

## **ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL**

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COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	15 March 2016
TITLE OF REPORT	Thematic Report - The Community Safety Partnership Hub

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

This report seeks to provide members with information on the Aberdeen Community Safety Partnership Hub (The Hub) and its objectives to improve community safety outcomes, specifically in terms of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), Community Fire Safety and Violence, all priority business areas. The Hub's aim is to deliver more efficient and sustainable solutions to address community safety problems.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

Members are asked to note the paper.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A.

### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

N/A.

### **5. BACKGROUND**

Officially launched in January 2013, The Hub aims to deliver innovative and improved community safety services for those who live and work in, or visit Aberdeen.

The Hub's implementation was brought about by recognition among key personnel in public services across the City that working on mutual goals, independent of one another, often meant that efforts were duplicated or disjointed. It was also clear that outcomes could be improved and be more efficiently actioned if done in collaboration where data and expertise could be shared more easily among staff of partnership organisations and agencies.

The Hub has realised this vision with staff working daily in a single office to deliver on key partner priorities as identified through a Strategic Assessment process. With a number of public-facing partners, The Hub is able to listen to the concerns of the community and react timeously to tackle problems identified.

Since the launch of The Hub, this shared approach has seen partners effectively tackling issues including Anti-Social Behaviour, Community Fire Safety and Violence. The Hub has facilitated this through daily meetings with partners where issues are highlighted, addressed and resolved in a way that empowers ownership and fosters a culture of inter-partnership accountability. These meetings allow relevant partners to offer specialist expertise and when necessary to intervene at an early stage before problems escalate.

## 6. **STRUCTURES**

There are 28 members of staff from partner agencies, i.e. Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, who are all currently based at The Hub in Frederick Street, Aberdeen. However, this partnership extends far beyond just staff based at The Hub by involving a wider range of services that participate in joint working and collaborative activities each day. These partners include: City Wardens, Social Work, Anti-Social Behaviour Investigation Team (ASBIT), Community Safety Analysts, Criminal Justice Social Work, Legal Services and Trading Standards, NHS Grampian, Aberdeen Inspired (Business Improvement District) and third sector partners such as SACRO Mediation Services, Grampian Women's Aid and Grampian Racial Equalities Council.

The key process within The Hub is the daily Tasking and Coordination Group, (T&CG) meeting. The above partners attend these meetings, as appropriate, to supplement the daily contributors which include Police, Fire, ASBIT and Aberdeen City Council Housing Department.

This meeting is held at 10am each day with the purpose of reviewing community safety incidents over the past twenty four hours or, on a Monday, those that occurred over the weekend. This is a task-focused meeting that aims to identify emerging issues and actions that partners can take immediately to prevent the repetition or escalation of such incidents.

Well established intervention processes exist as a result of recognition of issues at the daily meeting. With all relevant parties present case conferences can be held and courses of action put into practice almost instantaneously to achieve the most effective outcomes for our communities.

As well as these well-established protocols to deal with ASB, The Hub also has an embedded Police Scotland Early Intervention Officer. This officer's role is to take information from all sources across The Hub including that provided by analysts, the T&CG daily document and the previous 24 hour period of Police incident data and

identify young people who are vulnerable and on the cusp of offending. With appropriate early intervention a concerted and targetted effort can be made to divert the identified young person away from offending behaviour.

The Police Scotland Preventions Sergeant, also based within The Hub, has a primary role in ensuring that diversionary activities are applied whenever possible to young people with a view to reducing or stopping their offending. There have been some significant results in this area including work done with Police Scotland Youth Volunteers, Northfield Youth Action, Robert Gordon University (RGU) Street Sports and Midnight Football. There are currently advanced talks in place to work with RGU Street Sports, Scottish Football Association and Aberdeen Football Club Community Trust to deliver a new sport and education based diversionary project in the most deprived areas of Aberdeen.

In 2015 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland conducted an Inspection of legacy Aberdeen City Division (now part of North East Division) and reported on how effective partnership working (in The Hub) was in Aberdeen.

*"Partnership working is embedded within Aberdeen City and we regularly heard officers of all ranks and police staff referring to their role within various partnership initiatives. In our survey of stakeholders and in interviews with key partners, we heard positive feedback about their contribution to partnership working.*

*An internal evaluation of the work of The Hub was conducted. While it is difficult to identify a causal link between the establishment of The Hub and reductions experienced in antisocial behaviour, violent and fire-related incidents, a survey of professionals involved in the work of The Hub has identified positive feedback.*

*During our own inspection, the Community Safety Hub was frequently identified as an example of good practice in partnership working. Those working at The Hub said co-location and joint working had increased their awareness of the roles and responsibilities of other agencies which in turn had helped them identify alternative and more effective means of addressing issues. They said there was a greater degree of familiarity and trust between the organisations, and that the daily tasking process provided impetus to their work. They felt The Hub's work was evidence-led and that partners were committed to achieving positive outcomes. The general consensus was, 'how did we manage without The Hub?'*

*We consider the Community Safety Hub to be an example of effective practice and welcome efforts by those working at The Hub to assess the scope for its future development, including the need for more regular involvement by some partners such as health and social work".*

## **7. COLLABORATIVE OUTCOMES**

The Hub achieves positive outcomes for the communities of Aberdeen on a daily basis. All staff take pride in delivering tangible results such as ASB Orders,

evictions and closure orders. The Hub has also been able to accomplish significant "softer" results, such as in the referral of and assistance to individuals with complex and varied needs. Below are examples of how the partnership structure and mechanisms within The Hub have achieved real results in a timely manner.

In late 2015 The Hub received initial complaints of rowdy parties at an address in Aberdeen. The information received related to a large group of youths frequenting a particular flat at weekends where they were engaging in drug use, underage drinking and underage sex. This flat was tenanted by a vulnerable individual.

The local Housing Officer and an ASBIT Officer carried out various home visits with the tenant to discuss the complaints and the implications of continuing to allow youths access to the subject property. It was noted that the flat was in a dilapidated condition. Complaints continued into 2016 and the situation deteriorated further with incidents of disorder escalating and resulting in the Police, Housing and ASBIT becoming more heavily involved.

In early 2016 a case conference was held where all partners were in agreement that the best course of action was to apply to the Court for a Closure Order (such a Closure Order allows the Police, working in consultation with Local Authorities to take action on premises which cause significant and persistent disorder or serious nuisance to the local community. If granted, such orders are put in place for an initial period of 3 months). Subsequently the Council Housing Officer visited the tenant and discussed the implications of the Closure Order, alternative accommodation and support. The ASBIT Officer also called with neighbours and gathered impact statements to support the application. Both Police and the Council's Legal Team then worked to prepare the relevant Court documentation.

Subsequently, in consultation with Aberdeen City Council the Closure Notice was signed off by Police Scotland and the application finalised for presentation to the appropriate court. Thereafter a Closure Notice was served on the tenant. The serving of such a Notice means that only the tenant can be within the property until the subsequent hearing. Failure to comply could result in a fine up to £2500 or imprisonment. This Closure Notice was followed a short time later by the relevant Closure Order being granted in Court.

There has been a very positive response to this particular action from both the tenant and the community. The tenant has acknowledged their issues and responsibilities and is now positively engaging with support. Additionally there have been no further reports of ASB regarding this "problem" flat.

All partners including Police Scotland, Housing, ASBIT, Legal, Building Services (Joiners, Plumbers and Electricians who secured the property and ensured it was safe) worked swiftly and collaboratively to tackle this issue.

Another example of best practice relates to a local premises that was identified as selling New Psychoactive Substances, (NPS), commonly known as Legal Highs.

In 2015 numerous calls were received at The Hub relating to anti-social complaints connected to this NPS premises and these steadily increased over a short period of time.

The nature of these complaints included:

- Large number of visitors to the shop obstructing members of the public and attempting to sell illicit goods.
- Suspected drug taking and drug dealing occurring in the local area.
- Blood and drug paraphernalia found in the vicinity of the premises.
- Vandalisms in the local area.

It was confirmed by Police Scotland and ASBIT staff that serious and persistent ASB was ongoing in the vicinity of this problem premises. This continued to have a substantial negative effect on the local community. NPS continue to pose a significant health risk to those who use them. In this instance, attempts to prevent the sale of NPS had failed and a warning issued by Police Scotland to stop selling NPS had gone unheeded.

Later in 2015, with the assistance of partner agencies Police Scotland was able to secure a Closure Order regarding this premises which immediately removed the ASB associated with it.

This intervention generated extensive interest throughout Scotland and led to various operations being instigated by Trading Standards, with the assistance of other partner agencies. This has resulted in NPS products being removed from numerous locations nationwide in an attempt to stem the sale and use of NPS and associated ASB.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

It can be seen from Appendix 1 that through collaborative processes created at The Hub, partner agencies have worked to tackle issues that significantly affect the City's communities. In doing so there have been notable successes in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour (Neighbour/Noise Calls and Vandalisms), Violence Against Women and Road Safety. The Hub will continue in its efforts to deliver innovative and improved community safety services for those who live and work in, or visit Aberdeen.

## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A.

10. **REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS**

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## Appendix 1

CSP Performance 15/16	YTD Apr-Dec 15/16	LYTD Apr-Dec 14/15	3 Year Average	Diff (Prev Yr) Nos	% Diff (Prev Yr)	Diff (5 Yr Avg) Nos	% Diff (5 Yr Avg)
<b>ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR</b>							
ASBIT Complaints	2551	1803	2961	748	41.5	-410	-13.8
Police Neighbour/ Noise Calls	1341	1724	1773	-383	-22.2	-432	-24.4
Vandalisms	1767	1809	1945	-42	-2.3	-178	-9.2
Youth Annoyance Complaints	1675	1745	2246	-70	-4.0	-571	-25.4
ASB Incidents reported by members of the public	8069	7978	9655	91	1.1	-1586	-16.4
Motorcycle Annoyance Complaints	1003	1285	1207	-282	-21.9	-204	-16.9
Secondary Wilful Fires	249	212	241	37	17.5	8	3.3
Structural Wilful Fires	48	42	46	6	14.3	2	4.3
Street Drinking	132	173	192	-41	-23.7	-60	-31.3
<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN</b>							
Number of Domestic Abuse Incidents *	1902	2359	1737	-457	-19.4	164.8	9.5
Number of Domestic Abuse Repeat Victims				0		0	
Number of Domestic Abuse Repeat Offenders				0		0	
Homeless Presentations Fleeing Domestic Abuse	129	136		-7	-5.1	n/a	n/a
<b>PUBLIC SPACE VIOLENCE</b>							
Common Assaults - City Wide	2174	2334	2873	-160	-6.9	-699	-24.3
Common Assaults - City Centre	565	666	904	-101	-15.2	-339	-37.5
Serious Assaults	127	109	105	18	16.5	22	21.0
Emergency Admissions to Hospital for Assault							
Robberies	69	68	79	1	1.5	-10	-12.7
Knife Incidents	133	113	126	20	17.7	7	5.6
<b>FIRE &amp; HOME SAFETY</b>							
Admissions to A&E due to intentional injury in the home							
A & E Fire Related Attendances							
Fire Casualties	36	38	n/a	-2		n/a	n/a
Accidental Dwelling Fires	222	202	198	20	9.9	24	12.1
<b>ROAD SAFETY</b>							
Casualties (Fatal)	5	5	5	0		-0.3	
Casualties (Serious & Slight)	184	234	293	-50	-21.4	-109.3	-37.3
Pedestrian Casualties	47	46	76	1		-29	
Pedal Cycle Casualties	30	39	39	-9		-8.7	
Motorcycle Casualties	27	52	47	-25		-20	
Crimes Detected	1869	2605	2006	-736	-28.3	-137	-6.8

\*based on 5 year average, all others based on 3 year average

	Indicators highlighted in this colour are targets
	These are indicators