

To: Cabinet

Date: 13 November 2024

Report/Comments of: Scrutiny Committee

Title: Scrutiny feedback to Cabinet – Crime and Disorder Annual Report

<b>SUMMARY OF REPORT CONSIDERED</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	Crime and Disorder Annual Report
<b>Purpose/Description of Report:</b>	Scrutiny Committee receives an annual update report to assist it in discharging its responsibilities as the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee.
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Scrutiny Lead Member:</b>	Cllr M Brown, Scrutiny Committee Chairman
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder:</b>	Cllr S Cox, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property & Resources and the Chair of the Safer Melton Partnership

## 1. Introduction and Overview

The Scrutiny Committee met on 12 September 2024 to consider the Crime and Disorder Annual Report. As the Committee is the Council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee, it receives an annual report each year.

In addition to the report, the Committee received a presentation; the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Hate Delivery Plan and the Council's Domestic Abuse Policy. The report itself covered the following areas:

- An introduction to the Safer Communities Team
- The Safer Communities Team's Performance including case studies
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Anti-Social Behaviour Case Reviews
- Multi-agency Case Management System Review
- Serious Violence
- Prevent
- Prison Leavers

- Domestic Abuse
- Enviro-Crime

In attendance at the meeting was Leicestershire Police's Neighbourhood Policing Area Commander for Melton and Rutland, Inspector Darren Richardson and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance, Property and Resources (who is also the Chair of the Safer Melton Partnership), Councillor Sarah Cox.

## **2. Summary of Feedback/Recommendations for Cabinet Consideration**

- A Member asked if the Activity Bus, from StreetVibe, would be returning to Melton after March 2025. It was advised that it would be dependent on additional funding and Melton would have to apply again for the bus to be deployed here.
- In response to a query on how effective Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) were, Members were advised that FPNs had recently been increased in line with Government guidelines to act as a deterrent and, at Melton, the policy is that if a FPN is not paid, there would be a prosecution. Consideration is being given to community pay back, especially for the under 16's, though the national action plan for this is not yet in force. It was advised that there are other deterrents in place for persistent offenders for example a Community Protection Order which would remain in place for 12 months and if breached could lead to a custodial sentence.
- Members queried how many people get a visit when a crime is reported, as it has been commented on social media that when crimes are reported no Police Officer comes out to attend. In response, Members were informed that the Police work with the Victims' Code, which is a system that identifies a victim of crime and any vulnerabilities. The code states that an identified victim of crime should expect some form of contact by police within 24 hours, depending on the severity of the crime some victims will receive an in-person visit and some victims will receive a phone call. The Police would continue with 28-day updates and Officers would immediately contact the victim if there were significant updates. The preference in communication is decided by the victim.
- Following the above comment, concern was raised regarding the Police taking 24 hours to visit a victim, especially if the perpetrator is on the premises. In response, Members were informed that each response is graded, and an emergency response is within 15 minutes. It was recognised that geographically, it can be difficult but that neighbouring areas can send an officer in an emergency.

- In following up, the question was asked on whether helicopters can be deployed to pursue perpetrators who have left the scene. However it was noted that, whilst helicopters are still deployed it costs £15k each time. The helicopter is a regional resource, which is mainly deployed for safeguarding situations such as a missing highly vulnerable person. Drones are deployed more often for both missing people and crimes in progress.
- Members noted that the burglary rate in Melton is low and averages about one a week.
- It was reiterated that the public need to be encouraged to report all crime and not just post about it on social media where it escalates with no clarification if the crime had been reported. There is a Mobile Independent Advisory Group in the community which feeds into the Police what has been raised in the communities and on social media, what is being discussed or complained about and this information is actioned by the Police, where appropriate.
- The comment was made that there are a lot of posts from Police Officers on social media about their daily performances, e.g. number of arrests, and would rather the Police spend their time on their duties instead. In response, it was recognised that there would always be a debate on how the Police are best to engage with residents via social media. Some Officers decide to update the public via social media, whilst others prefer to just sort crime out, but it was recognised that the key is to get the balance between keeping the public informed and using the time to do police work.
- Members all agreed the Ring doorbells idea was good but asked if other areas of the Borough were to be considered and not just the town centre. In response, the Committee were informed that the Council were bound due to funding conditions, however, the Council are due to receive another 400 units, and these would be distributed throughout the Borough.
- A comment on prison leavers and the role of the Council was raised. In response, Members were advised that there is a Prison Release Protocol and the Council is part of a regional network which is part of the East Midlands Council, where briefings take place and the Council is then informed of: forthcoming prisoner releases, the locations where people are being released and the dates. This will then prepare the teams to understand where any pressures could be and support and arrangements could be put in place.
- A comment was made that it was encouraging to hear of work being actioned on the issue of fly tipping but queried on what is the strategy across the Borough. In response it was noted that historically there was a disconnect between the rural community and the Council but with

some work, there is now a strong line of communication. This has led to fly tipping being reported more and in turn the community have felt they are being listened to.

- It was recognised that the team has done a good job but the KPIs don't reflect this. It isn't easy to prove that the Council is getting value for money. In response, it was stated that KPIs are set at a national level. The government have changed the way that FPNs are recorded. There is no consideration on the size of the Borough or the number issued and paid. Members noted that setting targets can lead to increased costs. The real measure is digging more and understanding the themes.
- Members requested whether they could report incidences and register queries directly to a Police Officer, as opposed to using the form, as the form is clunky and doesn't always provide the best responses. The Committee was informed that Police Officers' email addresses are on the website, therefore they can be contacted directly. Inspector Richardson stated that he is happy for Members to contact him directly but that, due to his workload, a response won't be instant.
- The Committee welcomed the neighbourhood links initiative that that PCSOs have been undertaking. It was recognised that this is a good way for the Police to communicate with residents.
- The Chair reminded the Committee that Melton Mowbray and the Borough isn't an unsafe place but that doesn't mean that it is safe at all times. There is a lot of good work done by the Council, the Police and Partners in order to make the town and Borough safe.

**Written by: Scrutiny Committee Chairman in consultation with Members of the Scrutiny Committee**