



Cambridgeshire
Police & Crime
Commissioner

To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable and Chief Executive

Date: 27 October 2015

UPDATE ON VIOLENT CRIME

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Business Coordination Board ("the Board") on Violent Crime within Cambridgeshire.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 The Board is recommended to note the content of this report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Cambridgeshire Constabulary ("the Constabulary") is committed to keeping the people of Cambridgeshire safe and tackling crime and disorder as set out in the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan. In accordance with the requirements of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, the Chief Constable is responsible for the delivery of policing and has arrangements in place for the management of performance and the Constabulary's response to emerging issues. The Police and Crime Commissioner's ("the Commissioner") monitors the Chief Constable's performance management arrangements in order to hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's performance.
- 3.2 The Police and Crime Plan sets out the Commissioner's clear commitment to holding the police to account on behalf of the public. A vast range of performance indicators are monitored by the Constabulary and the Commissioner over time, in order to scrutinise the overall performance of the Constabulary, including against the priorities and outcomes set out in the Plan. The pledges and key indicators are monitored closely

to explore volumes and trends, as well as the Constabulary's response to emerging issues.

- 3.3 The results of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) independent 'Crime inspection' of all 43 police forces were published in November 2014. HMIC found Cambridgeshire Constabulary to be low-cost and high performing, with a strong focus on the needs of victims and good at reducing crime and preventing offending. The report concluded: "Through strong focus on the most vulnerable and individuals with a propensity to cause most harm in society, the force is making Cambridgeshire a safer place".

4. Overall Crime Recording

- 4.1 Overall, Cambridgeshire is a safe county and it is important that we all work together to maintain this. Cambridgeshire still has a lower crime rate per thousand population than that seen nationally (Cambridgeshire total recorded crime (including fraud) is 56.9 vs a national average of 60.3). The Public's confidence that the police are dealing with the things that matter to people in the local area continues to improve, at 73.2% in June. The public's perception of anti-social behaviour in Cambridgeshire remains low, though there have been some recent increases in police recorded ASB. Victim satisfaction in the way their cases have been handled remains high at 87.0%. However, neither the Commissioner, nor the Constabulary are complacent. The Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan sets out his desire to tackle crime and disorder, keep people safe and maintain local police performance. He continues to hold the Constabulary to account on behalf of the public to achieve these objectives.
- 4.2 The National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) is designed to ensure greater consistency between forces in recording crime and to take a more victim-oriented approach to crime recording with the police being required to record any allegation of crime unless there was credible evidence to the contrary. Together with the Home Office Counting Rules, the NCRS provides a framework and set of rules for the recording of crime by the police. The renewed focus on NCRS has resulted in an increase in the number of crimes recorded nationally. Certain offences, such as more low level violent crimes, have been more affected by these changes than others. The Constabulary continues to drive up recording standards, with National Crime Recording Standard compliance rates improving to 94% (up from 71% at the HMIC inspection point in June 2014).
- 4.3 Since the mid-1990s, the estimated level of crime in England and Wales has fallen. Historically, many people have chosen not to report crime and methods of recording were inconsistent. As more people report crimes and recording processes nationally have been tightened up, levels of recorded crime have seen some rises and the gap between recorded crime and the extent of crime as measured by the Crime Survey has narrowed. The Crime Survey is considered the best measure for long-term national trends in violence.
- 4.4 Increasingly, local level police crime data is readily available and can be accessed by Community Safety Partnerships through a system of self service, and by the public through the police.uk website.

5. Violent Crime

- 5.1 Violent crimes are those where the victim is intentionally jostled, pushed, kicked, punched, stabbed etc. or threatened with violence whether or not there is any injury. The crime category of violence against the person covers a wide range of offence types from minor assaults, such as pushing and shoving that result in no physical harm, to murder. It does not include robbery and serious sexual assaults.¹
- 5.2 Nationally, there is ongoing evidence of a changing crime profile which can be seen in the increase in the proportion of violent crime offences (violence against the person (as defined above), sexual offences and robbery), and a decrease in the proportion of theft offences. These trends are reflected in the Cambridgeshire crime profile (see Appendix A). In the twelve months to June 2015 the Cambridgeshire crime rate per thousand population for violence against the person was 11.59 compared with a national rate of 13.68.
- 5.3 The difficulty of disaggregating increases driven by changes in recording practices and actual increase is recognised. However, the reporting of incidents of violence remain stable indicating that it an increased conversion rate of incident to crime recorded, rather than a rise in incidents. Whilst not the only influence, it appears that the strongest influence remains the drive for improved crime recording standards. Indicators such as a comparison of calls for service with levels of recorded crime and both locally show that improving recording processes, rather than an increase in incidents, has resulted in more reported incidents being converted into recorded crimes. Data from partners such as data on violent crime from Accident and Emergency Departments (“A&E”) and feedback from communities were consistent with this analysis. A&E data did not show that violent crime was increasing and concerns were not being raised in feedback from communities.
- 5.4 An increasing level of non-recent offences reflects national trends. The numbers, however, are small when compared to the increase driven by the reporting of low level violence. The increase indicates the influence on the willingness of victims to come forward of high-profile national cases, ongoing investigations into child sexual exploitation and the Constabulary’s focus on threat, harm and risk. Domestic abuse is a flag. It is closely monitored and has seen increased recording and is closely monitored.
- 5.5 It is, therefore, also important to recognise, the rate of increase in violent crime is greater in the ‘without injury’ category, reflecting the increased compliance with the NCRS. For example, an incident of two people involved in an incident of affray now has to be recorded as two separate incidents of common assault, even if neither person involved wish for a crime to be reported, or were injured.

¹ The ‘Violence against the person’ category includes the Home Office classifications of homicides, violence with injury and violence without injury.

6. Constabulary's response and focus

6.1 As set out in the Performance Framework for the Police and Crime Plan, the Chief Constable is responsible for the delivery of policing and has arrangements in place for the management of operational performance and the Constabulary's response to emerging issues. Fluctuations in levels of recorded crime are constantly monitored through the Constabulary's performance regime.

7. Commissioners Response

7.1 A vast range of performance indicators are monitored by the Commissioner over time, in order to scrutinise the overall performance of the Constabulary, including against the priorities and outcomes set out in the Plan. The pledges and key indicators are monitored closely to explore volumes and trends, as well as the Constabulary's response to emerging issues.

8. Future Challenges

8.1 There are undoubtedly challenges ahead. Seeking out crimes that might previously have been hidden from view and improving recording processes will continue to have an impact on the levels of crime recorded by the police. The changing demands on the police were articulated in HMIC's Annual Assessment of policing in England and Wales. Looking ahead, as the Constabulary's cybercrime capability and public awareness increases, there is likely to be an impact on levels of recorded crime.

9 Recommendation

9.1 The Board is recommended to note the content of this report.

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