



# Northumberland

## County Council

### **Communities and Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**4th March 2020**

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#### **Community safety and anti-social behaviour control**

**Report of the Executive Director of Regeneration, Commercial and Economy:**

Juliemma McLoughlin

**Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Resilience:** Councillor John Riddle.

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#### **Purpose of report**

The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the current discharge of the Council's duties towards community safety and the control of anti-social behaviour, including particularly how it provides support to ward councillors, for its consideration.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 1) Receive and comment on the content of the Report.

#### **Link to Corporate Plan**

This report is linked to the Living and Enjoying parts of the Corporate Plan 2018-21 that have the objectives 'We want you to feel safe, healthy, and cared for' and 'We want you to love where you live'.

#### **Key issues**

1. Northumberland County Council has a statutory duty with regard to the prevention and control of anti-social behaviour (ASB) at both the strategic and operational level. Under s17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities, amongst others, have a duty to exercise their functions with 'due regard' to the issue and do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their area. The rationale for this responsibility is that levels of crime and disorder are influenced by the policies, decisions and practices of Northumberland County Council together with other partner agencies and organisations working in a locality.
2. The Safer Northumberland Partnership is Northumberland's Community Safety Partnership and the secretariat is provided by the Council. This brings together local authorities, Probation, Police, Fire Services and other partners to work together to develop crime and disorder audits, implement reduction strategies, and to work in partnership with other agencies to tackle the identified problems.
3. Service requests about ASB received by the Housing and Public Protection Service on behalf of the Council are assessed and triaged at initial point of receipt and then investigated against defined timescales. Some cases can be resolved through the CSO's investigation with, where appropriate, assistance from Environmental Health colleagues on linked issues or at addresses of mutual interest.
4. However, some issues require multi-agency involvement and these are escalated to the VOLs (Victim Offender Location meetings). These are two or four weekly multi-agency meetings chaired by the Senior CSO. They are attended by other key partners in particular the police and representatives of housing registered providers who also bring cases of interest to the meetings.
5. ASBRAC (ASB Risk Assessment Conference) is a higher level multi-agency group which meets, as needed, to consider cases which VOLs feel they are unable to deal with because of resource or policy implications, or because the level of risk associated with the case is too great and they are unable to mitigate it effectively. There is an ASBRAC that deals with person specific cases and an ASBRAC for localities that deals with area based issues.
6. In 2018/19 Public Protections community safety officers dealt with 811 service requests regarding anti-social behaviour and community safety. The majority were received from the general public but they also came from ward members, parish & town councils or other partners. For 92% of the requests the relevant response service standard was met and 94% were resolved within the target period.
7. The Safer Northumberland Partnership provides a local forum in which to discuss, plan and coordinate responses to both long standing statutory priorities such as reducing crime and disorder/ASB, reducing the misuse of drugs and alcohol and reducing reoffending. Furthermore it has taken on an expanding and increasingly

complex, interrelated and evolving agenda including issues such as Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), Modern Day Slavery (MDS), domestic violence, cyber crime and hate crime.

8. The Single Point of Contact system (SPOC) was approved by Informal Cabinet in late 2018 following consultation with ward members and key partners. The system provides a practical structured way in which ward members can raise issues of concern regarding ASB or community safety with officers and, if necessary, the wider partnership. This service is provided by Community Safety Officers (CSOs), within the Housing & Public Protection Service as they have highly developed partnership arrangements within their respective areas.
9. When required the SPOC can arrange a meeting with the ward Member and those partner agencies that need to be present to discuss particular area based community safety problems in their ward. These bespoke meetings are outcome focussed and efficiently use time and resources. Following a meeting the SPOC then provides the Member with timely updates on the progress of actions initiated at the meeting.

## **Background**

### **1.The statutory framework.**

1.1 Northumberland County Council has a statutory duty with regard to the prevention and control of anti-social behaviour (ASB) at both the strategic and operational level. Under s17(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, local authorities, amongst others, have a duty to exercise their functions with 'due regard' to the need to prevent crime and disorder in their area and do all it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their area. The rationale for this responsibility is that levels of crime and disorder are influenced by the policies, decisions and practices of Northumberland County Council together with other partner agencies and organisations working in a locality. So all the specified organisations including the Council have a duty to routinely consider the implications for crime and disorder as they carry out their day-to-day business.

1.2 Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) have their origin in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (CDA 98). This gave local authorities, probation, police and fire services duties to work together to develop crime and disorder audits and implement reduction strategies, and to work in partnership with other agencies to tackle the identified problems.

1.3 The Police and Justice Act 2006 comprehensively revised the CDA 98. The Act places a duty on an expanded range of responsible authorities to share evidenced data to support Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs). This includes the Fire Service, Probation Service, Health Service, local Police Authority and a representative of Registered Social Landlords. The legislation also places a new duty on CDRPs to join together in a formal strategic group to undertake frequent strategic assessments of levels and patterns of

crime and drug misuse in their area and to produce annual rolling three year community safety plans.

## **2. The Safer Northumberland Partnership.**

2.1 The Safer Northumberland Partnership (SNP) is Northumberland's Community Safety Partnership. This brings together the County Council, Probation, Police and the Fire Services to work together to develop crime and disorder audits. Then to implement reduction strategies and to work in partnership with other agencies to tackle the identified problems.

2.2 The Safer Northumberland Partnership provides a local and practical forum in which to discuss, plan and coordinate responses to both long standing statutory priorities such as reducing crime and disorder/ASB, reducing the misuse of drugs/alcohol and reducing reoffending. It has taken on an expanding and increasingly complex and evolving agenda including issues such as Organised Crime Groups (OCGs), Modern Day Slavery (MDS), the Government's anti-terrorism initiatives CONTEST and PREVENT, domestic violence, cyber crime and hate crime. The effects of these problems on communities, localities and victims creates a complex context encompassing themes such as vulnerability, community cohesion and fear of crime. Many of the recognised determinants and drivers of crime are within the remit of the Partnership so the selection of priorities and the development of action plans need to be cognisant of them.

## **3. Service requests regarding ASB and the Victim Offender Location (VOL) meetings.**

3.1 Service requests received by the Council's Community and Environmental Health Team's community safety officers are assessed triaged at initial point of receipt by the and then investigated against defined timescales. Some cases can be resolved through the CSOs investigation or with assistance from Environmental Health colleagues on linked issues or at addresses of mutual interest. The CSOs will also routinely work with the police where the issue is also of interest to them.

3.2 However some issues require more thorough multi-agency involvement and these are escalated to the VOLs. These are two or four weekly multi-agency meetings chaired by the Senior CSO from the Council's Community Safety Team within the Public Health Protection Unit. They are attended by other key partners in particular the Police and representatives of housing registered providers.

3.3 There are seven VOLs in the County, based around the Northumbria Police sector boundaries. Meetings are attended by operational staff and supervisory level managers. They are well respected by partners as being efficient and effective in dealing with cases up to a medium level of risk.

## **4. ASB Risk Assessment Conference (ASBRAC).**

4.1 This is a higher level multi-agency group which meets as needed to consider cases which VOLs feel they are unable to deal with because of resource or policy implications, or because the level of risk associated with the case is too great and they are unable to mitigate it effectively. There is an ASBRAC that deals with person specific cases and an ASBRAC localities that deals with area based issues.

4.2 ASBRAC is attended by more senior managers who have authority over appropriate resources and can take policy based decisions. Cases are typically highly complex and often relate to highly vulnerable individuals.

## **5.The Single Point of Contact (SPOC) system.**

5.1 The Single Point of Contact system was approved by Informal Cabinet in late 2018 following consultation with ward members and key partners. The SPOC arrangements were confirmed by email to all members on the 4th December 2018. The system provides a practical structured way in which ward members can raise issues of concern regarding asb or community safety with officers and if necessary the wider partnership. The system is provided by Community Safety Officers (CSOs) because they have highly developed partnership arrangements within their own area and so are ideally placed for this role. The Senior CSO chairs the six VOLs that operate across the County allowing for quick and effective escalation of cases into formal multi-agency settings as required. The manager of the Community and Environmental Health Team within which the officers sit is also the chair of ASBRAC again allowing for the rapid escalation of serious cases.

5.2 When required the SPOC can arrange a meeting with the ward Member and those partner agencies that need to be present to discuss particular area based community safety problems in their ward. These bespoke meetings are outcome focussed and efficiently use time and resources. They also meet the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations because those invited are there on a need to know basis.

5.3 Following a meeting the SPOC then provides the Member with timely updates on the progress of actions initiated at the meeting.

5.4 Although primarily aimed at the communication of operational issues SPOCs also act as the initial contact point for broader partnership matters such as the performance of partners, case review or areas where members thought further scrutiny was appropriate. SPOCs have excellent links to the SNP because the partnership secretariat is provided from within the same team and so they are well placed to refer on appropriate issues.

5.5 The SPOC system was reviewed after 6 months and an update was provided to all the five Local Area Committees in September 2019. The SPOC arrangements were subsequently reconfirmed by email to all ward members.

## 6. Operational asb control - key metrics and performance measures.

### 6.1 ASB service requests 2016-19.

Year	Number of service requests
2016/17	818
2017/18	916
2018/19	811
2019/20 to 31/12/19	719

Over a four year span the number of ASB complaints received shows only minor year to year variation.

### 6.2 2018/19 ASB service requests - response performance.

After the Pilkington enquiry the Council started to use the same classification system as the police for ASB. Using this approach enables ASB complaints to be classified as Category 1 (one working day response target) or Category 2 (three working day response target), thereby ensuring an appropriate speed of response. Depending on the nature of the service request it may be immediately referred to another agency such as Northumbria Police as the appropriate primary responder.

	Number of service requests	% responded to within target	% resolved within 3 months
<b>Cat 1</b>	321	89%	
<b>Cat 2</b>	490	94%	
<b>Total</b>	811	92%	94%

Response target 90%.

Cat1: Drug or substance use, vandalism, domestic violence, hate crime, intimidation or harassment. Cat 2: Inconsiderate behaviour, street drinking, arson, vagrancy, etc.

### 6.3 2019/20 to 31.12.2019

	Number of service requests	% responded to within target
<b>Cat 1</b>	272	86%
<b>Cat 2</b>	435	92%
<b>Total</b>	719	90%

**Implications**

<b>Policy</b>	None
<b>Finance and value for money</b>	Provided within established general fund budget.
<b>Legal</b>	None
<b>Procurement</b>	None
<b>Human Resources</b>	None
<b>Property</b>	None
<b>Equalities</b> (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	No new decision/policy implications
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	No corporate risks
<b>Crime &amp; Disorder</b>	The report outlines the Councils approach
<b>Customer Consideration</b>	Applicable to all customers
<b>Carbon reduction</b>	Has reduced number of meetings therefore also travel miles. So contributes to carbon reduction.
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>	Contributes to the reduction of asb and fear of crime.
<b>Wards</b>	All

**Background papers**

1. Single Point of Contact Arrangements between Elected Members and the Community Safety Team, Housing & Public Protection Service.

**Report sign off**

***Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:***

	Full Name of Officer
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Monitoring Officer/Legal	Neil Masson
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	Chris Hand
Relevant Executive Director	Rick O'Farrell
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