

March 2023

Community Safety

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and Hate Crime

Working in partnership with the Police, our Anti-Social Behaviour Team continue to focus on tackling Anti-Social Behaviour in our Neighbourhoods. The Team used the ASB legislation to obtain a CBO (Criminal Behaviour Order) on an individual whose behaviour in the town centre and at the Guild Hall has resulted in him being given a custodial sentence, and the team obtaining the CBO on an interim basis until his release, where the CBO will go to a full hearing at Northampton Magistrates Court.

Since November 2022 the ASB Team have issued 14 Community Protection Warning Letters, 2 Community Protection Notices and have obtained 3 criminal Behaviour Orders.

To support this years Young Citizen Scheme the ASB team have been instrumental in ensuring that the workshops being delivered to the Northampton Schools is tailored to fit the issues that the crime data is telling us about the crime types being seen in Northampton that could have an influence on young people. Therefore, there will be workshops on Knife crime, Gangs and Hate crime.

The ASB team have all been trained as Hate Crime Champions by Northamptonshire Police.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy is now feeding into a working Action plan, with formal task and finish groups established to focus on the delivery of the strategy. This incorporates what we hope to achieve in the 23-24 year, and subsequently by 2025.

Training to staff across West Northamptonshire Council has started with 42 staff members across services attending a 3-hour session. Feedback has been collated and planning for the next session is underway.

The 16 Days of Activism Campaign took place before Christmas and had a significant impact with many events taking place. This was an opportunity for the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Coordinator to promote and share the role and the Council's strategy, and really champion partnership working.

Posters have been updated with all services available across the county. These have been distributed across businesses and are displayed within Council buildings.

Knife Crime

The Knife Angel section of the Explore Northampton app has been updated with new videos, information for both young people and parents and links to relevant websites. The links include the map of bleed packs across the county funded and developed by charity Off The Streets.

Support given to the police weeks of action against Serious Violence including highlighting to staff the kinds of blades that are now illegal to own, particularly important to Officers who may be going into people's homes.

Safer Roads

The Roads Joint Action Group is a multi-agency tasking meeting which includes partners from the Neighbourhood Policing Teams, Police Safer Roads Team, West Northamptonshire Highways, Highways England, Kier and Fire and Rescue.

The group addresses issues on the roads throughout West Northamptonshire. Some items are long-term (the car cruise injunction, the review of at-grade junctions along the A43) while others are adopted and discharged at the same meeting, often being resolved between referral and the meeting taking place.

During 2022 JAG considered 31 new items

- Of these 8 were not adopted
- During the year 27 items were discharged
- At the close of the December meeting, we had 15 items ongoing

Neighbourhood Working

Work continues to deliver the Safer Streets (Home Office funding) in Blackthorn & Bellinge. A new CCTV camera has been installed in a crime and ASB hot spot area of Spinneyside Walk in Blackthorn which coincided with the start of the police Operation Revive tackling gangs and crime across Northampton East and Kings Heath. Reinstatement of CCTV in Bellinge and Blackthorn around the shopping areas is imminent. Lighting upgrade to LED for specific underpasses is also imminent.

Some adjustments have been made to the aspects of the town centre Safer Streets bid being delivered by the council and progress is being made. A full consultation on the Public Space Protection Order to gate Francis Jetty has been completed and is currently awaiting planning permission. Exploratory land searches for a future periodic road closure have been arranged and orders raised for works to install over 20 new lanterns, across an estate adjacent to the busy evening economy, alongside the removal of shrubbery to improve visibility. These works were identified and prioritised following partnership working with Northampton Partnership Homes and Northants Police.

Operation Push day of action on Abington Street with Community Safety, Wardens, Highways and Police to tackle dangerous cycling in the pedestrian area after a number of incidents and near misses. Additional signage was placed to advise the public prior to the event before council and police staff stopped cyclists and scooter-riders and issued Fixed Penalty Notices. In addition, a number of private scooters were seized.

Community Engagement

West Northamptonshire Council has been supporting the newly formed trustee board for Southbrook Community Centre, Daventry with advice and guidance to help set them up with the Charity Commission and become fully constituted to open the centre back up from closing since the pandemic. In partnership with Food for Thought Charity they opened their first Community Larder in July. Every week the centre sees over 70 residents. The community larder continues to increase its membership and now opens in the evening. Working in partnership with Futures Housing they also now have a clothes swap shop open to everyone in the community. WNC Customer Services also attend regularly.

West Northamptonshire Council has been working in partnership with Northamptonshire General Practice Alliance in helping to set up Happy Cafés in Daventry and Moulton. Focussing on low level mental health and wellbeing and based on scientific research the Ten Keys to Happier Living are explored through the Action for Happiness social movement. Talks have also been held with multiple partners and faith groups in Towcester to identify gaps and opportunities for service provision.

Engagement with residents of Bellinge, Standens Barn and Ecton Brook has taken place to find out what they want from the Bellinge Community House following its return to the Council. This is to ensure that the organisation taking on the lease will be best placed to serve those most likely to access it.

Personal Safety information and advice sessions delivered to the Mind Women's Group and Youth Group, as well as public stands in the Grosvenor Centre over the Winter period. These including providing free personal safety items such as personal alarms and light up arm bands.

We now have almost 100 Warm Welcoming Spaces that are making a difference to vulnerable residents in West Northamptonshire. January seen a high-level analysis in reporting from those who had been successful in applying for the grant funding, and case studies with key themes of vulnerable families using libraries to keep warm especially after school, and positive outcomes with children becoming involved with library activities. Vulnerable elderly people were not only using the spaces but opening up to volunteers regarding areas of need, signposting and more is provided. Engaging with the community also seen Councillors using spaces to speak to hard-to-reach residents to listen to their concerns and act accordingly. Mental Health has had many referrals and is prevalent at most spaces.

School Engagement

Planning has begun for our Young Citizens Scheme in 2023/24; the scheme promotes healthy, safe and strong individuals and communities. Participants become better citizens, are safer in their schools and communities, online and on the roads; are better equipped to make choices and understand the consequences of their actions; better informed of how to react in an emergency and have a better understanding of and relationship with the range of agencies which operate in West Northants.

Not all schools are able to attend Young Citizens, so we commissioned Amplitude Media to produce a series of animations which cover this range of subjects. The project has been launched to schools, youth groups and professionals working with young people. Feedback from partners has resulted in additional modules being considered.

We continue to work with Northampton International Academy to address some community safety issues alongside partners from Education and Youth Offending service. Safety Mapping workshops were completed in partnership with Free 2 Talk (F2T) in October and engaged with 130 pupils across several sessions. A report was produced by F2T which has been incorporated into the multi-agency action plan with the school to support ongoing improvement including the delivery of one of four youth justice fund projects led by Free 2 Talk, engaging young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system early on.

Community Forums

The Diverse forum has been working to support the police and fire recruitment by helping them connect better with the diverse community across West Northants, there has also been support from the forum in encouraging the take up of COVID vaccinations.

In November, the Youth Forum produced and delivered a Hate Crime awareness session to their peers at the Youth Summit Conference, as well as hosting a UK Parliament Week event for other young people to attend involving a Q&A with Councillors. Work is currently in progress to expand the Youth Forum to better represent young people across West Northamptonshire with the recruitment drive throughout February/March.

The Youth Forum take part in a Youth Focus Group session in March; part of a College funded project to explore how youth, community, education training and employment organisations can better identify young people who face intersectional barriers.

The LGBTQ and Allies Forum have had a stand in the One Stop Shop through February to mark LGBTQ+ History month and to promote the forthcoming Northampton Pride event in July.

Applications are now open for sponsors, performers, stall holders, food vendors and the parade for Pride.

Community Events

International Day of People with Disabilities – Another successful virtual event was held on Thursday 1 December and is available to view on the Council's you tube Channel [International Day People with Disabilities - YouTube](#). It covered serious subjects as well as some light entertainment and catch ups with previous contributors.

World AIDs Day held on 1 December saw a marked increase in attendance, with public health colleagues providing information to the public and a stall from Northampton Integrated Sexual Health team providing free STI testing and advice on the day.

Holocaust Memorial Day – Friday 27 January - Event moved from evening to follow the lunchtime civic element. The event was well attended and featured musical and spoken word performances from local schools, Sponne and Northampton School for Boys.

Hong Kong Civic Welcome Event - 14th January 2023.

A civic welcome event for a new community of Hong Kong British Nationals who have settled here under a government resettlement programme from Hong Kong. Approx. 200 people attended the event. A variety of stalls, information and speeches given to support our new community members.

Ukrainian Conflict

Ukrainian families and their hosts in West Northamptonshire joined people across the UK to observe the anniversary of the conflict in Ukraine on Friday, 24 February. The Ukrainian flag was raised at all Council office buildings in Towcester, Daventry and Northampton to mark one year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

International Women's Day – the annual event took place at the Guildhall on Saturday 4 March. The event was well attended, the biggest turnout so far, with a record 32 stands and 2 free workshops amongst the highlights. The workshops included one for women thinking about starting up their own business and the other to encourage young girls into STEM

subjects. Judging had taken place for the Inspirational Women Awards, with announcement and presentation of award winners as part of the event at 2pm.

Resettlement Schemes

Homes for Ukraine

Over 700 Ukrainians have arrived across West Northants, however we currently have around 500 residing in West Northants.

Whilst there is small movement to and from other parts of the UK, there are also those who have already left the UK, either to other parts of Europe or have returned to Ukraine.

Access to limited free bus travel for 2 months is now distributed as part of the welcome visit to those people that express a need at this point.

The hubs continue to support hosts and guests in local communities, and we are finding that engagement is generally increasing. In some areas, where engagement is lower, we have moved to a fortnightly hub and alternate the locations with new localities on these days. The team use the hubs as a point of contact to help people meet with each other and also to engage with other services and even with prospective hosts.

| Day | Time | Location |
|-----------|----------------|--|
| Monday | 2pm – 4pm | Moulton Community Centre NN3 7AX <i>Translator available at this Hub</i> |
| Tuesday | 2pm – 4pm | East Hunsbury Library NN4 0RZ (14 th & 28 th March) |
| | | Brackley Library NN13 6AJ (7 th & 21 st March) <i>English lessons available every week 1pm -3pm</i> |
| Wednesday | 10am – 12 noon | Daventry Methodist Church, NN11 4FB (22 nd Feb & 8 th March) |
| | | Woodford Halse Library, NN11 3RL (1 st & 15 th March) |
| Thursday | 2pm – 4pm | Towcester Library NN12 6AD <i>Translator available at this Hub</i> |
| Friday | 1pm – 3pm | Brixworth Library NN6 9DS |
| | 12.30pm – 3pm | Weston Favell Library NN3 8JZ |

We are currently paying an uplifted thank you payment – we committed to pay this through the winter months to acknowledge the increased energy costs that everyone is facing and so we are paying an additional £200 per month above the current Government payment of £350. This uplift will finish after March's payments, but hosts will start to see their payments increase to £500 per month, once the guests that they are accommodating have been living there for 12 months. This is a Government commitment as part of the announcement it made in December to commit to a further 12 months of funding for the scheme. Guests' arrival payments have fallen though from £10,500 per person to £5,900 for those arriving from 1 January 2023.

We continue to visit every household at the six-month mark, to ensure that the guests are still resident, there are no safeguarding concerns, and any issues can be addressed.

We are planning a further campaign to secure hosts locally. Previous work on this has been successful, but we are realising that we have to sustain efforts to keep interest keen.

Afghan Bridging Hotels and Resettlement

There are currently 227 Afghans across our two bridging hotels. Third country arrivals are currently stopped by request from the PM. However, we may see arrivals from other hotels as they close down. We are working closely with NNC to match families to properties when these are secured – and have 6 completed / potential matches now in place. We are looking now to assist with up-front housing costs and furniture where this facilitates a family to secure their own accommodation, following an update around the use of funding.

Asylum Contingency Hotels

We continue to regularly engage with the organisations that are providing the support for those in hotels currently in West Northants. Regular review meetings are taking place with our partners around emerging issues and concerns.

Community Funding

Community Funding Panel

The Community Funding Panel met on 16th November and approved 24 Community Funding Grant applications out of the 50 received. The value of the grants awarded was £101,123. This utilised the remaining balance of the revenue budget available for 2022/23.

Transformation Project Groups

Transformation project groups continue to work through the transformation of services. The Debt & Money Advice group is well advanced, pulling together the full business case. Stakeholder organisations have been involved in initial discussions and will be consulted through the process. The Community Transport group will follow a similar format and include stakeholder organisations in the progress of the project.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Trading Standards



Our Trading Standards team continue to take action against retailers selling non-compliant vapes. The main area of non-compliance is that the vapes contain more than the allowed 2ml capacity. So far 1582 items have been seized with a value over £12,000. In February, the Local Government Association called for strict new measures to regulate the display and marketing of vaping products, in the same way as tobacco, to crack down on a rise in stores selling to children.

At the same time, Action on Smoking and Health recommended excise tax on single use (disposable) vapes to be implemented in the Budget on March 15th. This would immediately reduce the affordability of these products, which are the most popular vapes with children,

and can currently be bought for under £5.00. They also called for better funding for enforcement and stricter product regulation.



Prompted by the effect that the cost of living crisis is having on lower income families, Trading Standards test purchased two sofas at the cheaper end of the market from local retailers. Both sofas failed the requirements of the Furniture and Furnishing (Fire)(Safety) Regulations 1988. These fire safety regulations were created in response to a number of serious fires that had been caused by upholstered furniture, and they stipulate that all furniture must be made from materials that are incombustible or will not ignite readily. In the UK, it is illegal to sell any upholstered furniture that does not meet the requirements of these regulations, and manufacturers must conform to strict testing standards in order to

ensure compliance. Both samples failed the tests carried out by an independent test house. One retailer has already recalled 9000 items of furniture and investigations are continuing in relation to both sofas.



Following intelligence received from Nottinghamshire Trading Standards, Trading Standards Officers visited a food wholesaler in Northampton in relation to the sale of incorrectly labelled and packaged acetic acid. A Nottinghamshire resident with sight difficulties had purchased a similar product from a European food store believing it to be a bottle of lemonade and suffered life changing internal injuries after consuming a small amount of the liquid. The business voluntarily surrendered about 300 bottles of acetic acid to the Officers.



Trading Standards recently received information from Suffolk Trading Standards Imports Surveillance team that they had detained a consignment of electrical goods, which were all found to be unsafe. The goods were due to be delivered to a fulfilment warehouse in Northampton and were to be sold on eBay. Our Trading Standards team visited the fulfilment warehouse and removed almost 2000 of the same items that had already been delivered. All listings were removed from eBay

immediately and all items are to be destroyed. The items included nail lamps (for gel nails), electric combs, manicure and pedicure sets, facial massagers, hair straighteners, heat lamps and induction cookers. The safety issues included risk of electric shock due to detached wires, overheating of items, non-compliant fuses and incorrect labelling.

The importer is responsible for ensuring that all the products comply with product safety legislation. It is a criminal offence to supply an unsafe or non-compliant product.

Health Protection

The health protection team continue to make good progress with food hygiene inspections in line with the Food Standards Agency Recovery Roadmap which outlines how visits should be prioritised following the delays which resulted from the Covid 19 pandemic.

Industry leaders from warehouse, transport and logistic businesses across West Northants joined West Northamptonshire Council to learn more about wellbeing in the workplace.

WNC's health protection, public health and regulatory service colleagues held the forum for businesses at the Ford Motor Company, in Daventry in February. Representatives from Ford Motor Company Ltd, DHL and Pristine International attended to encourage and share best practice with businesses.

The forum provided businesses with information on future health and safety priorities and initiatives, to encourage change and reduce accidents that result from occupational behaviour.

Key topics included staff training, a focus on wellbeing and how this can reduce accidents in the workplace, as well as how to manage workplace hazards.

Environmental Protection

The Council has been successful in securing a grant of £292,378 from the DEFRA Air Quality Grant programme.

The grant will fund work is to develop an evidence base on particulate pollution which will inform any decision about the possible extension of smoke control areas in West Northants. Burning of solid fuels is one of the major sources of particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) which is harmful to health. Currently there are smoke control areas in place in parts of Northampton but there are no such areas in the remainder of West Northants. The project aims to gain information on the concentration of PM10 and PM2.5 across the area, to increase the understanding of the prevalence of solid fuel burning across the area and to establish the economic and health impacts of extending smoke control areas. Whilst there are health benefits from reducing concentrations of PM10 and PM2.5 there are economic and wider health impacts of imposing more stringent controls on the burning of solid fuels which may be the only economically viable source of heating in some locations. The work will involve monitoring , modelling, survey work and detailed analysis to understand the implications of any decisions about action to restrict the burning of solid fuels.

The consultation on an updated Public Spaces Protection Order to deal with dog fouling and other dog control matters in the Northampton area has just commenced.

Licensing

Consultation on the new taxi and private hire policy for West Northants is currently in progress.

The Policy will supersede current policies for the areas of Daventry, Northampton, and South Northants and sets out the driver, vehicle, and operator standards for Hackney Carriages and private hire licensing for current licence holders and all new licence applicants. This consultation specifically focuses on increasing standards and therefore improving public safety.

Key details that the draft policy focuses on include:

Improved driver standards

Strengthening the "fit and proper person" test

A more rigorous convictions policy

Mandatory safeguarding training

Spoken English testing

Driving standards training

Pre-engagement work has been undertaken with local licenced drivers and operators and we have also been working with the Police as we look to develop a new safeguarding assessment.

Building Control

The building control service for the whole of West Northants will be back in house from 1 April. The team have been working hard over the last few months to transfer the service for the Daventry area back from the shared service with Warwick and Rugby Borough Council. The team are looking forward to working together across the whole of West Northants to deliver high quality services.

Councillor David Smith

Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Engagement and Regulatory Services