



**Scrutiny Committee**

**16:30 to 18:00**

**21 September 2023**

Present: Councillors Ackroyd (chair), Carrington, Champion (substitute for Galvin), Fox, Francis, Haynes, Kidman (substitute for Driver), Osborn, Peek (substitute for Thomas (Va)), Prinsley and Sands (M) (substitute for Padda).

Apologies: Councillors, Driver, Fulton-McAlister, Galvin, Padda, Stutely, Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi).

Also Present: Councillor Jones

**1. Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. Review of how the council addresses anti-social behaviour (ASB)**

The Acting Community Safety Manager presented the report. He provided an overview of the team and introduced the Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator and the ASB Manager who were in attendance.

A member referred to the two current vacancies in the structure for Response Officers and asked if there were issues with the recruitment and retention of officers and what support was offered. He asked further if there were plans to extend the number of officers working with the Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator as real improvements had been seen since he came into post. The Acting Community Safety Manager advised that work had been done on recruitment over the last 18 months. In terms of staff retention, the team were offered training courses and qualifications in order that they felt they had the right skills to do the job.

The ASB Manager advised that she was now receiving enquires from staff in other teams that were interested in working in the ASB team. She had been looking at career development for officers and succession planning, ensuring that the triage staff had the necessary skills if an enforcement officer vacancy arose.

The Acting Community Safety Manager advised in reference to the Safer Neighbourhood Initiative that what had been achieved was to be reviewed and

analysed to ensure that other parts of the council were responding as appropriate to requests for assistance. The Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator role should be a coordinating one, pulling together the work of all teams. The Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator noted that this happened in some areas but that there was a lack of capacity in some teams.

A member referred to how helpful it had been to have the Safer Neighbourhoods Coordinator offer walkabouts in certain areas as residents felt their concerns were being listened to. He asked if what had been successful was being looked at and how the Safer Neighbourhood Areas mapped with other areas such as the Reducing Inequalities Target Areas (RITAs).

The Acting Community Safety Manager advised that he worked at a County-wide level with relevant partners to establish initiatives and strategize. He referred to the new Serious Violence Duty which was a priority for Community Safety Partnerships to ensure they had a strategy in place to counter serious violence in their area. This would involve reviewing different layers of information and evidence and looking at pockets of activity.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that CCTV monitors were located on the ground floor of City Hall and it was a modern and fit for purpose facility. There were over 100 cameras which were mainly focussed on the city centre, the council also had housing cameras in blocks and tower blocks and there were a number of redeployable cameras. In terms of redeployable cameras, access to wifi and electricity had to be considered. He noted that a bid was being made to the Safer Streets Fund for more redeployable cameras at present. Cameras were monitored live over peak periods Friday, Saturday night into Sunday morning and played an important role in ensuring the safety of the Nighttime Economy.

If councillors were aware of an issue in their ward there was a process to follow on the intranet to request a redeployable camera. Requests were considered in the round and if deployment of a camera was considered public consultation with people affected in the area would take place. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator noted that if an issue were identified where a camera would be of use then it was important that the police took the lead. It would be the police who would build a business case for a camera to be deployed and he advised councillors to contact local police Safer Neighbourhood Teams to discuss. The police took the lead because it would be they using the footage and it was important to have their buy in and support.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager noted that staff training had added professionalism to the role. The ASB Manager noted that it had given staff the confidence to know what tools and powers were at their disposal and which was the right tool for the situation. Staff were able to escalate matters to court but also were able to advise if a matter was not ASB but a neighbour dispute. In response to a member question the ASB Manager advised that it was crucial to ensure that residents received the right support and were advised what things they could do for themselves.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that he represented the council at the Countywide Community Safety Partnership. The benefits of attending the meeting were that it increased partnership and multi-agency

working and it impacted positively on bids for funding, for example in terms of the Safer Streets Funding. The ASB Manager noted that it was about stakeholder management, understanding what mattered to external partners and what their challenges were, how could we support them and them us. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator referred to the Anti Social Behaviour Action Group which was held monthly with representatives of about 15 different agencies and noted that this was a very productive meeting in terms of information sharing and joint working.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that that the service cost approximately £800,000 for the council to deliver and that there was a statutory duty for the organisation to provide a service. He noted that the service aimed to develop to establish more resilient neighbourhoods, there was more work needed to analysis what was needed in the city going forward.

A member referred to the list of enforcement activity that the team had carried out since February 2022 as listed on page 39 of the agenda. The ASB Manager noted that that it was not about the number of actions taken but that the right resolution was achieved and the correct tool used. She considered that there had been a perception previously that the service was reluctant to take enforcement action. She advised that the service was learning what action was effective to deal with the root of the problem and was taking coordinated action with partners to resolve issues.

A member asked a question in relation to methods of engagement in the Safer Neighbourhood Areas. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator advised that a paper based survey was delivered to all households within the Safer Neighbourhood Areas as well as an online survey, this achieved a 14-20% response rate. He noted that where there was an established Facebook group in an area response rates were better. This learning would be taken forward when further engagement was conducted.

In relation to how ASB data in other areas was gathered the team were working to bring together data from different sources such as the police, ASB reports, street scene reports relating to sharps and street drinking to give a refined picture of where the issues were. In terms of learning from the Safer Neighbourhood Areas it was noted that six areas were too many to conduct satisfactory engagement in at once.

In response to a member question the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that the team conducted prevention work, each case was risk assessed and the needs of each individual considered and referrals for appropriate support made. The ASB Manager noted that by the time that cases came to the team they were beyond the prevention stage and the focus was on the prevention of future harm. She highlighted that work to reduce 'boomerang' cases was undertaken in order that issues were not just moved on but that a long lasting solution was found. This included referrals and joint working with drug and alcohol agencies and mental health services.

The Acting Community Safety Manager noted that the council worked in a joined up way by holding Complex Case Strategy meetings which pulled together departments working with an individual as well as outside agencies. He also referred to the work of the Specialist Support Team which provided support to individuals to manage their tenancies. Councillor Jones referred to the Safer Norwich Partnership which had

emerged out of the work on the Safer Norwich Strategy and would bring partners and resources together to consider how best to support each other.

A member asked if it was possible to breakdown the budget of the service into prevention and punitive activities. The Acting Community Safety Manager noted that every case varied and that if there was a serious incident then prevention was not possible. However, wrap around support was provided to individuals which was preventative. The ASB Manager compared Community ASB with Locational ASB, Community ASB was hard to separate out into preventative and punitive actions, the priority for the service was to look holistically at the issue in question. In terms of Locational ASB prevention activities might be easier to quantify as the aim was design out crime for example via the use of alley gates.

A member asked if CCTV was used in a preventative capacity as well as to catch people in the act as it were. He noted that when a redeployable camera was placed at Barnards Yard whilst no perpetrator was captured residents did report feeling safer. Further, he asked in relation to door access entry controls being installed what was the methodology used to decide which block would be prioritised and was the installation programme on track. In terms of alley gates what was the target number to be installed.

The Acting Community Safety Manager noted that CCTV worked in some cases but it was a finite resource and the location along with feedback from local residents had to be considered. He confirmed that CCTV could be used as a deterrent and noted that CCTV had been used to target fly tipping as part of the LOVE Norwich campaign and police had noted a corollary reduction in ASB. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator advised that a target had not been set for the installation of alley gates, he highlighted that residents had to want to have them installed and a target was not helpful. He advised that the door entry control programme was ready to go and blocks had been selected based on feedback from residents, councillors and the location of ASB across the city.

The installation of door entry systems incurred a cost for residents and the cost of living crisis might discourage residents from wanting them. The programme would be run by the Property Services Team and delivery would start in the next few weeks. Leaseholders had been consulted with but tenants were yet to be consulted and the Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator had spoken with the Property Services Team about resident engagement.

A member asked a question about sensitive lets and the ASB Manager advised that where the team were aware that a property had become vacant as a result of ASB a sensitive let was requested. She advised going forward that the team would assist with the short listing process for properties which had become vacant as a result of ASB. She noted that the biggest issue was the limited amount of information which was available on relet and that of course people's situation could change.

A member asked about the Prevent programme and the Acting Community Safety Manager advised that he sat on the Channel Panel. Channel is a multi-agency programme which identified and supported at risk individuals and the Channel Panel assessed the nature and extent of the risk and developed the most appropriate support plan for that individual. The council contributed through information sharing and did

not make many referrals itself, there was work ongoing to get the housing team trained in Prevent. The council had a responsibility too in relation to the booking of buildings and or rooms, to ensure these were not being used for terrorist related activities.

In response to a member question the Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator advised that the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in relation to vehicles had impacted positively on the number of calls to the police in relation to vehicle nuisance. For the period 26 July-12 September 2023 there were 24 calls in relation to vehicle nuisance and for the same period of the previous year it was 52. Anecdotally the Operational Partnership Team, (teams in each council district headed by a Police Sergeant) reported that residents were phoning in and reporting vehicles congregating in the city. The PSPO did not preclude vehicles congregating, there had to be ASB.

A member asked if there was any monitoring of work undertaken in areas by the Community Engagement Team and its impact on ASB. The Acting Community Safety Manager advised that there was a much stronger working relationship in place between the teams. The aim of the council was to create more cohesive and resilient neighbourhoods. The Safer Neighbourhood Coordinator noted that the assessment of the impact of such work was a real challenge as it was difficult to judge. Walkabouts were conducted in target neighbourhoods to promote engagement with residents and the Community Engagement Team were brought in to develop this.

The deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety thanked the committee for their consideration of the topic. She noted that a lot of development of the service had taken place and it was useful to hear member's feedback.

**RESOLVED** to request that cabinet:

- 1) Consider whether the positive outcomes achieved by the ASB team justifies an increase in resource and funding for the service;
- 2) Thank the officers and the ASB team for the work they are doing and continue to do;
- 3) Continue to prioritise the service and support the ongoing training and development programme and ensure sufficient funding is available to achieve its objectives;
- 4) Expand the resources given to the programme of presentations to other partners;
- 5) Consider whether the resources for the safer neighbourhood scheme can be increased given the successful outcomes achieved from the scheme and consider the outcomes of the scheme;
- 6) Consider lessons learnt from the locational approach trialled for the safer neighbourhood initiative and how this can be expanded for other neighbourhoods;
- 7) Provide a briefing event for all Councillors on the PREVENT scheme; and

- 8) Consider surveying anti-social behaviour in areas where the community enabling team have focused to assess the impact of their work

### **3. Scrutiny committee work programme 2022-23**

The chair proposed that at the October session the committee conduct a review of the effectiveness of the scrutiny committee. The Monitoring Officer referred to the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny's self-evaluation framework which she suggested the committee use as a basis for their review. The first stage would involve requesting all councillors complete a survey prior to the meeting, the responses from which would be used as a basis to conduct the self-evaluation exercise.

**RESOLVED** to agree that:

- 1) The October session focus on a self-evaluation exercise on the effectiveness of the scrutiny committee; and
- 2) A survey be sent to all members of the council to establish their views on the effectiveness of the committee.

CHAIR