

Report to Cabinet
13 March 2019
Report of Director of neighbourhoods
Subject Safer neighbourhoods initiative

Item

5

KEY DECISION

Purpose

To update cabinet on the partnership working undertaken by the council on crime and disorder issues.

To report progress on the recommendations from the scrutiny committee report on county lines to cabinet in November.

To propose some new areas of work to complement our partnership approach to safer neighbourhoods.

Recommendation

To comment on the proposals set out in the report.

Corporate and service priorities

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a safe, clean and low carbon city.

Financial implications

Any financial implications arising from this report will be met from approved budgetary provision.

Ward/s: All Wards

Cabinet member: Councillor Maguire - safe city environment and Councillor Harris – deputy leader and social housing

Contact officers

Bob Cronk, director of neighbourhoods

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Background documents

None

Report

Background

1. The council has a good track record of working in partnership with the police, the county council and other agencies to help to ensure that neighbourhoods in our city remain safe and welcoming places.
2. Over the past two years, the council has continued to review how it works on our estates. The council's neighbourhood model, provides an opportunity to maximise the impact of front line services by:
 - using data to allocate resources based on vulnerability and risk to ensure those most in need are supported
 - intervening as early as possible to prevent issues escalating and more difficult and costly to resolve
 - integrating services and activity where it makes sense to do so
 - building on the positive attributes, assets and influences in our communities
 - encourage residents to take pride in where they live and to have influence on shaping their neighbourhood
3. In November of last year the council's scrutiny committee undertook a review of county lines and the work being progressed by the council with partners to help tackle the issue in Norwich.
4. Members of the committee received a briefing from a senior police officer, an officer from the Norfolk youth offending team and council officers.
5. The scrutiny review made a number of recommendations which were reported to cabinet which resolved to consider addressing the issues of County Lines through the city council's services and influence. This report seeks to bring members up to date on the implementation of those recommendations and other complimentary areas of work.
6. Below are the recommendations adopted by cabinet and progress to date:

Recommendation

7. To liaise with contractors to provide front line staff with training on safeguarding and awareness of County Lines and that there is a process for reporting incidents to contribute to intelligence gathering

Action taken

8. Briefings have been provided to front line council officers and will be rolled out to delivery partners and contractors to provide information and raise awareness on:
 - What county lines is
 - Operation Gravity
 - Indicators of county lines activity – what employees should be looking out for
 - The risk to vulnerable residents

- How to report suspected county lines activity.
9. County lines will also be incorporated into the council's safeguarding policy and procedures when it is revised this year.

Recommendation

10. Provide Norwich City Council Councillors with training on safeguarding and awareness of County Lines and that there is a process for reporting incidents to contribute to intelligence gathering.

Action taken

11. Information has been provided to elected members as part of their safeguarding training and members also received a separate briefing on county lines. County lines will be incorporated into the members safeguarding guidance notes and procedures when it is revised later in the year, including how issues can be reported.

Recommendation

12. Following consultation with the police, that the council explores the removal of tags which demarcate the territories of drug gangs

Action taken

13. In areas of the city where a targeted partnership response is planned (see later in the report), the council will flex our policy so tags can be removed from both our own properties in neighbourhoods and, where the building owner is willing, from private properties.

Recommendation

14. Review the licensing policy and procedures to ensure that County Lines' activity is captured particularly in relation to the fit and proper test in relation to licences for private hire drivers and hackney carriage drivers.

Action taken

15. The Government are currently consulting on revised statutory guidance for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing which includes a focus on safeguarding and protecting users. This recommendation will be considered in light of this guidance.

Recommendation

16. Review tenancy agreements and procedures for rapid response to County Lines' activities and treatment of vulnerable tenants "cuckooed" by criminals.

Action taken

17. The council's ABATE team (anti-social behaviour and tenancy enforcement team) continues to support Norfolk Constabulary with enforcement action. The

ABATE team is co-located with a team of police officers and forms the Norwich operational partnership team (OPT), based at Bethel Street police station.

18. The focus for much of the ABATE team's resources has been drug use and cuckooed properties (where the tenancy has been taken over by drug dealers) due to the level of risk and harm to vulnerable residents and the impact on the wider community. This has been under the banner of Operation Gravity.
19. ABATE has worked with the police to issue section 8 misuse of drugs act letters in cases of cuckooed properties, following their successful implementation elsewhere in the country.
20. These letters are presented to residents in cuckooed properties by ABATE and police officers where county lines activity is evidenced to be taking place. The resident is advised that police and council are aware of the drug dealing, how they are breaking the law and the subsequent consequences of the behaviour if it continues. The residents are also offered support to cease activity and how they can safely provide information on those operating the county line. This support might include a move to alternative accommodation and the property temporarily secured to stop the activity.
21. This helps disrupt activity and protect vulnerable residents from violence, exploitation and unwilling cuckooing of their property. A review of the use of 'Section 8' letters will be undertaken during this year.
22. The council is also making use of the absolute ground for possession power in suitable circumstances. This enables some respite for neighbours that have endured ongoing antisocial behaviour from county lines activity.
23. Successful enforcement action requires information to be reported by residents so that the impact on the community can be identified and detailed for legal action. The importance of residents reporting their concerns and the challenge of the amount of time and level of evidence required for successful enforcement action cannot be overestimated and in certain circumstances this may not always be achieved which can impact on resident satisfaction.
24. Where tenanted properties have been cuckooed and the tenant deemed to be vulnerable, options to re-home the resident away from the area will be considered.

Safer neighbourhoods initiative

25. In order to further support and complement this activity, a number of other areas of work are recommended to be progressed in the coming 12 months.

Data sharing

26. The council will pool information and data with the police and other agencies to help identify high demand and problem locations and where services should be targeted. This will help ensure that reports and intelligence are brought together to give a complete picture of the issues in these areas.
27. In these target locations, the council will ensure that its estate and neighbourhood services e.g. estate cleansing, tenancy management and

improvements are coordinated and effective. Where additional provision is required, these will be topped up for a limited period.

28. Regular dialogue will be held with the police and other partners to agree priority locations; the interventions and response required and to review progress where joint activity is taking place.
29. Further partner engagement will be undertaken through the Norwich early help hub to ensure relevant support agencies are engaged in the work such as social care and the youth offending team. This will be to ensure support is in place for vulnerable and at risk residents, including children and young people, where enforcement, including tenancy enforcement is not suitable. This may include the relocation of vulnerable tenants.
30. Crimestoppers will be used to help the police, council and partners respond better to issues within local neighbourhoods. Crimestoppers allows the public to report issues of crime and disorder anonymously. This allows areas of the city to be targeted by partners, to encourage reporting. Information will be provided on what residents should look out for and how to report anonymously any activity taking place.

Pump priming safer neighbourhood activity

31. A sum of £50,000 has been allocated in the 2019-20 budgets for the safer neighbourhood initiative to target and pump prime safer neighbourhood activity. This activity will need to be relevant to the local issue and reflect the needs of the community and neighbourhood but might include:
 - Gating of alleyways
 - Additional district lighting
 - Enhanced service activity e.g. deep cleans and graffiti removal
32. There will also be an opportunity to consider how the council coordinates investment across the city as part of the response to make more of where resource is being allocated or can be targeted.

Purchase 4 new re-deployable CCTV cameras

33. The housing service will purchase four re-deployable CCTV cameras for use in problem locations to complement the current three joint police/council cameras held in the operational partnership team. The deployment of these will be guided by the data and information sharing described above and criteria will be developed to do this.
34. These will be used to monitor and capture criminal activity and be used to support enforcement activity.

Supporting community groups and neighbourhood activities

35. An important element of the councils approach to promoting safer neighbourhood's, is to ensure that as far as possible, the interventions and positive change brought about, are sustainable.

36. Through *Get Involved*, our community enabling model we will concentrate our work with residents in neighbourhood 'hot spots' so they can be involved in any interventions. The objective would be to help support a defined role for communities to take control of where they live and their local communal spaces such as has been developed by residents and supported by the council at Old Library wood.
37. Police statistics show that compared to many urban areas, Norwich has relatively low levels of crime. The city remains a safe place to live, visit and work. Whilst Norwich has seen both increases and decreases in certain crimes, overall, crime levels have remained relatively static with an increase of 1.5% in 2017-18 compared to the previous 12 months (the national increase being 6%).
38. By adopting the recommendations above we can add to the effective partnership working that the council has in place and make people living in our neighbourhoods feel safer.

Integrated impact assessment



NORWICH
City Council

Report author to complete

Committee:	Cabinet
Committee date:	13 March 2019
Director / Head of service	Bob Cronk – director of neighbourhoods
Report subject:	Safer neighbourhood initiative
Date assessed:	26 February 2019

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Detailed engagement with residents in high demand areas may highlight residents with rent arrears and debts who can be advised and sign posted into services
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This work will help to identify vulnerable adults and children who can be supported and signposted to support services.
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	This work will contribute to resolving one of the top community safety issues in the city and county.
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The initiative will engage residents and support them to be more involved in the areas they live.

	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forming part of the get involved/community enabling work, the initiative will encourage and support residents to work more closely in helping to improve their local environment.
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The initiative seeks to encourage resident led estate & civic space improvements
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments

	Impact			
Risk management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The proposals will help reduce the vulnerability of residents.

Recommendations from impact assessment				
Positive				
The safer neighbourhoods initiative sets out to reduce issues of crime and disorder; encourage and support residents to get involved and increase residents perceptions of crime where they live.				
Negative				
Neutral				
Issues				