members may want to ask questions around the following areas:-

- Which areas of performance are you most pleased with, what could be better?
- What areas of performance are you most concerned about and why?

- What do you consider to be the strengths and weaknesses of the partnership?
- What is the greatest challenge to reducing the impact of alcohol on violence in Barnsley? When do you expect to see an improvement in the progress to achieving this priority?
- What barriers are you facing when working with young people and schools, particularly those who are hard to reach (eg. elective home educated) and those that refuse to engage with the Plan B Custody Navigators? How do you plan to overcome them?
- How has Covid impacted upon the number of domestic violence incidents and what more needs to be done to achieve the 10% target for those leaving violent relationships?
- Is the response to the rise in violence against Women and Girls sufficient and at an appropriate pace?
- How is the 'residents' voice' reflected in your work? What are they telling you?
- What can be done to increase public confidence in the reporting and investigating of crimes and how do you manage expectations?
- What do you hope to achieve by shifting 'cultural norms within society'?
- How is data recorded and how confident are you that that this data is robust?
- What does success look like, and how will you know whether you have achieved it? How will you measure the impact?
- When will the action plan be refreshed to take account of newly emerging priorities and are completed actions to be removed or will they be embedded into day-to-day service delivery?
- Are there sufficient resources to achieve the priorities and how do you ensure that these are fairly, effectively and efficiently deployed across the borough?
- How has SYP invested in technology across Barnsley in order to make residents safer and how is crime being 'designed out' across the borough?
- What can Members do to support the work of the Community Safety Partnership and the South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit?

## **7.0 Background Papers and Useful Links**

- Item 4b (attached) Barnsley Violence Reduction Action Plan
- HM Government Serious Violence Strategy 2018:-  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/698009/serious-violence-strategy.pdf)
- South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit:-  
<https://southyorkshireviolencereductionunit.com/>
- Yorkshire Mentoring:-  
<https://www.yorkshirementoring.org.uk/>

## 8.0 Glossary

ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
BDGH	Barnsley District General Hospital
BMBC	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Leads
ENTEG	Barnsley Evening and Night-time Economy Group
MVP	Mentors in Violence Prevention (SYVRU initiative)
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing Team
OCGs	Organised Crime Groups
OPCC	Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
OSC	Overview & Scrutiny Committee
PVP	Protecting Vulnerable People (Safer Barnsley Partnership)
SOC	Serious and Organised Crime
SYENTEG	South Yorkshire Evening and Night-time Economy
SYP	South Yorkshire Police
SYVRU	South Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit
TYS	Targeted Youth Support (Barnsley MBC department)
WLWTWP	Wrong Look Wrong Time Wrong Place
YJS	Youth Justice Services (Barnsley MBC)
YOT	Youth Offending Team

## 9.0 Officer Contact

Jane Murphy, Overview & Scrutiny Officer [Scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny@barnsley.gov.uk)  
31st January 2022