

Safer Communities Portfolio report, October 2015

Currently I am focussing on several key areas of work in partnership with the Police and other agencies in the area.

Anti-Social behaviour has the potential to significantly impact of the lives of residents, and therefore continues to be an ongoing priority for the team – Newcastle has an excellent record for prompt action in response to complaints from residents and elected members and a high proportion of complaints are resolved to the satisfaction of residents within a short time of being reported. Over the summer, in collaboration with the Police, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and other Agencies, this council delivered a wide range of activities for young people, which helped to reduce the nuisance behaviour usually associated with a minority of young people in the Borough over the school holidays. We are currently planning a range of activities and interventions to head off possible problematic behaviour over the Halloween and Bonfire Night periods. Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour remains a priority despite the fact that Newcastle is already a ‘success story’ in Staffordshire.

General crime trends are very positive for Newcastle compared to similar communities in the region. In my regular review of crime statistics, I was concerned to see an apparent increase in recorded incidents of Arson in the borough over the last few weeks. On investigation this seems to relate to an isolated spate of incidents in rural Newcastle where wheelie bins were stolen and set on fire by youths. Because each bin has to be given a separate case incident number, a small number of incidents where bins were taken from several neighbouring houses at the same time produced a disproportionate rise in the recorded statistics for this offence. Officers of this council have been working with the police and Parish councils to identify the youths responsible and to put preventative measures in place, supported by funds from the JOG.

Domestic violence continues to be a priority for the team – we have taken a lead role in making sure that partner agencies across the Borough take note of and implement the recommendations of the recently published Domestic Homicide Review relating to a homicide which occurred in the Borough in February 2012.

October 1st marked the first meeting of the ‘Safer Neighbourhood Panel’ for Newcastle – this panel is a collaboration between the Borough and the OPCC, and is comprised of representatives of the Police, the Borough and County Councils, the Magistracy and a number of lay members of the public living in Newcastle. The panel will scrutinise the operation of policing in Newcastle, help to build on existing strengths of our local policing team and also make sure that good practice from elsewhere in the County is identified and adopted in Newcastle. This panel will also help to make sure that policing continues to meet the needs of Newcastle residents.

Cllr Tony Kearon, Cabinet member for Safer Communities

October 3rd 2015