

**FROM:** Audit and Risk Manager                      **SUBJECT:** Crime and Disorder  
**TO:** Head of Health & Community Protection                      **DATE:** 10 February 2021  
**C.C.** Chief Executive  
Deputy Chief Executive (AJ)  
Head of Finance  
Safer Communities Manager  
Portfolio Holder (Cllr Falp)

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 In accordance with the Audit Plan for 2020/21, an examination of the above subject area has recently been completed by Jemma Butler, Internal Auditor, and this report presents the findings and conclusions for information and action where appropriate.
- 1.2 Wherever possible, findings have been discussed with the staff involved in the procedures examined and their views are incorporated, where appropriate, into the report. My thanks are extended to all concerned for the help and cooperation received during the audit.
- 1.3 The audit was undertaken during the COVID-19 pandemic. This has meant a slightly different approach has been taken to complete the audit. Rather than observing staff members and meeting staff face to face, correspondence has been via email, telephone calls or virtually through MSTeams.

## 2 Background

- 2.1 Warwick District Council is an active partner in the South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP). The vision of this partnership is that South Warwickshire 'should be an attractive and desirable place to live, work and visit, with a sense of safety which reflects the low risk of becoming a victim of crime in the area'.
- 2.2 Responsibility for managing crime and disorder sits mainly within the Safer Communities section of the Health & Community Protection department within the Council, although other departments also have roles to play.

## 3 Scope and Objectives of the Audit

- 3.1 The audit was undertaken to test the management and financial controls in place.
- 3.2 In terms of scope, the audit covered the following areas:

- Compliance with legislation
- Partnership working
- Performance monitoring and reporting
- Budget and project management
- Risk management.

3.3 The control objectives examined were:

- The Council complies with relevant legislation
- Relevant partners are aware of their responsibilities
- Decisions are taken by the partnership as a whole
- Partnership management are aware of progress against agreed plans and objectives
- The effects of crime and disorder strategies are known
- Members of the public are informed of relevant performance figures
- Budget variances are limited as the budgets are set appropriately in line with known areas of income and expenditure
- The Council is aware of any potential budget variances
- Partnership funds, including those awarded to the Council for specific projects, are appropriately managed
- The outcomes of individual projects are achieved or management is aware of the reasons for non-achievement
- The Council is aware of the risks in relation to the services provided (where it retains responsibility) and has taken steps to address them
- Partners and outside agencies are aware of the risks in relation to undertaking their services and have taken steps to address them.

## 4 Findings

### 4.1 Recommendations from Previous Report

4.1.1 The current position in respect of the recommendations from the previous audit, undertaken in January 2017, was also reviewed. The current position is as follows:

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Management Response</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
1	Consideration should be given to including a section on crime and disorder implications in (all or selected) committee reports.	Discussions to be held with Committee Services to review.	The current template includes crime and ASB as considerations within the policy section of the report.
2	The YouTube video, regarding the priorities of the SWCSP, should be updated to include recent statistics.	The video cannot be updated. A comment is to be placed on the website to demonstrate the priorities remain the same.	No longer applicable as the priorities are not displayed in a video format.

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Management Response</b>	<b>Current Status</b>
3	A link to the video should be included on the relevant pages of the WDC website.	The link to the video has been checked and updated.	As above.
4	The Community Safety page of the council's website should be updated to show the latest crime figures.	The figures have been updated on the website.	At the time of the audit the figures were up to date.

## 4.2 Compliance with Legislation

4.2.1 There are various pieces of legislation in place for local authorities regarding crime and disorder. The main piece of relevant legislation is the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and this is supported by the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014 (public space protection). Section 17 of the 1998 Act is the specific part which requires each authority to consider crime and disorder implications in all of its functions.

4.2.2 Warwick District Council's compliance with the Acts is reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as part of a combined South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP). The most recent report was presented to the committee on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The committee reports are also an opportunity to present the current projects and progress on plans.

4.2.3 Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnerships were created as part of the Crime & Disorder Act (1998). They are the responsible bodies for reducing crime, disorder, substance misuse and reoffending.

4.2.4 In 2008 Warwick and Stratford-on-Avon District Councils merged to create South Warwickshire Community Safety Partnership (SWCSP). SWCSP is made up of the following members:

- South Warwickshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- Stratford-on-Avon District Council
- Warwick District Council
- Warwickshire County Council
- Warwickshire Fire Authority
- Warwickshire Police
- Warwickshire Probation

4.2.5 Meetings are held at least three times a year giving opportunity for the Partnership to endorse and set priorities for the next twelve months. Progress and performance is also reviewed after six months as well as annually. Extra meetings may be held to discuss items such as additional priorities and domestic homicide, which allows the partnership to adapt to any changes within the local environment.

4.2.6 The main staff involved with the Council's crime and disorder functions are aware of the relevant legislation and through discussion were able to explain how the legislation is embedded within their day-to-day roles.

4.2.7 The committee report template makes reference to crime and anti-social behaviour as part of 'Green, Clean, Safe' within the policy section of the report. This helps to serve as a reminder to Members to consider this in their decision making. Members also receive training on crime and disorder and the Council's responsibility as part of their induction and this was last carried out in 2019.

### 4.3 **Partnership Working**

4.3.1 Warwick District Council's website has various pages available to the public regarding crime and disorder. Not only does it include ongoing initiatives but it also signposts to shared safety initiatives on Warwickshire County Council's website. The SWCSP terms of reference was provided on request by the Community Safety Officer. The terms set out the role of the members and the various sub groups involved in delivering the initiatives. A report presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on November 10<sup>th</sup> 2020 confirms the members and reinforces the roles and the responsibilities of the partnership.

4.3.2 Pre-Covid SWCSP meetings were held on a regular basis as along with meetings with other partnerships which stem from the main group. Since the first lockdown in March 2020 meetings have had to take a virtual format. Initially there were issues as Warwick District Council staff did not have an MS Teams licence. This prevented them from setting up the meetings. Reliance was placed on other members to set up the meeting, share it and enable a dial in function on behalf of Warwick District Council. Warwickshire Police do not have MS Teams so are still using the dial-in function to join the meetings. Recently the Warwick District Council Community Safety Team have obtained licences so are now able to set up the meetings themselves.

4.3.3 Formal minutes are taken at the meetings and are circulated to the relevant partners ensuring that decisions agreed upon are noted and can be referenced.

4.3.4 Where appropriate information, initiatives and actions can be shared between north and south Warwickshire and adapted to be delivered on a local level through SWCSP.

4.3.5 Stemming from SWCSP there are a number of sub-groups allowing the priorities and actions to be focused at a local level within the communities. These groups include:

- Multi-agency groups – tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Client action group – working with local charities, such as helping hands and the Salvation Army.
- Community impact assessment group – working to provide reassurance and deliver initiatives in the local community.

- 4.3.6 There are a number of action plans in place for the groups and partnerships involved in crime and disorder prevention. Action plans are updated and reported frequently. The main SWCSP action plan feeds into the small groups which allows the focus on the actions to be at a local level. The SWCSP action plan is agreed and updated at SWCSP meetings as well as being shared at Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 4.3.7 The main priorities currently on the SWCSP action plan include:
- Violent crime, including domestic abuse
  - Anti-Social Behaviour, and links to street begging
  - Crime in rural areas
  - Serious acquisitive crime, with a focus on residential burglary and vehicle offences
  - County Lines, including identifying and protecting vulnerable groups, linked to substance misuse.
- 4.3.8 Each priority has its own accompanying action plan which identifies the action, owner, timescale and any updates on the progress. The actions include delivering training, creating awareness and other initiatives. The SWCSP action plan is then broken down further into the sub-group action plans. For example: the action plan for the Community impact assessment group has actions linked to county lines prevention, reducing, preventing and raising awareness of drug abuse, and links to other initiatives such as 'meaningful change' which identifies individuals who need and will accept help and support.
- 4.3.9 The updates to the actions and their outcomes are shared at the partnership and group meetings as well as being reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Some of the actions and outcomes are also shared on Warwick District Council's website which is also kept up to date with the outcomes of non-confidential actions.
- 4.3.10 As part of Warwick District Council's crime and disorder action plan, the public space protection orders were reviewed. This tied into the anti-social behaviour and county lines priorities. The outcome meant that restricted drinking zones within the district were upgraded to intoxicating substances zones, allowing enforced restriction of consumption of both alcohol and drugs in public places. The review also included the dog control orders. However, unfortunately, confidential information was leaked to the public before a consultation could be held. This led to the current orders being extended for a further year with a view to be reviewed. The orders at present do not prevent dogs from being off lead in some play areas or protected wildlife areas unless there is suitable signage in place.

### **Advisory**

**Ensure confidential documentation is clearly marked and that Members and staff are aware and are reminded of their obligations.**

- 4.3.11 Other initiatives working towards the county lines priority have been carried out throughout the year, despite lockdown. One of the associated actions

was to raise awareness within the area. The safer communities team presented awareness sessions in March, just before the first lockdown. The sessions were held at the Royal Spa Centre and were well attended by Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council staff, local police, support services, teachers, elected members and local businesses. A total of 401 people attended across the three sessions.

- 4.3.12 A presentation based on the above mentioned session was also due to be rolled out into local schools. Originally the sessions were going to be presented in schools for limited year groups (due to the cost) but because of the ongoing pandemic they have had to be adapted to be video presentations. This will mean that more year groups will be able to watch the presentation without a significant increase in cost.
- 4.3.13 Another successful action is the 'Meaningful Change' initiative. A total of six units have been purchased so far of which four have been installed. The units have a contactless tap point on the front which allows passers-by to tap their contactless bank card to give an instant donation as an alternative to giving money directly to beggars, to help the homeless and less fortunate within the local area. Since the first installation in November 2019 around £6,300 has been raised. The funds have so far paid for the rehabilitation of two people who were able to show they could commit to rehab and would accept the support offered to them. The funds have also purchased identification documents for others to help them gain employment and benefits. Meaningful change links to the client action group, the Samaritans and local charity Helping Hands. Each case is presented to them and assessed before the funds can be committed.
- 4.3.14 Actions have also included raising awareness of county lines and knife crime through social media. Using Crimestoppers and Fearless services, posts and videos were circulated on social media sites targeting adults and young people across South Warwickshire. The Crimestoppers campaign reached 21,484 people in the Leamington area. The Fearless campaign, aimed at a target age group of 13-17 year olds reached a total of 55,096 people using the social media platforms of Instagram, Snapchat and Facebook.
- 4.3.15 The action plans are adaptable and the groups can work flexibly as new intelligence arises, such as with the recent activity of the 'Hundred Handers' within the area. The group are working on producing information to share within the community and wider area, helping to reduce the impact and to create awareness of the risks. The information about the 'Hundred Handers' and other right wing groups was also recently shared internally amongst managers to help create awareness within the various service areas at Warwick District Council.
- 4.3.16 Adapting to the pandemic also meant that accommodation needed to be organised for the homeless in the area during the first lockdown in March 2020. Providing this accommodation meant that the homeless were able to be reached easily with support and advice to help keep them off the streets. Current figures show the impact has been sustained as there are only four homeless people in the district compared to 22 previously (figure correct in December 2020).

4.3.17 The Safer Communities team have also had to adapt to situations in the district such as the increase in violent incidents. Early in 2020 a murder in the district unsettled the community. A 'pop-up' group was quickly organised to assist residents affected and support the police. The group filled a gap where support and reassurance was needed in the community. The group is made up of members from Warwick District Council and Warwickshire County Council Community Safety, Warwick District Council Housing and Warwickshire Police. The pop-up group have been used to deliver leaflets and have carried out door-to-door visits providing information, reassurance and advice. Support has also been provided to residents where the incidents have made it difficult for them to enter or exit their house or maintain a level of privacy within their home. The benefits of the group and the impact it has had in the community has been recognised as good practice with thoughts to roll out similar groups across the County.

#### 4.4 **Performance Monitoring and Reporting**

4.4.1 Performance monitoring is carried out by SWCSP and reported to Overview and Scrutiny committee. The last report to the Overview and Scrutiny committee was issued on the 10<sup>th</sup> November 2020. The report shows the figures for South Warwickshire then breaks them down into districts and wards. This allows the group to identify priority areas to focus on at a very local level.

4.4.2 The monitoring report for Warwick district shows an increase in violent crime and antisocial behaviour and a drop in acquisitive crime when comparing April to September 2020 to the same period in 2019. The narrative accompanying the report explains and reviews the potential reasons behind the changes.

4.4.3 Violent crime has increased within Warwick district and across the south of the county as a whole. One of the main trends is the increased level of reported domestic violence. A number of possible reasons for the increase have been identified including lockdown conditions, raised awareness and willingness to report. Positively, lockdown conditions have been identified as a likely reason as to why violence with injury has decreased – affording limited opportunities for it to occur.

4.4.4 Acquisitive crime has shown a decrease with residential burglary and vehicle crime showing a positive trend, likely to be a result of the restrictions linked to the pandemic. As restrictions become eased it is believed that these offences will start to rise.

4.4.5 The increase in antisocial behaviour is largely down to the method of recording Covid regulation breaches. As Covid was new there was not an appropriate reference for it to be logged on the police database so Covid-related incidents were logged as antisocial behaviour. This accounts for a 60% increase in the figures for the district. Non-Covid related incidents show a reduction of 4% compared to the previous year. A briefing paper was produced for Councillors and presented at Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November, the paper further broke down the crime figures and responded to questions that had been raised.

- 4.4.6 Warwick District Council's website has dedicated community safety pages. The relevant legislation is published on the pages along with information regarding SWCSP. The crime levels on the webpage were updated during the audit to show the figures up to 2018/19. The page on antisocial behaviour is up to date with the relevant information, legislation and contact details. The public spaces protection orders page is also up to date with the current legislation and orders in place within the district.
- 4.4.7 There was an increase in violent incidents in 2020, with a number of murders and violent incidents occurring within the district. Two of the murders were linked to county lines and drugs which has enabled the team to focus support and create awareness in the wards affected. Two of the murders have been accepted for domestic homicide review by the Home Office and progress is overseen by an independent chair on behalf of SWCSP.
- 4.4.8 Reporting is also carried out on a quarterly basis to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). This allows progress on initiatives funded by the PCC to be reviewed and progress updated. The reporting also includes the spending of any grants issued.

#### 4.5 **Budget and Project Management**

- 4.5.1 The budgets were reviewed as part of the audit and there were no variances or concerns found. Many of the budgets are currently shown as underspent, which is largely due to the pandemic preventing some of the initiatives from being carried out. Discussions with the Community Safety Officer and the Head of Community Protection confirmed that many of the initiatives planned will still go ahead but different approaches will have to be taken, e.g. providing sessions in a virtual or video format rather than face to face.
- 4.5.2 The budgets are reviewed on a regular basis by the Head of Community Protection and an Assistant Accountant. Where face to face meetings cannot be completed, correspondence has been via email. The budgets are reviewed and monitored closely as reporting and monitoring forms a part of the PCC grant agreements.
- 4.5.3 Special budget codes are not used for the PCC grants but they are easily identified within the budgets. The grants received from the PCC were allocated to the following initiatives in 2020-21:
- SW Drone £2,500.00
  - Street Marshals £3,780.00
  - Street Pastors £4,500.00
  - CCTV £11,150.00
  - Burglary Packs £2,382.30
  - County Lines £9,888.00
  - TOTAL £34,200.30
- 4.5.4 Documentation is retained supporting the spending and is reported to the PCC on a quarterly basis in partnership with Stratford-on-Avon District Council. The reports show the amounts spent remaining funds, broken down



into the relevant areas for each district. The spending is explained in the report along with any obstacles encountered.

#### 4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 Lone working and general visit risk assessments are used when Warwick District Council officers are working away from the office, meeting with members of the public or partnerships, visits and inspections to domestic premises, business premises and outdoor locations. The visits risk assessment has been updated within the last year and continues to be kept up to date with regard to working safely during Covid restrictions and relevant guidance.
- 4.6.2 There are numerous other risk assessments in place for the officers to use which cover Covid risks and procedures, helping to keep them safe when working within the community and meeting with partners.
- 4.6.3 The service area risk register is updated frequently, incorporating changes and updates to legislation. It identifies various relevant risks such as staff shortages, lone/night working and general health and safety. It also incorporates Covid-related additional risks such as transport, working from home, dealing with the public and the effects on partnership working. Where risks have been reviewed or updated they have been dated and any further discussion points are noted.

#### 5 Summary & Conclusion

- 5.1 Following our review, we are able to give a SUBSTANTIAL degree of assurance that the systems and controls that are currently in place in respect of Crime and Disorder are appropriate and are working effectively.
- 5.2 The assurance bands are shown below:

Level of Assurance	Definition
Substantial Assurance	There is a sound system of control in place and compliance with the key controls.
Moderate Assurance	Whilst the system of control is broadly satisfactory, some controls are weak or non-existent and there is non-compliance with several controls.
Limited Assurance	The system of control is generally weak and there is non-compliance with controls that do exist.

- 5.3 Just one advisory was noted regarding procedures, awareness and communication of confidential information.

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