

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

26 February 2019

Report of the Director of Central Services

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

1.1 Crime statistics

1.1.1 The latest crime statistics have been released to the end of December 2018 and show that there was an increase of 12.6% in the amount of crime reported for the borough (from 8,585 last year to 9,666 this year). These figures include an increase in the number of violent crimes reported (which includes sexual offences) and it is felt that victims feel more confident to report sexual offences (both historical and current) and they feel that these reports will be taken seriously and will be investigated by the Police.

1.1.2 Although there has been an increase in the number of crimes recorded, Tonbridge & Malling does remain a safe place and we continue to have the third lowest crime rates in Kent (behind Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells).

1.2 CSP Priorities 2019/20

1.2.1 We are currently in the process of looking at our priorities for 2019/20 and have recently completed a Strategic Assessment which shows the key issues for the borough over the past year. Our 'workshop event' will be held on Wednesday 27 February and this is where partners discuss the key issues for residents and agree on our priorities for 2019/20. Key trends arising from the Strategic Assessment show that anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and substance misuse are still are of concern. There are some emerging issues that may need further discussion around doorstep crime and cyber-crime and partners will discuss these (and the whole Strategic Assessment) in further detail at the 'Workshop' event before agreeing on our priorities for the year ahead.

1.3 Preventing homelessness

1.3.1 The CSP has been working to prevent homeless people sleeping rough in Tonbridge. One particular gentleman was causing concern and he was offered accommodation by Porchlight at a hostel in Tunbridge Wells (which he accepted). However, he was continuing to return to sleep rough in Tonbridge (next to the river). Due to this behaviour and his begging the CSU decided to issue him with a

Community Protection Warning Notice to prevent him from sleeping rough and begging in the borough. Unfortunately he did not adhere to this and was therefore been issued with a Community Protection Notice. Following further concerns and the continuation of his behaviour he was then issued a fine (which he paid). In the meantime the hostel was helping him to apply for his own accommodation and Clarion housing was able to offer him his own property in the local area. He accepted this property and is currently waiting to move in. We are pleased with this result and hope that the gentleman can now live a good quality of life in his new home.

- 1.3.2 We are also aware of the homeless people sleeping rough outside The Angel Centre in Tonbridge. We have been working with Porchlight to engage with these individuals to ensure that they have been offered accommodation and we are also working with The Angel Centre to prevent them from sleeping in this area.

1.4 Breach of Community Protection Notice

- 1.4.1 On 30 January the Borough Council was successful in prosecuting a male in Snodland for breaching a Community Protection Notice requiring him to keep his dogs under control. The male pleaded guilty to five breaches of the Community Protection Notice which was issued by the Anti-social Behaviour Officer in March 2018 following multiple complaints to the Council that the male had failed to keep his dogs under control while in a public place, despite numerous warnings that he must do so.
- 1.4.2 The male had allowed his two dogs, both Border Collies, to be out of control and aggressive towards pedestrians and other dogs (including attacks on other dogs) on numerous occasions since August 2017 and that he had ignored multiple warning letters from the Dog Warden telling him that he must keep the dogs on a lead when in a public place. In October 2017 the male was given a Community Protection Warning telling him he would receive a Community Protection Notice if he failed to control his dogs. This too was ignored and so the Community Protection Notice was issued (March 2018).
- 1.4.3 Unfortunately the male failed to comply with the Community Protection Notice and so, having received numerous further reports of the dogs being out of control, the Council decided to prosecute.
- 1.4.4 The male pleaded guilty at Medway Magistrates Court on 30 January to five charges of breaching the Community Protection Notice. He was fined £100 for each of the five charges. He was also ordered to pay costs of £85 and a victim surcharge of £30.
- 1.4.5 We are pleased with this result as it shows the seriousness of breaching a Community Protection Notice and that these can be effective in resolving community safety issues.

1.5 Issues at Martin Square, Larkfield

- 1.5.1 The CSP was recently made aware of some anti-social behaviour issues at Martin Square in Larkfield. This included criminal damage to the toilets, groups of youths causing a disturbance and general anti-social behaviour. In response to this the Council arranged for mobile CCTV to be erected in the area. The Police were able to put extra patrols in place and some of the young people suspected to be involved were visited. This has seen a reduction in ASB issues reported and residents feel safer.

1.6 Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Pilot scheme

- 1.6.1 Tonbridge & Malling have been leading on the development of a pilot scheme for perpetrators of domestic abuse and recently arranged a meeting between the Police, domestic abuse charities and the other West Kent Community Safety Partnerships to look at whether it would be possible to get more male perpetrators of domestic abuse to attend the CDAP (Community Domestic Abuse Perpetrator) programme. This is a free 27 week programme held in Tonbridge which aims to change behaviour.
- 1.6.2 The CDAP Programme has been working alongside men for over 10 years. It is a rolling evening programme based in Tonbridge and Folkestone. It is designed to help men who feel their behaviour towards their female partner, or former partner has been, or still is, abusive. Over the 27 weeks CDAP shares a new set of skills the perpetrator can adopt when dealing with situations in a more respectful, non-abusive or controlling way.
- 1.6.3 We have agreed to trial some shorter 'taster' sessions for men who have been arrested and taken to custody. CDAP will run two, 1 hour sessions for men to talk to them about domestic abuse and the consequences of their behaviour. It is hoped that these taster sessions will allow men the opportunity to consider the impact of their behaviour and then lead them to want to attend the full CDAP programme.
- 1.6.4 We are currently in the process of looking for funding for the 'taster' sessions and we hope to have these up and running by the summer. CDAP will update their leaflets and these will then be given to every man arrested and taken to custody. Further information about the progress of this pilot will be made to the Board in due course.

1.7 Prevent training

- 1.7.1 Free Prevent training for partners has been arranged for Wednesday 13 March. This will tell partners about what prevent is, help to explain what the signs of being drawn into extremism can be and how to refer someone who they think is at risk. At present we have 25 partners signed up to this training.

1.7.2 The Borough Council is also required to update its Prevent Action Plan. This gives details of how the Borough Council will work to prevent terrorism. The Action Plan is at draft stage at present but will be brought to an appropriate Board in the future.

1.8 Legal Implications

1.8.1 None

1.9 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.9.1 Any funding requirements are provided through the Community Safety Partnership.

1.10 Risk Assessment

1.10.1 All risk assessments are under taken as appropriate.

1.11 Policy Considerations

1.11.1 Community Safety

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Alison Finch
Safer & Stronger Communities
Manager

Adrian Stanfield
Central Services Director