

Appendix 3 - Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP): Strategic Assessment to inform 2014-17 Community Safety Strategy

Herefordshire Council Strategic Intelligence Team

December 2015 Refresh

Executive summary

- The strategic assessment is an annual exercise to identify key crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse issues that affect Herefordshire. This assessment considers what needs to be achieved to improve or maintain community safety and how communities can feel reassured and have confidence that their concerns and fears are being addressed. The assessment is refreshed annually to ensure that priorities and strategic decisions remain relevant and effective. The completion of the Strategic Assessment involves scanning partner data, identifying where further analysis is required and identifying emerging issues, vulnerable locations and people. This exercise in 2013 informed a decision by the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership on the priorities for the Three Year Strategy and Plan (2014-17).

The current priorities agreed for 14/17 are: Reducing Reoffending, Promoting Community Cohesion and Reducing Anti-Social Behaviour, Reducing the Harm from Domestic Violence and Abuse, and Reducing the Harm from Substance Misuse. A fourth priority was also agreed to be jointly overseen with the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Board addressing Child Sexual Exploitation & Adult Sexual Violence and Abuse.

In addition the HCSP has agreed to work with the West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner to address Rural & Business Crime.

The latest refresh is the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership: Annual Strategic Assessment Refresh 2015/16. This document is currently in draft awaiting sign off by the CSP in February 2016.

Highlighted below are the main issues identified for 2014/17

- Herefordshire generally has a **lower rate of crime** per head of population than across England and Wales (49 per 1,000 compared to 64 per 1,000). This is reflected in the individual crime types with only 3 crime types out of 17 ('sexual offences', 'miscellaneous crimes against society' and 'non-domestic burglary') having more offences committed per head of population than across England and Wales. The last three years have seen some convergence, with crime rates in Herefordshire decreasing more slowly than across England and Wales.

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- **Total recorded crime** continues to decrease with all but ‘non-domestic burglary’, ‘miscellaneous crimes against society’, ‘shoplifting’, ‘violence without injury’, ‘domestic burglary’ and ‘drug offences’ decreasing between 2010 and 2013. The scale of decrease has not been as great as across England and Wales, but this may reflect a lower starting position.
- Crime is **concentrated in Hereford City and the market towns**, particularly Hereford City Centre. This is true for all crime types except ‘burglary other’ where the highest rate was in rural areas, particularly the Golden Valley.
- Based on the volume and **cost per crime** ‘violent crimes with injury’ and ‘sexual offences’ appear to cost the county the most in terms of preventing crime, the impact on victims and in response to the crime.
- The number of **sexual offences** in the county has increased considerably in the last two years, although this may be due to reporting of ‘non-recent offences’. The number of offences compared to other crime types is low, but the cost of these crimes to society (particularly the physical and emotional costs for victims) means that the number is not insignificant. The rate of sexual offences per head of population in the county is slightly above that nationally - one of only three offence types above the national rate. Some services have reported an increase in referrals for victims with complex mental health needs, but it is not clear whether this is due mostly to changes in the way agencies refer cases or whether it reflects a change in need.
- The **‘misuse’ of alcohol** in the county has impacts in a number of areas particularly for the police and health services. Alcohol is linked to a large proportion of violent crime and is particularly related to the night time economy. It is also implicated in domestic abuse. The health impacts of alcohol disproportionately affect deprived areas of the county. The number of violent crimes with injury and alcohol related assaults reporting to A&E have decreased over the last few years.
- The number of **domestic violence** and abuse offences and incidents is fairly comparable to other areas of the West Mercia force. However, there has been some increase in both DVA offences and incidents in the last two years, a fact which is reflected in violence against the person offenses.
- The number of **antisocial behavior** crimes and incidents in the county has seen a continual decrease in the last three years. The number of ASB incidents recorded by the police however, is still quite large (7,900 in 2012-13 - 15% of all incidents). In 2012-13 14% of people were fearful of antisocial behaviour in their area. Residents of the most deprived areas were most likely to think ASB was an issue. There is a need to further understand whether ASB is decreasing universally across the county or whether certain hot spots are bucking this trend.
- The number of **drug offences** committed in the county has increased at a far greater rate than any other type of crime, although rates remain below those nationally. Drug related admissions to hospital saw a considerable increase in 2012-13 and evidence suggests that drug related mortality is increasing. The number of problematic drugs users (per head of population) is similar to that nationally.
- The number of people **re-offending** over the last three years has been consistently higher than would be expected given the characteristics of the cohort, although not statistically significant.
- Herefordshire continues to have a significantly higher rate of first time entrants to the **youth justice system**. It is thought that this may be explained by the sustained significantly higher detection rate, coupled with a lower use of community resolutions.

- **Hate crime** has seen a considerable increase in the last two years. The total volume of crimes is still fairly small, but there is a need to understand the reasons for the increase and monitor the trend.
- Evidence indicates there are **certain groups of people and families** that make a disproportionate call upon a number of services from different providers. Further work to understand how individuals (single people and those within families) interact with these services, could bring advantages in terms of effectiveness of intervention, especially if adopting a “whole family approach”.

Addendum: Update December 2015

As an update, Herefordshire remains a safe county, however, there has been an increase in total recorded crime for Herefordshire in 2015. This has come about due to a number of factors, including a change to crime recording protocols.