

North Somerset Council

Report to the Community and Corporate Organisation Policy and Scrutiny Panel

Date of Meeting:

Subject of Report: Community Safety Update

Town or Parish: North Somerset

Officer/Member Presenting: Howard Potheary, Safer Communities Service Manager & Harry Mills, Senior Safer Communities Officer

Key Decision: No

Recommendations

1. Summary of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an opportunity for the Panel to review the work led by North Somerset Council's Community Safety Team in partnership with other agencies to build safer and stronger communities in North Somerset.
- 1.2 The report provides an opportunity for the Panel to feed into the future priorities and planned actions of the Safer Communities Service.

2. Policy

- 2.1 Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (subsequently amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006) places a duty on a number of organisations (the Local Authority, Police Force, Probation Trust, Community Rehabilitation Company, Clinical Commissioning Group and Fire Service) to work together in a Community Safety Partnership to prevent and tackle crime and disorder. This includes specific requirements to reduce re-offending, substance misuse and anti-social behaviour. The People and Communities Board fulfils the role of Community Safety Partnership in North Somerset.

3. Details

3.1 Street-based Anti-Social Behaviour

3.1 Street-based anti-social behaviour (ASB) covers aggressive begging, street drinking and leaving personal property unattended or abandoning items.

3.2 Support for vulnerable people

3.2.1 It is important to stress that individuals that are rough sleeping and those that are engaging in street-based anti-social behaviour should be looked at as separate matters.

3.2.1 North Somerset Council works in partnership with a variety of agencies and also works directly with such individuals to provide alternatives to this lifestyle. A wide range of support is available to those who are genuinely rough sleeping in North Somerset, such as the 'Everyone in Policy' where accommodation is offered to those who are sleeping rough.

3.2.3 However, some individuals choose not to engage with the services offered and remain entrenched in street community life, engaging in behaviours that have a detrimental impact on the wider community

3.3 Tackling anti-social behaviour in North Somerset is one of our key service priorities, which includes street-based anti-social behaviour which can have a significant impact on our town centres. This why we have introduced a number of initiatives to address these issues.

3.4 Aggressive begging & Street drinking

3.4.1 Aggressive begging covers anyone asking for money, food, cigarettes or other goods in a public place in a manner which causes or is likely to cause someone to feel harassed, alarmed or distressed.

3.4.2 Street drinking covers unlicensed drinking in public spaces. While drinking in the street is not an offence in North Somerset, it often leads to rowdy or disruptive behaviour which can cause passers-by to feel intimidated.

3.4.3 The Safer Communities Service coordinates a weekly Street Community Meeting which is a multi-agency group that discusses individuals who are rough sleeping and/or engaging in street-based ASB such as begging and street drinking. The group discusses each individual and their needs to put in place action to ensure all the support available to that individual has been offered to address their needs such as housing, substance misuse and healthcare.

3.4.4 Where individuals refuse offers of support and engage in anti-social behaviour, the council has to balance the rights and needs of all sectors of the community including local residents, businesses and visitors and will use our tools and powers to address these issues.

- 3.4.5 Examples of these tools and powers which are regularly used to tackle street-based ASB include (but not limited to):

Education letters – Issued to anyone believed to be engaging in street-based ASB to make the individual aware that ASB will not be tolerated and the potential consequences if they continue to cause ASB.

Community Protection Warnings/Notices – Used by the Council and Police to target persistent offenders by putting in place requirements and prohibitions to stop the ASB from occurring.

Public Space Protection Orders – Implemented by the Council but enforced by a wider group including the council and the police, they are an effective tool for tackling anti-social behaviour in public spaces including street drinking.

- 3.4.6 To streamline enforcement around aggressive begging, the council is due to be consulting on the inclusion of a restriction on aggressive begging in the PSPO to provide an effective means of dealing with aggressive begging.
- 3.4.7 Over the next few months, we will be stepping up the usage of our PSPOs to take a zero-tolerance approach to street drinking through confiscating alcohol under the PSPO, especially in hotspot areas.

3.6 Abandoned Waste/Unattended belongings

- 3.6.1 In response to a large number of unattended, personal items being left around Weston Town Centre in shop doorways, we have introduced a Clearance Protocol.
- 3.6.2 Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 and Refuse Disposal (amenity) Act 1978, any items left unattended could be treated as an act of fly-tipping or littering for which a person could be issued with a £75 fine or up to £2,500 if prosecuted. However, we have taken a more pragmatic approach towards dealing with unattended items in the town centre by introducing this protocol.
- 3.6.3 The Clearance Protocol addresses how we will deal with three main issues:

Items considered as abandoned, soiled or hazardous - If belongings are left and are not being cared for such as strewn around in the street rather than placed together or are placed against a bin, they will be treated as litter and disposed of. Items or bedding which are soaked or considered as hazardous such as items believed to contain illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia or anything with bodily waste on it, will be removed and disposed of immediately.

Unattended belongings - As part of this clearance protocol, a 'Bag & Tag' scheme has been introduced that covers any belongings which do not appear abandoned and are not hazardous or soiled.

Where unattended items are left in the town centre, our Community Response Officer will note the time and location. If the items remain unattended after three

hours, our Community Response Team will collect the items into sealed property bags, which will be sealed with a unique serial number.

The items will be retained for a maximum of 14 days in a secure location. If the items are not reclaimed in this period, they will be disposed of.

Private landowners - As rough sleepers often bed down in shop and office doorways, many town centre businesses encounter rough sleeping on a daily basis.

We all have a part to play in keeping Weston Town Centre safe and clean and it is the responsibility of the property owner to manage any persons and property on their land, including shop doorways.

North Somerset Council, together with a number of community services, provide support to businesses around rough sleeping. This includes:

- speaking to rough sleepers and assessing the situation
- advising businesses what their rights and responsibilities are
- providing contact details for support services
- reporting rough sleeper locations to the outreach team
- liaising with the outreach team and Police as necessary
- ongoing advice and support.
- Where private land (which includes doorways) is persistently attracting anti-social behaviour or public health concerns, the council will do everything they can to support private landowners.

However, if after a reasonable period of time nothing is being done to rectify the matter, the council will take action against private landowners to ensure measures are taken to prevent the anti-social behaviour at the property from reoccurring.

We will not use our anti-social behaviour powers on somebody just because they are sleeping rough or are homeless.

3.2 North Somerset CCTV Upgrade 2021/22

3.2.1 Context for the need for the CCTV upgrade

- The Emergency Control Centre which operates the CCTV cameras in Weston, Clevedon, Nailsea & Portishead has undergone a transformation. The 80-year-old analogue public surveillance cameras throughout the district have been upgraded with state-of-the-art digital ones which provide clearer, better images, and therefore help when bringing prosecutions.
- The new technology allows police to log in, where authorised, to access and view live and recorded cameras remotely from agreed locations.
- The upgrade has also seen the introduction of a number of separate mobile cameras which can be deployed to hotspots to deal with issues such as anti-social behaviour and littering.
- The previous system which had been in place for 20 years and was fast becoming obsolete and the rejuvenated model will now enable the authority to make North

Somerset a safer place to live, work and do business into the future. This upgrade has been made possible thanks to contributions from each of the four town councils in North Somerset - Clevedon, Nailsea, Portishead and Weston-Super-Mare.

CCTV Progress Report to Completion.

- **July 2020** – Physical work commenced on upgrade of CCTV system from analogue to IP
- Changes to specification introduced at the same time. These changes were the result of a business case whereby it was deemed that using our own networks (affecting Nailsea, Clevedon & Portishead) instead of private, high-cost alternatives, to transmit images would mean greater financial savings in the future.
- Agilisys were commissioned to upgrade the networks from the towns. (Clevedon & Nailsea library and Somerset Hall, Portishead). This involved several aspects which delayed the project significantly, These included reliance on Virgin Media (acting for Agilisys) and B.T work as well as excavation of the ground to make connections to the libraries and Somerset Hall. It also increased the cost, but the business case was strong – 2.5-year payback then ongoing savings in excess of £23k per annum.
- **October 2020** Weston CCTV cameras back online, Nailsea **March 2021**, Clevedon **April 2021**, Portishead **May 2021**.

3.2.2 Issues still outstanding:

- As part of the procurement process, we specified the need for a 'Call Logging System' which would be fit for the purpose of producing reports of all types and record analysis. The incident reporting system delivered did not meet our expectations and was rejected.
- We are currently using the old reporting system, so we *are* providing reports, but not via the new system. We are continuing to press our contactor & HIK to supply to our expectations.

3.3.3 Overall Outcomes of Upgrade:

- Replacement of failing system (most of which was obsolete)
- Clearer images which better provide evidence for convictions
- Ability to link any IP camera from any location via the internet or SIM card & add to the system.
- Cost savings (as highlighted above), by using a combination of wireless and our own network for transmission.
- Future proofed (by replacing old system with latest technology)
- Created ability to create revenue streams.

3.3.4 CCTV Upgrade Conclusion

- Following a rigorous assessment by the National Security Inspectorate the Control Room has been awarded the Surveillance Camera Commissioner's Certification of Compliance to further endorse our commitment to providing the best possible service.

- The Emergency Control Room is staffed 24/7 365 days a year by a team of 10 dedicated operators all vetted to the highest level and fully trained to ensure that the cameras are only used in accordance with current legislation.
- Although the most visual element of the Emergency Control room is the image display wall and although mostly known for CCTV, the team also deal with emergency calls to the authority out of office hours, lone worker monitoring and provide a dedicated operator for the night-time Carelink service.
- The Emergency Control Room comes under the Safer Stronger umbrella and boasts good partnership working with the police, night-time economy and other businesses via a radio system linking retail outlets and licenced venues. CCTV also works with Community Response Officers and Town Centre Wardens.

3.3 Local Operation Remedy Update

- 3.3.1 North Somerset will be one of the first areas in Avon and Somerset to go live with an uplift of Police staff under the name 'Remedy Local'.
- 3.3.2 From the 28 February 2022, the Remedy Local Team will be comprised of four Police Constables (PCs) and one Police Sergeant. By the end of August 2022, the team will be made up of eight PCs and one Sergeant.
- 3.3.3 The team will be tasked fortnightly at the local tasking meeting and will be principally deployed against local issues including drugs supply, ASB, acquisitive crime. They will also take responsibility for all warrants and outstanding offenders as well as providing additional support for policing events in North Somerset.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Not applicable

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The activities referred to within the report are accommodated within existing approved budgets and resources.

6. Legal Powers and Implications

- 6.1 This work is undertaken in line with the Council's responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) and subsequent amendments.
- 6.2 A range of enforcement powers are available to the Council and Police to support the aims of the work described in this report.

7. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

7.1 There are no implications on climate change or the environment arising directly from this report.

8. Risk Management

8.1 Not applicable

9. Equality Implications

9.1 Being safe and feeling safe affect some communities disproportionately (including those with protected characteristics). For example, some members of the community are more at risk of being the victim of crime – particularly some types of crime.

10. Corporate Implications

10.1 This report sets out key work areas, which contribute to corporate priorities

11. Options Considered

11.1 Not applicable

Authors:

Howard Pothecary,
Safer Communities Service Manager
Howard.Pothecary@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 426494

Harry Mills
Senior Safer Communities Officer
Harry.Mills@n-somerset.gov.uk
01934 427265

Appendices:

[Click here to enter Appendices]

Background Papers:

[Click here to enter Background Papers]