

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

09 November 2021

Report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 UPDATE FROM THE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

This report will give an update on some of the latest work of the Community Safety Partnership

1.1 Latest crime statistics and crime trends

1.1.1 The latest crime statistics (to the end of September 2021) show that there was a 10% reduction in reported crimes to the police (from 8,236 this year compared to 9,153 in the same period last year). There have also been reductions in violent crime offences (1.5% reduction), residential burglaries (11.6% reduction), shoplifting offences (24.7% reduction) and drug offences (16.3% reduction). The reasons for these reductions are unclear, although the police have been undertaking proactive patrolling which might have led to the reductions in burglaries, shoplifting and drug offences.

1.1.2 There have also been reductions in the number of domestic abuse reports to the police (from 2,965 last year to 2,886 this year) and in reports of anti-social behaviour to the police (from 2,418 last year to 2,239 this year). It is difficult to know why domestic abuse reports have reduced as organisations working with victims of domestic abuse are seeing increasing numbers of people contacting them for support (and with increasingly complex cases). We continue to encourage victims of domestic abuse to report these to the police and get any help they need.

1.1.3 The Community Safety Partnership will continue to monitor the crime statistics so that it can identify any crime trends or look at whether any further work is needed to tackle a particular issue.

1.2 Serious Violence Duty

1.2.1 Following public consultation in July 2019¹, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new serious violence duty on public bodies which would ensure relevant services work together to share data and knowledge and allow them to target their interventions to prevent serious violence

altogether. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships by making sure they have a strategy in place to tackle violent crime.

- 1.2.2 Serious violence has a devastating impact on victims and their families, instils fear within communities and is extremely costly to society. Incidents of serious violence have increased in England and Wales since 2014. For example, offences involving knives or sharp instruments increased by 84 percent between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020.
- 1.2.3 The Duty (as set out in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act) requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area. The Duty also requires the specified authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their strategy.
- 1.2.4 New structures will not necessarily be required, and local areas will need to decide on how to take this forward. This may be through the existing Violence Reduction Units or through Community Safety Partnerships.
- 1.2.5 The Duty requires that the Police, Probation Service, Youth Offending Teams, Fire & Rescue Service, Health, District Councils and County Councils must work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. Within Kent it is likely that the Violence Reduction Unit (which is already in operation and leading on work in the county to tackle violent crime) will lead on this work. This will avoid duplication and discussions are already underway to look at how best this work would be carried out.

1.3 Violence Against Women and Girls

- 1.3.1 Following recent events, violence against women and girls (VAWG) is becoming a national priority. Whilst Tonbridge & Malling is a low crime area, with crimes against women and girls low, we know that there is more to do to make sure that women and girls feel safe in the borough.
- 1.3.2 There are already many agencies working in the borough to tackle this issue and the Police and Crime Commissioner is leading on work to develop a county wide strategy. He currently is asking for residents to complete a survey (<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/VAWGKENTPCC/>) and is meeting with agencies to look at how we can work together.
- 1.3.3 The Tonbridge & Malling Community Safety Partnership already commissions a number of agencies to work with victims of domestic abuse (as well as programmes which work with perpetrators of domestic abuse). We link in with KCC Early Help around schools work and preventative work and have been able

to provide funding for Op Heart, a Kent Police initiative focusing on personal safety in and around the night-time economy. As part of this, police licencing officers (and TMBC licencing officers) have visited premises and have distributed 'spikekeys' which aim to prevent drink spiking.

- 1.3.4 The Partnership will be looking to identify whether there are any further actions it should be taking to address this topic and it is likely that Violence Against Women and Girls will become a priority in its Partnership Plan for 2022/23.
- 1.3.5 Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council itself is now a White Ribbon accredited organisation. White Ribbon is a charity that aims to end male violence against women by engaging with men and boys to make a stand against violence. Their mission is for all men to fulfil the White Ribbon promise to never commit, excuse or remain silent about male violence against women. They aim to act as a catalyst, encouraging people, and especially men and boys, to take action and change behaviour individually and collectively.
- 1.3.6 White Ribbon Ambassadors are male volunteers who engage with other men and boys to call out abusive and sexist behaviour among their friends, colleagues and communities to promote a culture of equality and respect. Women can also sign up to be Champions and encourage men to get involved by finding opportunities to inspire and inform; through presentations, conversations and social media.
- 1.3.7 White Ribbon Day is 25 November and as part of this we'll be looking to plan some events to highlight this both within the Council and in the wider community.

1.4 Neighbourhood Engagement Meetings and crime prevention stands

- 1.4.1 The next Neighbourhood Engagement meeting will be held on Wednesday 8 December at 7pm via MS Teams. This meeting gives residents the chance to speak to representatives from the Police, Borough Council and County Council about community safety issues. All are welcome to attend but need to register in advance (csp@tmbc.gov.uk).
- 1.4.2 We hope that in the New Year (subject to Covid restrictions) we will be able to move to face to face meetings with residents and we will keep you informed of any dates arranged for these meetings.
- 1.4.3 In the run up to Christmas we have also arranged a number of community safety/crime prevention stands across the borough. Dates for these are still to be confirmed but again will be published as soon as they are known.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 None

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

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

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 All risk assessments are under-taken as appropriate.

1.8 Policy Considerations

1.8.1 Community Safety

Background papers:

Nil

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