

**Report of:** Councillor Dee Sinclair, Board Member for Crime and Community Response

**To:** FullCouncil

**Date:** 2nd February 2015

**Title of Report: The Oxford Safer Communities Partnership**

# Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report**: To inform members of the work of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership.

**Report approved by:**

**Finance:** Paul Swaffield

**Legal:** Jeremy Franklin

**Executive lead member:** Councillor Dee Sinclair

**Policy Framework:** The Corporate Plan

**Recommendation:**

1. Council is asked to comment on and note the contents of the report.

# Crime and antisocial behaviour in Oxford

1. Crime levels are at an all-time low in Oxford. At the partnership’s December 2014 meeting, the Oxford Police Commander, Superintendent Christian Bunt reported a 9.5% reduction in crime compared to the same period the year before. This is a continuation of a trend that started in the mid-2000s.
2. By the end of the year burglary of people’s homes is projected to have fallen by 24%, approximately 320 offences. In the mid-1990s there were over 2,500 burglaries per year. Robbery has fallen by 24% and cycle theft has fallen by nearly 4%.
3. Anti-social behaviour recorded by the police has also fallen although some parts of the city have seen an increase. However, the picture is slightly differently when reports to the city council are taken into account. The number of contacts to the saferoxford@oxford.gov.uk address reached 3,500 in 2013-14; in 2014-15 it is projected to exceed 5,000. This is due to the promotion of the saferoxford email address and the number of environmental concerns that are reported directly to the council. Typically, these cases involve litter, fly-tipping, fly-posting and the management of trade and domestic waste.
4. There was a spike in violence offences at the beginning of the financial year but the year-on-year increase has been following throughout the rest of the year. Sexual offences, although low in number, have doubled so far this year from 24 to 56 due to the increasing number of historic cases and the increased confidence in reporting. The partnership has focussed upon these insidious crimes for a number of years which may also contribute to the increase in recorded offences.

# The role of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership

1. The Oxford Safer Communities Partnership is a statutory partnership of Responsible Authorities charged with identifying local community safety priorities in Oxford. The partnership set out their response to these challenges in an annually refreshed Rolling Plan. These requirements were set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and further amended by subsequent acts.
2. The Responsible Authorities are Oxford City Council, Oxfordshire County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group, Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Probation Service and Thames Valley Police. Other organisations’ representatives on the Board include Oxford Brookes University, Oxford University and Oxford University Student Union. Probation services have recently been split into two organisations, the National Probation Service and community rehabilitation companies, both of whom are invited onto the partnership.
3. The partnership is chaired by Oxford City Council’s Director for Community Services and meets four times per year. Meetings are split between business planning matters and a themed topic. During 2014 these themed topics included the impact of mental health on community safety organisations, the impact of the Transforming Rehabilitation reform programme on probation services and current activity on tackling child sexual exploitation.
4. The partnership is allocated a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner to support in the delivery of its Rolling Plan. These funds help to support officers within Oxford City Council’s Community Safety Team, and the projects that they deliver. These posts are:
	* Human Exploitation Coordinator: coordinating and delivering OSCP’s approach to child sexual exploitation, human trafficking, sex working and other forms of exploitation.
	* Violent Crime Reduction Coordinator: coordinating and delivering OSCP’s approach to CCTV, serious youth violence, the management of high risk offenders and the Prevent agenda that targets all forms of extremism.
	* Anti-social Behaviour Prevention Project Coordinator: coordinates and delivers problem-solving projects to tackle anti-social behaviour, including the student house champion scheme, situational crime reduction programmes, Public Spaces Protection Orders and the Language School Forum.
5. Further information on the partnership can be found in the link below.

<http://www.saferoxford.org.uk/index.html>

# Oxford Safer Communities Rolling Plan

1. The work of the Oxford Safer Communities Partnership is encapsulated in the Rolling Plan. The plan contains only actions that add value through partnership working, not actions that are “business as usual” for members. For example, joint enforcement operations between the police and local authorities. Progress against the plan is reviewed quarterly at partnership meetings as is the monitoring of crime and anti-social behaviour levels.

# The priorities

1. The priorities identified in the strategy have been informed by the Strategic Intelligence Assessment. The assessment uses partnership data, community feedback through surveys, and information from frontline practitioners. This last element is particularly important as some offences are under-reported and will not appear in datasets or community consultation processes. The priorities for 2015-16 have yet to be ratified by the partnership but are likely to remain unchanged from the current priorities, which are:
	* Inter-personal abuse, including domestic and sexual abuse, and human exploitation, including trafficking, sex working and child sexual exploitation.
	* Violent crime, including alcohol-related disorder, serious youth violence, hate crime and robbery.
	* Anti-social behaviour, including neighbourhood nuisance, environmental concerns, drug misuse and rough sleeping.
	* Priority theft offences, including burglary of people’s homes, theft from cars and metal theft.

# Delivery of the Rolling Plan 2014-15

1. The Rolling Plan groups the activities that the partnership undertake into:
	* tackling problems affecting the whole community;
	* supporting victims or preventing a person from becoming a victim of crime or anti-social behaviour;
	* target those who commit, or are at risk of committing, crime and anti-social behaviour.

# Whole community activities

1. Embedding the new tools and powers available to local authorities and the police under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Tools include the Community Protection Notice, Civil Injunction and Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO). Work is underway on a number of PSPOs to tackle anti-social behaviour on the waterways, within the city centre and in local communities.
2. The Student Community Warden schemes at both Oxford Brookes University and the University of Oxford continue and are tied into the House Champions scheme that aims to resolve ASB and waste problems through early intervention with a lead tenant.
3. The Language School Student Action Plan continued in 2014 with a new Student Safety App and police operations to target seasonal spikes in robbery, protect students and combat anti-social behaviour.
4. A number of test purchasing operations took place on premises suspected of selling alcohol to under-18s.
5. The Rose Hill CCTV project was completed in November with two cameras covering the Rose Hill shops and side streets.
6. The Cleaner, Greener Oxford neighbourhood campaigns took place in Littlemore and the City Centre.
7. Operation NightSafe continues to deliver reductions in violent crime in the evening economy, supporting business and customers. A new addition to the operation in 2014 was the St John’s Ambulance support bus in Cornmarket Street.
8. Review of the Neighbourhood Action Group mechanism to ensure access and accountability to the partnership.

# Supporting victims

1. Delivery of the multi-agency training on child sexual exploitation, written by Oxford City Council officers on behalf of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
2. Continuation the sanctuary scheme programme to improve the security of properties for people fleeing violence.
3. Multi-agency training on stalking and harassment.
4. Completion and publication of the Domestic Homicide Review and developed pathways to share lessons learned from Domestic Homicide Reviews across the Thames Valley region to prevent further homicides.
5. Implementation of a number of projects to support victims of child sexual exploitation and trafficking, including a conference, financial support to youth agencies and training for taxi drivers.
6. Case management plans for sex workers to reduce their vulnerability and provision of a sex workers handbook for professionals.
7. Provision of an Independent Trauma Advisor service to victims of trafficking and exploitation, funded by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The project is seeking financial support for the next two years.
8. Deliver of training on female genital mutilation and representation on the FGM strategy group.
9. Training session on “honour-based” violence delivered within Oxford and support given to other local authorities in the Thames Valley.

# Targeting offenders

1. Joint operations led by Thames Valley Police on the Nelson Public House and Athena Guesthouse targeting drug and human exploitation.
2. The Weekend Operation out of hours’ service has been running throughout 2014. Two council officers are patrolling the city from 11 p.m. to 4 a.m. every Friday and Saturday night, dealing with noise complaints, ASB issues, street trading, distribution of free printed matter and taxi and licensed premises concerns.
3. Continued to deliver our Positive Futures Referral Programme across the city.
4. Over 1,100 environmental enforcement actions by the Community Response Team have taken place so far this year, tackling trade waste, litter, fly-tipping and other offences.
5. The Community Response Team has been re-accredited with the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme powers by the Chief Constable.
6. The Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team investigated over 680 cases of neighbour nuisance in 2014.
7. Making Changes have been providing a 27 week domestic abuse perpetrator programme in Oxford since September 2012, with consistent flow of referrals. A second programme was opened in Abingdon in January 2014. 1-2-1 work is provided for those not suited to group work.
8. Work is underway to further develop the information sharing and disruption of organised crime groups within the city.

# Future challenges for the Rolling Plan 2015-16

1. Develop our approach to organised crime groups
2. Develop our understanding of the models of exploitation most prevalent in the city
3. Continue with our joint response to child sexual exploitation and abuse through strengthening our links with the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
4. Deliver our Prevent action plan, to tackle all forms of domestic and international extremism.
5. Improve multi-agency working in response to mental health problems that impact on community safety
6. Funding of PCC-funded posts. The PCC has committed to maintaining the 2014-15 funding levels in 2015-16, however, with significant budget reductions required between 2016-18, without sustainable funding these posts may be at risk in future years.

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**List of background papers:**

Further information can be found on the web site link below.

<http://www.saferoxford.org.uk/index.html>

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