
Meeting: EXECUTIVE

Agenda Item:

8

Portfolio Area: Communities and Equalities

Date: 12 JULY 2016

COMMUNITY SAFETY DATA TRENDS

NON-KEY DECISION

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report seeks to provide the Executive with details of community safety trends across various crime types, between the period 2011-2016 and considers respective Police resourcing levels across the County.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the contents of the report be noted.
- 2.2 That if the Executive be minded, a more detailed analysis of individual crime types should be undertaken by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG), in order to further focus the community safety partnership's (CSP) strategic planning moving forward.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In October 2015, the Chair of SoSafe; Stevenage's Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) requested that a piece of work be undertaken, to analyse longer term county wide crime trends in terms of Community Safety Partnership (CSP) performance, against various crime types and most similar groups.
- 3.2 A report was subsequently submitted to the Executive on 19 January 2016 where it was resolved:

That a further report be brought to the Executive, after the SoSafe Community Safety Partnership has completed a more detailed analysis of crime trend data; which will be considered by RAG in order to inform future priorities.

3.3 During the meeting of 19 January the Executive expressed concern that the three community safety key performance indicators (KPIs) within the Balanced Scorecard were red for the second consecutive quarter:

- ASB per 1000 head of population
- violence against the person per 1000 head of population
- Criminal damage per 1000 head of population.

3.4 Given that community safety and the fear of crime had been identified as priorities by residents through the 2015 residents' survey and at Stevenage Day, the Executive requested that officers in conjunction with the Police present a report to them at their earliest convenience detailing crime trends. An initial piece of work was undertaken, to consider data in relation to the balanced scorecard measures; and to hypothesise a reason for the marked increase in those crime types.

3.5 The research found that:

- All districts had an increase in recorded violent crime between August 2013 and July 2015.
- All districts had steadily increasing recorded Domestic Abuse crimes since August 2013, with no obvious peak.
- Recorded crime rates for most crime types have fluctuated at a similar rate across all ten districts during the last two years.
- All districts (except Broxbourne) had increased rates of ASB between August 2013 and July 2015.
- Seven districts had increased rates of serious acquisitive crime between August 2013 and July 2015 – Stevenage recorded a decrease and the lowest rate in the county as of July 2015.

3.6 The initial analysis demonstrated a direct correlation between a timeline of organisational system changes; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) review into police recording standards and revisions to crime recording standards. The report also suggested increases due to greater public awareness of certain issues and how to report them, particularly following any heightened media response.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 This report brings together further sources of data spanning five years, in relation to a wider variety of crime types; to consider the information at ward level and to compare with other Hertfordshire community safety partnerships (CSP) and most similar groups (MSG)¹. This trend data, provided by the

¹ Most similar groups include areas which share similarities of geography, demography, population and areas of affluence or deprivation. The groups are made up of different areas according to the risk factors associated with each crime type.

County Community Safety Unit, may aid the CSP to benchmark against crime types in order to set future targets for the partnership's performance.

4.2 A report on the five year data analysis was presented to RAG on 18 May 2016. Data was collected in relation to the following crime types:

- 'all' crime
- burglary dwelling
- burglary other
- robbery
- motor vehicle crime
- criminal damage
- antisocial behaviour (ASB)
- domestic abuse (DA)
- violence against the person
- drug trafficking class A
- drug possession.

4.3 A short summary of information ascertained against each crime type can be seen below:

Crime type	Total crimes 2010/11	Total crimes 2015/16	Top hot spot	MSG rank*	Herts rank**
All crime	6564	6734	Bedwell	-	10
Burglary dwelling	283	118	Roebuck	1	1
Burglary other	359	199	none	5	9
Robbery	64	47	Bedwell	-	9
Motor vehicle crime	524	374	none	1	8
Criminal damage	1259	1042	Bedwell	13	10
ASB	5651	2735	Bedwell	-	10
Domestic abuse	510	992	Bedwell	-	10
Violence against the person	1079	2002	Bedwell	-	10
Drug trafficking class A	6	31	Bedwell	15	10
Drug possession	279	273	Bedwell	11	7

* 1=best, 15=worst ** 1=best, 10=worst

4.4 A complete breakdown of the data and findings for each crime type can be found in Appendix A. This includes information about ward level crime rates. Further ward data showing decreases and increases in percentages can be found in Appendix B.

4.5 Overall, the following conclusions were made by RAG:

- Stevenage is performing better against the crime levels of five years ago and most crime types are at lower levels currently. Although antisocial behaviour (ASB) has tended to increase during the last two years it is considerably less than when measured five years ago, however we remain the worst performing authority in the County against many crime types.

- Bedwell is the top hot spot across all crime types except those involving more high value acquisitive crime - burglary dwelling, burglary other, motor vehicle crime. The Old Town, Pin Green, Shephall and Roebuck are predominant second and third hot spots for many crime types, which may be linked to areas of deprivation or affluence.
 - Domestic abuse and violent crimes have increased across in wards and across all Herts districts – this correlates with changes to crime recording standards and is also a national trend. However, most crimes have no particular trend pattern (dates, times etc.), particularly those that are opportunistic and therefore more random.
 - Anecdotal evidence suggests that most crime is committed by a small number of people who are often known to police - therefore bi-weekly Operational Delivery Group and quarterly RAG data is important, in order to keep informed about current operational priorities.. Raw data doesn't always tell the whole picture – anecdotal evidence is very important and should be considered in parallel.
 - Stevenage fares well against its “most similar groups” (MSG) except for criminal damage and drug associated crime, although some crimes are not compared and therefore not measured.
 - There may not be a true picture of crime trends or patterns when comparing Stevenage with other Herts districts, unless they are categorised as a MSG.
- 4.6 RAG agreed to further analyse the most problematic crime types in order to understand the various risk factors, beginning with domestic abuse and violence against the person. This will involve looking at repeat victims and perpetrators, overlaying with other internal and external data where possible. Further data for these and other crime types should be collected from additional sources like the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), in order to build up a correlating picture between crime and its contributing factors.
- 4.7 Police Resourcing in Stevenage
- 4.7.1 In terms of the policing profile for Stevenage, there are currently 17 police constables attached to the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). This increased from 13 during 2013/14 when the Chief Constable, Andy Bliss, last reviewed the policing complement across Hertfordshire. At that time, some other districts had their complement of constables reduced. There are currently 21 police community support officers (PCSO) in Stevenage, including six which are part funded by the Council. These figures do not include other available officers, whose availability may be more fluid e.g. local control unit (LCU), Op Scorpion, roads, custody etc. There is a national policing level formula, which details the amount of staff calculated as a requirement for each force area. It is the Chief Constable's responsibility to distribute those staff across the County as necessary.

4.7.2 There are a number of significant factors which adversely affect crime figures in Stevenage. For instance, Bedwell data may be skewed somewhat by factoring crimes in relation to the police station (where incidents are often recorded and therefore attributed to that ward). The railway and bus stations are also situated in Bedwell, and attract various crime types due their proximity to the shops and pubs in what is a very busy town centre. Lister hospital also impacts on police resources in Stevenage. Accident and Emergency Services are available to people from all over Hertfordshire, and certain crimes are often 'imported' into the town (invariably attributed to the night time economy, or violent incidents). Vulnerable people also come into the area, with a steady stream of vulnerable missing people (absconding from A&E) regularly impacting on local police resources.

4.7.3 The table below shows (where the information is available) the level of resources in each of the districts in Hertfordshire: *This information was not made available at the time of printing.*

District	Resources
North Herts	
East Herts	
Welwyn and Hatfield	
Dacorum	
St. Albans	
Hertsmere	
Watford	
Three Rivers	
Broxbourne	

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 Community safety in Stevenage is supported through the following funding:

- Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) community safety grant (£19,900pa).
- The Council funds three additional Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's) under an SLA with Herts Constabulary, who match fund a further three PCSOs (£85,000pa provided by the Council)
- ASB enforcement is undertaken by the Council's ASB team (4 full time staff and related ongoing costs)
- Domestic Abuse work is supported by officers funded through the Council's New Homes Bonus Scheme (2 full time staff and related ongoing costs)
- The Community Safety Partnership is supported through existing resources within the Council's policy team (0.5 FTE staff and related ongoing costs).

5.1.2 The PCC recently advised Hertfordshire CSPs that a new model for the allocation of community safety grants will be applicable from the start of 2017/18. It will be based on a bidding process and granted to CSPs against local and shared community safety priorities.

5.2 Legal Implications

5.2.1 The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*² made it a statutory requirement for a number of public sector organisations (Responsible Authorities), including local authorities, to work together in partnership to tackle crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

5.3.1 There are no new equality and diversity implications associated with this report.

5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 There is a risk that without further analysis or resourcing, a lack of strategic insight could hinder the CSP and its ability to target resources appropriately and effectively.

5.5 Community Safety Implications

5.5.1 The recommended approach will allow the community safety partnership to better identify key risks and challenges.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Breakdown of data according to crime type

Appendix B - Ward data 2011-2016 with percentage changes

² *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents>