



## **SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT**

Date Written	17 <sup>th</sup> November 2020
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Service Area	Community Regeneration, Public Protection & Housing
Committee Date	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2020

*To: Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen*

### **Anti-Social Behaviour – Town Centre**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 The Committee requested a report be produced advising Committee Members of the latest status in relation to the Council's activities regarding anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in the Town Centre.
- 1.2 Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety Team within the Community Safety Partnership and carry out work in conjunction with South Wales Police and other Partners in tackling Anti-Social Behaviour within the County Borough.
- 1.3 The report identifies that Anti-Social Behaviour has increased in the town centre by 81% for the period April 2020 to September 2020 compared to the same period for 2019.
- 1.4 In addressing these concerns and increase the Local Authority have begun a review of issues within the Town centre with a view to providing a strategic and tactical approach to resolving these issues.
- 1.5 A Safer Streets Home Office Grant has also been received to expand and introduce new crime prevention and detection initiatives within the town centre.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Committee Members receive the report and note its content.
- 2.2 Scrutiny Committee to offer any recommendations/feedback/observations to support the officers with future planning (where appropriate)

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Committee requested a report be produced advising Committee Members of the latest status in relation to the Council's activities regarding anti-social behaviour and substance misuse in the Town Centre.
- 3.2 A report has been produced by our partners in South Wales Police detailing and comparing anti-social behaviour in the town centre between April – September 2019 and 2020. This is attached as **Appendix 1** to this report.
- 3.3 Members will be aware that during this reporting period the town centre faced significant challenges from the COVID pandemic. The Castle Hotel was repurposed as facility for homelessness provision that resulted in some vulnerable residents with complex substance misuse issues located in the town centre.
- 3.4 During the lockdown; with less shoppers and visitors; anti-social behaviour in the town centre became more visible and attracted several social media posts relating to incidents.
- 3.5 In tackling Anti-Social Behaviour, Merthyr Tydfil Community Safety team use a four stage approach when dealing with perpetrators:



## 4.0 WHERE WE WERE

4.1 Figures for the relevant period showed:

Time Range	AN17 ASB – Environmental	AN18 ASB - Nuisance	AN19 ASB - Personal	Total ASB
Apr to Sep 2019	6	124	34	<b>164</b>
Apr to Sep 2020	96	170	31	<b>297</b>
% Change	+1500.0%	+37.1%	-8.8%	+81.1%

ASB is recorded in three categories.

**ENVIRONMENTAL** – which includes such thing as off-road biking, joy riding and issues affecting the environment

**NUISANCE** – where ASB is not strictly targeting an individual personally but is causing them issues.

**PERSONAL** – where ASB is targeted towards a person or persons. For example neighbour disputes which harassment, alarm or distress is being caused.

4.2 As part of our four stage approach the following actions were taken:

Community safety during this period have issued **161** ASB warning notices at a stage one level. In addition, for those not complying, **29** have been progressed the second stage warning level.

4.3 ASB related issue were discussed at Problem Solving Group Meetings where Senior Officers from across a range of agencies would discuss ASB related matters and plans of actions.

## 5.0 WHERE WE ARE NOW

5.1 In order to address the issues related to the town centre, a number of summit meetings have been held with both internal and external partners.

5.2 The meetings identified that a number of services are located within the town centre which support vulnerable residents with complex needs and, in some cases, have substance misuse issues. Our courts and probation services are also town centre based.

5.3 As a consequence of the location of these services, the Police have difficulty in utilising all their enforcement tools such as Criminal Behaviour Orders as they are unable to ban offenders from the town centre as there is a need for them to attend for access to these services.

5.4 The utilisation of the Castle Hotel for homelessness during the COVID pandemic has also contributed to an increase of perceived anti-social

behaviour, not necessarily by the residents but by associates who have congregated into the town centre. The Authority is under increasing pressure with homelessness and provision of accommodation.

- 5.5 There is a perception of under reporting of ASB and public mistrust in the 101 system.
- 5.6 All town centre CCTV cameras have been upgraded to new high definition quality.
- 5.7 The Community Safety Partnership were successful in obtaining a Home Office grant via the Safer Streets Funding. Additional CCTV cameras, a tannoy system and help points plus additional street lighting formed part of the successful bid.

## **6.0 WHERE WE WANT TO BE**

- 6.1 Create a 'one stop shop' to support service users and remove the town centre as a focal point for these services.
- 6.2 Reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour through effective preventative and enforcement initiatives.
- 6.3 Dovetail town centre transformation projects with the reduction in anti-social behaviour and utilise opportunities to 'design out crime'.

## **7.0 WHAT WE NEED TO DO NEXT**

- 7.1 Continue the work that has commenced as a result of the town centre summits with consideration is being given to the co-location of multiple support agencies into one central 'hub', which would act as an assessment centre for those accessing criminal justice services, drug & alcohol services, housing and others.
- 7.2 Work smarter with partners in tackling ASB issues and utilising our powers effectively to explore the introduction of a Public Space Protection Order relating to street drinking.
- 7.3 Continue to promote the use of 101 and online platforms as reporting tools for anti-social behaviour.
- 7.4 Complete the Safer Street grant programme with the successful installation of CCTV, additional lighting, tannoy system and help points.

## **8.0 CONTRIBUTION TO WELLBEING OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 Community safety contributes to the wellbeing goals and the sustainable development principle.

8.2 Activities and reporting on community safety outcomes are captured across the Corporate Wellbeing Plan; with a primary focus on these appearing under the Working Life theme

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<b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>		
<b>Title of Document(s)</b>	<b>Document(s) Date</b>	<b>Document Location</b>
List the Background documents which have been relied on in preparing the report. E.g. previous minutes of relevant committees		
<b>Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?</b>		