
HOUSING & COMMUNITIES STATEMENT

Community Safety Update

I want to take this opportunity to update the Council specifically on the considerable work being undertaken by the Cardiff Community Safety Partnership over the last few months.

General Crime/Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Problem Solving Group/Complex ASB Issues

The multi-agency Problem Solving Group has been successful in bringing together over 30 organisations to identify and address issues that require a co-ordinated partnership response to their solution. We have already seen the impact of issues in Splott and Llanrumney, where I have held briefings with some members. This group has, in quick time, addressed issues including anti-social behaviour, vandalism and criminal behaviour by introducing diversionary and community safety measures, and improving community engagement. The potential for this pilot approach is exciting as we look to build our multi-agency approach to tackling community issues and making a real difference.

The Council is also responding to the most difficult and persistent anti-social behaviour hotspots in the city in partnership with South Wales Police. Young people engaged in anti-social behaviour have been re-directed into education and training, which provided resolution for neighbouring residents. This includes a dedicated group responding to anti-social behaviour concerning off-road bikes and the continuation of Operation Red Mana by South Wales Police, which sees bikes confiscated from offenders. A new area-based officer will also provide additional resource in Cathays and Plasnewydd, which have the highest crime rates, and deliver renewed focus on addressing complex and repeat anti-social behaviour in these parts of Cardiff.

Crime Prevention Infrastructure

£432,000 in funding has been secured from the Home Office's Safer Streets fund, providing CCTV and other crime reduction infrastructure for Butetown and Grangetown. The installation has already begun and will be completed during the term of the current administration.

Public Safety Awareness Raising

The Community Safety Partnership recognises the key role residents have in tackling crime by providing reports and intelligence to the authorities. The partnership is working with Crimestoppers to encourage increased reporting in communities that may face barriers to engaging, such as a fear of retribution. Reports can be made safely, anonymously and in over 140 languages, providing valuable intelligence to South Wales Police that might not otherwise be captured.

Shoplifting

The Community Safety Partnership is supporting the ShopWatch programme to help small local businesses affected by crime and anti-social behaviour support crime prevention efforts and make shoplifting more difficult for perpetrators.

Cardiff Against Business Crime (CABC) is an accredited Business Crime Reduction Partnership that is dedicated to protecting business premises in Cardiff and making the city a safer place for customers, clients and employees. CABC is hosted by FOR Cardiff, in partnership with South Wales Police, British Transport Police, Cardiff Council, South Wales Fire & Rescue Service, Cardiff Licensees Forum, St David's Shopping Centre and other stakeholders. It supports businesses by providing its members with the tools and intelligence to prevent, detect and reduce business crime, and has just renewed its National Standards Accreditation. All CABC members are connected to partners through subscription to the CityNet public safety radio network. An exclusion scheme is also being introduced, which aims to enable and support retailers and licensees across the city centre to effectively self-manage the low-level business crime such as shoplifting and anti-social behaviour in the retail and night-time economies.

In respect of young offenders, these processes provide safeguarding intelligence to the local Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to help identify prolific offenders and support intervention.

Burglary

South Wales Police have identified a marked increase in commercial burglaries since the lifting of lockdown. In response, a targeted approach has been implemented in Roath and Cathays, where the local police team has initiated Operation Henbane, which is a combination of overnight overt and covert patrols including:

- Neighbourhood police teams pro-actively visiting shops providing reassurance and crime prevention advice.
- A centralised team from the neighbourhood police team who have collated information from all the burglaries including sharing images from CCTV etc. to aid identification.
- Information has been shared with operational support teams (specialists such as Roads Policing, Dogs Teams etc.) who have increased patrols in the evenings.
- #OpHenbane is circulated on social media, with advice on how to report any suspicious activity as well as positive results.

- The police have made several arrests for burglaries and are continuing to share public messaging regarding patterns of crime and crime prevention advice. Specialist crime reduction tactical officer visits are available and have been offered at identified at risk locations.

Graffiti

The Council's Community Safety Team is leading work to map out graffiti reports, which will, in future, allow partners to identify and proactively address hot spots and link in with Probation Services so that perpetrators will help to clear up graffiti across the city.

Drink Spiking

South Wales Police have launched a proactive response following these concerning national reports. This has included proactive engagement with our licensed venues forums and partners to ensure there are clear lines for reporting incidents and the city is active in preventing this shocking crime. New processes will shortly be trialled which include testing kits for licensed premises to give out to customers to test their drinks, along with safe drink lids. City centre premises have been responsive and engaged in introducing these measures and it is anticipated that there will be a comprehensive roll-out of these protections to many establishments in the night-time economy, particularly those popular with the student community.

South Wales Police are also taking action to address the evidential gap which can prevent police from taking action against offenders of spiking. This will improve the availability of testing to identify spiking victims and will utilise the CityNet radio network, which is used widely by businesses in the city centre, to issue warning alerts to premises and stop predators in their tracks.

One of the most concerning aspects of these reports is the move to using needles to administer drugs. South Wales Police are already exploring the application of metal detector arches to support effective searching and further support will be provided through the Community Safety Partnership Night-Time Economy sub-group. This will include more training with licensed premises, awareness raising with students through their unions, and working with hospital Emergency Units to identify spiking victims on admission.

Victim Support

All victims of crime are guaranteed the right to support – this includes helping them to understand the criminal justice process and ensuring that they are treated with respect, fairness and dignity. Victim Support provide free and confidential support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year for people affected by crime and traumatic events, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police. Their support is tailored to each individual and can include both immediate and longer term emotional and practical help, restorative justice and personal safety services.

In Wales, enhanced services are available for victims of hate crime, with a dedicated support service funded by the Welsh Government. The Victim Code of Practice also sets what victims can expect from the criminal court proceedings. It is widely recognised that the more support a victim has at the start of a court process, the less likely they are to withdraw from the process, which can result in better crime conviction rates. The Community Safety Partnership will continue to work with victim support organisations to ensure that the best advice and services is being provided to all communities.

Youth Violence/Knife Crime/Serious Violence

An Immediate Response Group (IRG) Protocol has been established to ensure an immediate and effective response across public services in the wake of a serious violent incident, which also ensures support for victims and immediate assurance on the safety of the wider public. A new approach to protecting vulnerable young people from criminal exploitation through SAFE (Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation) has also been launched. This is based on a partnership approach between Community Safety and Children's Services, which supports young people at risk away from crime and assists them in accessing appropriate support and diversionary provision, including targeted youth work.

Women's Safety

Cardiff is renewing its White Ribbon accreditation for the eighth year – the global movement working to end male violence against women and girls, promoting gender equality and a new version of masculinity. Key areas of work include awareness raising days of action and the continued roll-out of the Ask & Act programme, which trains staff across the public sector to identify and support people who are survivors of domestic abuse. A revised regional Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy for Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan is also being developed, which will have an increased focus on tackling perpetrators and education.

Student Safety

A partnership group with the city's universities is leading on a targeted plan of action to ensure students' safety both on and off campus. This has included proactive partnership work during Freshers' Week, such as intensive targeted engagement with students on how they can stay safe, including the provision of safety helpline numbers and the launch of FOR Cardiff's Safer Spaces App. In addition, the student safety bus is based in the city centre on weekend nights, supported by South Wales Police officers and volunteers, with many students being taken home safely and some to the city's alcohol treatment centre!

Street-Based Lifestyles & Complex Needs

The Community Safety Partnership's Street-Based Lifestyles & Complex Needs Group was established in July 2021 and is driving a clear focus on addressing the

needs of the homeless and some of the most vulnerable people on our streets. Street-based lifestyles describes vulnerable people that spend all or a significant amount of their time on the streets. This can include issues such as rough sleeping, begging, substance abuse and sex work.

The Street-Based Lifestyles & Complex Needs Group is taking forward a public health approach to the impact of street-based lifestyles and is fully engaged with key partners including the Council, South Wales Police, Cardiff & Vale University Health Board and the Third Sector. Task and Finish groups have been set up to roll out key areas of work, including operational; data & intelligence; resident engagement; and volunteer engagement. It has also established an operational drug litter heat map, which co-ordinates a range of partner data sets, enabling services to address issues proactively as they emerge.

The Targeted Outreach Team is also a hugely successful example of partnership working between Cardiff Council, the Wallich and the Salvation Army, supported by a multi-disciplinary team of experts for rapidly moving individuals away from rough sleeping and street-based lifestyles. This was a crucial development in helping people off the streets during the Covid-19 pandemic and a key tactical approach to reducing the number of rough sleepers as lockdown restrictions have been eased in the city. The success of the team's outreach work has been significant in reducing levels of homelessness, but for some, the complexity of their needs keeps them on the streets. The team will continue to work with them, as they explore the long-term solutions needed to address the root causes. The continued support from Health partners and the Area Planning Board to this group is key to ensuring that we take a trauma-informed and public health approach to delivering sustainable solutions.

Citizens can help make services aware of people needing help via the Real Change text initiative. Reports can be made by texting REALCHANGE to 80800 with a description and location details. The Targeted Outreach Team will typically respond to reports within two hours. This initiative marks an innovative approach and is the only example of a text-based reporting system in the UK.

Cardiff Council, South Wales Police and other key partners are also instigating a refreshed begging protocol, embedding effective practice across the Neighbourhood Policing teams so that begging can be addressed sustainably. This will use a traffic light system to engage with beggars and move them away from their cycle of behaviour before enforcement is taken.

Community Safety Team

Additional resources have been secured to support the work of the Council's Community Safety Team following a number of successful funding applications and investment from the Community Safety Partnership. This has significantly increased the capacity of the Council's team over the last 18 months, which has increased from a single officer to seven full-time members of staff, together with additional operational manager support.

The new team of dedicated officers is leading on the response to complex issues such as violence prevention, women's safety, street-based lifestyles and complex anti-social behaviour. The team is delivering for the city on the key community safety

priorities set by the Community Safety Partnership and the community through improved service co-ordination and strategy development. This has also included an improved interface with elected members regarding community safety concerns within their ward, who are able to raise issues directly via the dedicated mailbox and receive a prompt and comprehensive response from the team.

The Community Safety Team is pioneering a comprehensive evidence-led approach to public service delivery, having commissioned a new interactive data and intelligence dashboard for the Community Safety Partnership that enhances the evidence-led approach to community safety in Cardiff and provides live intelligence on key crime and vulnerability data that supports responsive service delivery. This tool is already being used across the partnership's various fora to support the use of data in decision making and evaluation in order to improve the efficiency of services and optimise resources.

I am excited and enthused by the considerable efforts of the Community Safety Partnership over recent months. As we move into the New Year, the Council and partners are keen to reflect on our journey and the challenges we have faced to help strengthen future work to keep our city and communities safe.

Councillor Lynda Thorne
Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities
18 November 2021