

Report To:	SCRUTINY PANEL B	Date:	15 OCTOBER 2020
Heading:	SCRUTINY REVIEW: COMMUNITY PROTECTION SERVICE		
Portfolio Holder:	NOT APPLICABLE		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	NO		
Subject to Call-In:	NO		

Purpose of Report

The Council's Community Protection Service was added to the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20 in July 2019 and was subsequently added to the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/21 by Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members wished to consider the objectives and remit of this discretionary service, how it works with partners to achieve these objectives, and to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and provides value for money.

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update regarding the Council's Community Protection Service, including recent recruitment efforts, restructuring, and success stories. At the meeting, discussions will be held on potential recommendations to be considered for approval and submission to Cabinet within a final report summarising the findings of the review.

Recommendation(s)

Scrutiny Panel B Members are recommended to:

- a. Note the information contained in this report.
- b. Consider and approve recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet in a final report.

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Council's Community Protection Service was added to the Scrutiny Workplan 2019/20 in July 2019 and subsequently added to the Scrutiny Workplan 2020/21 by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June 2020.

Alternative Options Considered

No alternative options have been considered at this stage of the review.

Detailed Information

Community Protection Service Overview

Please see an overview of the Council's Community Protection Service provided by the Service Manager – Community Safety.

Working Times/Hours

Community Protection Officers form the high visibility uniformed service operating between 8am and 10pm, seven days per week. There are 10 CPOs on the establishment, this equates to 50 shifts over the seven-day period covering 14 hours per day. The CPOs contract allows for CPOs to work between 7am and 12pm with a four-week notice period for shift pattern changes. The service benefits from the goodwill of officers to change their shift pattern at late notice on occasions to accommodate service and community needs.

Mobility of Community Protection Officers

CPOs were based in the localities they served when the service first started at Police stations and are now based at Kirkby Council Offices. CPOs have 1 dedicated CPO vehicle and use the IT vehicle (566) most days/evenings and borrow a van (520) from the depot Friday evening to Sunday evening.

Area based Community Protection Officers

When the service originally started, 16 CPOs covered the district and were ward based (16 wards) and predominantly worked evenings and weekends.

The same challenge exists today as per when the service first started regarding coverage on rest days, holidays and sickness when having area-based CPOs. Equally without having area-based CPOs there is a challenge in recognising the perpetrators (by only coming into contact periodically rather than daily), of building community intelligence and confidence with residents who may not report without dedicated officer support.

There are **priority areas** in the District:

- Sutton Town Centre - One dedicated Community Protection Officer.
- Leamington Estate - One concentrated Community Protection Officer (also covers Sutton on a demand request basis).
- Carsic Estate - One concentrated Community Protection Officer (also covers Sutton on a demand request basis).
- Kirkby East (Coxmoor) - Two concentrated Community Protection Officers (also cover Kirkby on a demand request basis).
- Hucknall East (Butlers Hill and Broomhill) - Two concentrated Community Protection Officers (also cover the rest of Hucknall/Rural on a demand request basis).

- Hucknall Town Centre - One concentrated Community Protection Officer (also covers the rest of Hucknall on a demand request basis).

A recent change to the Community Protection Service was introducing a 'duty CPO' to receive demands, allocate or undertake initial visits and problem solving.

Community Protection Officer – Activities

Community Protection Officers continue to undertake a wide range of activities to support communities and ensure the safety of Ashfield residents. These activities include:

- Supporting the Private Sector Enforcement Team with traveller encampments.
- Offering ongoing support as a visible presence in the District's town centres.
- Providing daily patrols, interaction and enforcement in Sutton Town Centre, focusing on street drinking and anti-social behaviour.
- Responding to reports received from residents regarding bonfires and noise and issues in public spaces.
- Providing a visible presence by undertaking patrols in hotspot locations in our parks, estates, town centres and cemeteries.

Additionally, Members will be pleased to learn that since the previous meeting of the Panel, the Council has successfully recruited 3 new Community Protection Officers as well as a Community Protection Officer Team Leader. Furthermore, the Council has launched a national recruitment search for senior leaders to help deliver the Council's aspirations, including a Service Manager – Place and Wellbeing (including Community Safety).

Recent News

Early in this review, Members discussed the need for the work of the Council's Community Protection Service to be effectively communicated to residents to demonstrate the value of the services. Several news stories regarding the work of the Community Protection Service have recently been published on the Council's website. Please see some examples:

Anti-Social Behaviour Task Force – 07/09/2020

The Council has recently established a multi-agency taskforce as a response to ongoing anti-social behaviour in Sutton Town Centre and Portland Square area, which has been causing a nuisance to local shoppers, residents, and traders. As part of the multi-agency taskforce, the Council will be working with Nottinghamshire Police, Housing Options, and Framework to tackle all aspects of the issues present.

The Council's Community Safety Team is taking a zero tolerance approach to Anti-Social Behaviour in Sutton Town Centre.

The Council have set up the multi-agency taskforce as a response to the ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour in the town centre and Portland Square area which has been causing a nuisance to local shoppers, residents and traders. The Council will be working closely with Nottinghamshire Police, Housing Options and Framework to tackle all aspects of the issues.

Community Protection Officers have already completed a large number of confiscations of alcohol and issued Fixed Penalty Notices. The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team are taking further legal action to address the behaviour of some individuals by obtaining Community Protection Notices and injunctions against repeat offenders.

The taskforce is also providing support to the more vulnerable residents. This follows the work that the CPOs, Complex Case Team and Housing Options have already been carrying out, engaging with homeless residents to provide support to help them access our services.

Cllr Samantha Deakin, Ward Councillor for Sutton Central and New Cross, said "Anti-Social Behaviour will not be tolerated and we are working closely with the appropriate agencies to ensure the action is taken to stop it. We know how disruptive anti-social behaviour can be and we are determined to tackle the issue head on.

"We want our town centres to be enjoyable places for everyone to visit, and we are going to be investing heavily into Sutton with the available funding from the Towns Fund. We don't want visitors and residents to be put off because of the behaviour of a few individuals.

"The Council is committed to making Ashfield and safer place to live, and visit, and by creating this new taskforce we are demonstrating that we will take reports of Anti-Social Behaviour seriously."

For full details: <https://www.ashfield.gov.uk/mediacentre/news-and-updates/council-set-up-new-taskforce-to-tackle-anti-social-behaviour-in-sutton/>

Community Protection Officers Serving the Community Through Lockdown – 25/08/2020

Ashfield District Council's Community Protection Team have been busy serving the community throughout lockdown.

On top of their recent efforts assisting with the Community Hub, the Community Protection Officers have also been busy issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for littering, engaging residents about social distancing, supporting Nottinghamshire Police and responding to incidents throughout Ashfield.

One of these incidents happened whilst on routine patrol on The Lawn, Sutton, on 11th August, Community Protection Officers (CPOs) discovered a young person who had been badly assaulted. The CPOs reported the incident to Nottinghamshire Police and provided first aid assistance at the scene. They then escorted the young person and their mother to Kings Mill for further treatment.

Later that same week on 16th August, CPOs received intelligence that two people had stolen meat from the Co-op in Kirkby. The Council CPOs spotted the suspects, following an area search, and monitored their activity whilst they informed the police of their whereabouts. This led to the pair being arrested by the police.

Cllr Helen-Ann Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety at Ashfield District Council, said "This is a perfect example of partnership working and how important it is that we continue our close working relationship with Nottinghamshire Police.

"The Community Protection team have been working extremely hard throughout lockdown, from doing welfare checks on vulnerable residents to regular patrols of the District. They have been providing an invaluable service to the residents of Ashfield.

"We will continue to work closely with Nottinghamshire Police wherever possible as we are committed to ensuring our residents feel safe in their community."

For full details: <https://www.ashfield.gov.uk/mediacentre/news-and-updates/ashfield-district-council-community-protection-officers-steak-out-shop-lifters/>

Review Summary

As the review of the Council's Community Protection Service heads towards a conclusion with Members considering potential recommendations to be submitted to Cabinet, it may be useful for Members to consider a summary of the review, including what information has been considered and areas of interest identified for possible recommendations.

Scrutiny Panel B - 30 January 2020

Members held the first meeting of Scrutiny Panel B reviewing the Council's Community Protection Service in January 2020. The Council's Service Manager – Community Safety and Community Protection Team Leader attended this meeting to assist Panel Members with the review. They also delivered a presentation to the Panel, providing a background to the service. Members discussed:

- Origins of the Community Protection Service
- The Council's vision for Community Safety set out within the Corporate Plan
- The role of a Community Protection Officer
- The structure and resourcing of the Council's Community Protection Service
- Patrol plans, hotspots, collaborative working, and operational tasking

Members were asked to consider what positive activity and success might look like for the Community Protection Service. Members approved terms of reference for the review at this meeting.

Scrutiny Panel B - 10 March 2020

For the second meeting of Scrutiny Panel B on this topic, the Chairman invited three of the Council's Community Protection Officers to attend the meeting and assist Members with their considerations.

Members took the opportunity to ask various questions of the three Community Protection Officers, discussing:

- The challenges facing the Community Protection Service
- Airwave radios/body-worn cameras
- Should the focus be on case work or on more reactive issues
- The value of a visible presence in Ashfield's Town Centres
- The safety of CPOs when carrying out their roles
- The value of the Integrated Services Hub
- The need for improved utilisation of the Council's Triage system

At this meeting, Members also identified key areas of interest within the review to be explored at subsequent meetings and inform any recommendations to be made to Cabinet.

Understanding Public Expectations and Perceptions

At the first meeting of the Panel, Members discussed the need to ensure that the public and partners had clarity on the aims of the service and the role of a Community Protection Officer within the community.

Monitoring Performance

Managing and monitoring performance is a key aspect of understanding how the service is meeting its objectives. Members were informed that the Council were currently using E-cins to record case information but there were identified gaps in the extraction of data within the system and far too much information was currently being recorded and shared via email.

As part of the initial discussion, Members were informed that a system called 'Whitespace' was currently being explored to assess its suitability to record CPO activity. As part of the review, the Panel agreed that the current method (E-cins & email) was not an effective method to manage demands and monitor performance. Members discussed the possibility of gaining a demonstration of the system to ascertain its value for the section.

Priorities of the Service

As an introduction to the review, Members received a presentation from the Service Manager, setting out the aims of the service, which were identified as undertaking a problem solving approach to address on-street anti-social behaviour, environmental and nuisance related issues, which affect the quality of life for residents in Ashfield.

Community Protection Officers provide a uniformed patrol presence within Ashfield's town centres and communities, spending time in communities conducting high visibility patrols, engaging with residents, visitors, and businesses, and proactively challenging perpetrators of anti-social behaviour. Furthermore, they also carry out "safe and well" checks to vulnerable members of the community.

Work Planning (Proactive/Reactive)

Members agreed that ensuring there was a consistent approach to understanding the main priorities of the service and ensuring that work planning was proactive in addition to being reactive to issues of need was essential including identifying hotspots, in collaboration with our partners, and planning work around this information.

Members also recognised that a service specific system to manage demands would assist both the Community Protection Officers and the service.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is intrinsic to the Community Protection Service with the integrated services hub and the Ashfield Community Partnership. Members previously discussed the importance of ensuring all within the partnership are working collaboratively with adequate effort and input from all agencies.

Public Consultation

Members identified the importance of ascertaining and managing public perception of the Community Protection Service, as a key discretionary service. This could be achieved through exploring an appropriate public consultation exercise involving residents and businesses in Ashfield.

Consideration was also given to the Scrutiny Review of Neighbourhood Wardens undertaken by Scrutiny Panel A in 2009. Members found that many of the areas for improvement raised in 2009 remain relevant to the service presently.

Scrutiny Panel B – 23 July 2020

Following some delays to the progress of the Community Protection Service review, Members took the opportunity to refamiliarize themselves with the work of the review, including reassessing the originally set terms of reference and identified areas of interest.

At this meeting, Members were joined by several Officers from the Council's Community Safety Team, as well as the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Leader of the Council. A discussion took place between the Panel and Officers/Executive Members in attendance, focusing on:

- The responsibilities of Community Protection Officers, with information shared on the diverse range of requests CPOs are often tasked with.
- The Panel's vision for the Community Protection Officer role, focusing on the correct mix of responsibilities between reactive enforcement and the proactive approach to ensuring wellbeing within the District.
- Partnership working and arrangements in place with the Police, including information sharing and training needs.
- Members also acknowledged the powers available to Community Protection Officers.
- No new powers have been granted to Community Protection Officers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Members were shown an example of the data captured by Community Protection Officers, including:
 - Date and time of incident
 - What powers were used
 - Location
 - Welfare visits
 - Surveys
 - Referrals to other agencies
 - Fixed Penalty Notices issued

Next Steps

Members are encouraged to consider formulating recommendations to be presented to Cabinet by the Scrutiny Panel B Chairman ON THE 1 December 2020. Discussions can be held at the Panel meeting between Members and Officers to identify areas where recommendations are most appropriate.

Following the restructure of the Council's Community Safety section, Members may also wish to revisit the progress of the service and the implementation of any recommendations in 2021.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

Ashfield District Council's vision for a safer and stronger Ashfield by 2023 is set out within the new Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023. This includes ensuring the foundations for a good quality of life are in place and reducing crime and anti-social behaviour.

This will be achieved through prioritising both an effective response to issues but also working on prevention and behavioural change. To achieve this, the Council will continue working with our partners to ensure people feel safe and are safe by reducing levels of crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Legal:

There are no direct legal implications resulting from this report. Any legal implications identified over the course of this review will be explored and addressed appropriately.

Finance:

There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report. Any financial implications identified over the course of this review or as part of final recommendations will be explored and addressed appropriately.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	None at this stage of the review.
General Fund – Capital Programme	
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	

Risk:

Any risk implications identified by Scrutiny Panel B through the course of this review will be presented to Cabinet within the final report.

Risk	Mitigation
None at this stage of the review.	None at this stage of the review.

Human Resources:

There are no direct HR implications resulting from this report. Any HR implications identified over the course of this review will be explored and addressed appropriately.

Environmental/Sustainability:

There are no direct environmental or sustainability implications resulting from this report. Any environmental or sustainability implications identified over the course of this review will be explored and addressed appropriately.

Equalities:

There are no direct equality implications resulting from this report. Any equality implications identified over the course of this review will be explored and addressed appropriately.

Other Implications:

There are no other implications resulting from this report. Any other implications identified over the course of the review will be explored and addressed appropriately.

Reason(s) for Urgency

None.

Reason(s) for Exemption

None.

Background Papers

None.

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