

**1 Purpose**

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information about current crime levels, a summary of activity on the delivery of the Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership (AVCSP<sup>1</sup>) Plan in 2018/19, and an update on some of the recent and future changes taking place in connection with community safety.

**2 Recommendations**

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| 2.1 That Members note the content of the report and comment as to what they might like to see included or amended in the refreshed 2019/20 plan. |
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**3 Executive summary**

- 3.1 Total recorded crime for the year to date, is currently showing an increase of 3%. This equates to an increase of 318 crimes, as compared with the same period 2017/18. This increase was anticipated in line with national trends.
- 3.2 The report provides information about activities completed to date from the AVCSP 2018/19 action plan such as work around drugs exploitation, thefts from vans and prevention of Burglary to homes.
- 3.3 This report provides an update on use of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) legislation to deter offending that impacts on communities.

**4 Supporting information**

An upward trend in all crime has now been seen for the second year running, in particular Violent Crime. This has attracted national media interest and recent homicides amongst younger people involving knives, mainly in the London area, have prompted debate on police resourcing and cuts in Local Authority spending. Fortunately, the incidence of knife crime in the Vale of Aylesbury remains low. However, exploitation of young people into dealing and handling of illegal drugs remains a concern.

- 4.1 Domestic homicide has seen an increase of one offence compared to the previous year. The onus is on the Community Safety Partnership to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR) into the circumstances and journey of the deceased prior to their death. The review process, under an independent chair, seeks to establish whether there was sufficient access to services and relevant support offered that might have prevented the death of an individual. The aim of each review is to identify lessons that can be learned by the supporting agencies and to make meaningful recommendations for improvement, where appropriate. The process is overseen by the Home Office and lessons learned collated and shared across the partnership. The executive summary of the review reports are published on the AVDC website. The costs and administration fall to the district council, although some funding

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<sup>1</sup> The Partnership Plan is drawn up by the AVCSP, which is made up of Aylesbury Vale District Council, Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, Buckinghamshire Fire and Rescue Authority, National Probation Service, Aylesbury Vale Clinical Commissioning Group, VAHT and HMYOI, Aylesbury. \* Figures to be updated at end of year.

has been secured through the Police Crime Commissioner's annual Community Safety Grant. AVCSP currently has three DHRs underway, with a fourth set to conclude and report finally to the Home Office. The administration of this process has occupied a considerable amount of officer time and the number of concurrent reviews is unprecedented locally. This has had some effect on the Community Safety Plan and has, understandably taken priority, at times.

- 4.2 Partnership working with the police and AVDC continues to focus on organised crime and Operation Stronghold, a Thames Valley Police initiative, is supported by a range of partners including AVDC and the Community Safety Partnership. Burglary to homes and thefts from work vans are often products of organised crime groups and considerable focus has been put into reducing such offences. The seizure of two containers full of stolen power tools made a huge impact and led to a temporary reduction in this crime type. AVDC Community Safety officers support community engagement and crime reduction events in both urban and rural areas and assisted in returning stolen tools at an event arranged by police partners. Engagement and crime reduction events, in particular those held around the daylight saving changes to the clocks has augmented the intelligence led enforcement activity by police and to keep Burglary rates lower than seen in neighbouring areas and forces. Modern Slavery remains a focus and the joint initiative named Hotel Watch has proven successful in raising awareness amongst staff and managers in premises that may be used to commit exploitative crimes against young people.
- 4.3 Hate Crime continues to be a focus and the new Interfaith Network is developing in strength. The Inter-Faith breakfast hosted at The Gateway will see a gathering of representatives of nearly all the recognised religions in Aylesbury, Buckingham and surrounding villages. Hate Crime continues to be a major consideration of this group, going forward. The Independent Advisory Group is a Thames Valley Police meeting that provides an interface between the local Area Commander and the Vale's community. An average attendance of 20 or so invited members of the public act as "critical friend" to the police, feeding back on such issues as Hate Crime and Stop & Search.

Crime Type (TVP priorities)	Crime figures (year to date, as of 12.3.19)	% change compared with 2017/18
All Crime (excluding fraud)	Up 318 offences	3% Increase
Violent Crime with Injury	Up 45 offences	4% Increase
Burglary (homes)	Down 20 offences	6% Decrease
Domestic Violence	Up 58 offences	20%
Anti-Social Behaviour	Down	% Reduction

**Please note – these figures will be updated at end of year.**

## **5 Update On The Community Safety Plan 2018/19**

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, requires the Aylesbury Vale Community Safety Partnership (AVCSP) to produce a three year partnership strategy and annual action plans to achieve the priorities set in the strategy. The strategy (2017-2020) has two key priorities:

- **Supporting communities and town centres to become safer, more resilient and cohesive places to live and work.**
- **Work closer in partnership to cut crimes that are of most concern to the public and to protect the most vulnerable members of our community.**

5.1 The Annual Plan for 2019/20 is in draft form, the Community Safety Partnership Strategy Group has reviewed and agreed its priorities. It will be published at: <http://www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk/section/communitysafety-partnership-news-and-events>

### **5.2 Purple Flag**

Renewal of the Purple Flag Award was featured in the 18/19 plan. Having held the Purple Flag Award in Aylesbury town centre since 2010 though, a review has been conducted as to its effectiveness. The award recognises how the partnership currently works together to make town centres safer places for visitors and residents. Following the submission of a new full application and consequent assessment evening on the 6<sup>th</sup> April, where Aylesbury partners showcased the town centre evening and night-time economy as a safe and vibrant environment, commensurate with a town of its size; a decision was made not to renew. This was based on the following concerns:

- The cost in terms of officer time and financial outlay did not match the benefits perceived to have been gained by holding the Purple Flag status.
- The award does not attract sufficient national marketing from the awarding body (ATCM – Association of Town Centre Management).
- That during street surveys held in Aylesbury the general public seemed unaware of its existence and purpose; despite local marketing and signposting.

The “Night Moves” group will continue its focus on making Aylesbury Town Centre safer, to the same standard that achieved the award, as before. The group will decide actions to reduce crime and disorder in the night-time economy. It will link in with other groups such as the proposed stakeholder group around “Aggressive begging” (see below).

### **5.3 Criminal Drugs Exploitation**

Following the previous Locality Review which was focussed on “County Lines” drugs exploitation, and carried out by the Violence and Vulnerable Exploitation Unit in the previous year’s plan, governance recommendations have been adopted and the partnership now represents on a county-wide tactical Serious Violence Group. This is a sub-group of the Safer & Stronger

Bucks Partnership Board and will take forward elements of the government and Thames Valley Police Serious Violence Strategies, with a strong focus on Criminal Drugs Exploitation and County Lines. This tactical group will draw up plans to tackle the issues identified within the Vale of Aylesbury as part of a wider Bucks initiative. The joint agency Vulnerable Tenancy Group, which takes cognisance of those individuals exploited in their homes for the purposes of drugs supply, was held up as good practice within the review's report and remains in place locally for the Vale.

National and regional campaigns in relation to security and personal safety have been supported and social media employed to focus messages on key demographics, for example the "Hidden Harm" campaign aimed at raising awareness of Modern Slavery, Online Child Abuse, Honour Based Abuse. Domestic Abuse and Hate Crime.

#### **5.4 Other Partnership Activity**

The AVDC Community Safety Team continue to take key roles at a strategic level in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation, Modern Slavery/exploitation, Cyber Crime and the county-wide substance misuse strategy groups; along with other partners within the CSP. This interaction informs CSP actions in the annual plan. Housing and Community Safety Officers from AVDC have supported a number of Modern Slavery police operations to safeguard suspected victims of Modern Slavery in the Vale and neighbouring CSP areas. One major operation utilised a Reception Centre identified from AVDC's Emergency Plan.

Crime reduction and engagement events have been carried out across the Vale, especially in the rural areas, offering home safety and tool marking advice. Bucks Fire and Rescue Service continue to provide crime reduction advice as part of their events and Home Safety checks.

#### **5.5 Emergency Planning & Community Resilience**

Emergency Planning and Resilience, are aligned with the Community Safety sector in AVDC. This year, training of Senior Managers has been conducted by the national Emergency Planning College in their roles around Integrated Emergency Management. The emergency plan, and AVDC's response in partnership with the wider Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum, was tested on two occasions this year. The first being as part of a regional and national exercise, Evolving Formula, where officers attended and played their roles at both tactical and strategic levels; at Upper Heyford and Kidlington respectively. The second table-top exercise sought to put Incident Managers and Crisis Management Team officers through their paces in an adverse weather scenario. The exercise was supported by partners in Bucks County Council, Milton Keynes Council and the Met Office; as well as a retired Police officer from Thames Valley Police. The temporary Community Safety and Emergency Planning Support Officer post has been made permanent to ensure AVDC meets its commitments under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and to the wider Thames Valley Resilience Forum. Work streams now include HS2 and EU Exit contingencies, which are emerging as priority areas, going forward.

### **6 Examples of upcoming projects/initiatives for 2019/20 include:**

A problem-solving, demand reduction approach involving as wider partnership as possible will continue to be “business as usual” in tackling crime and disorder, whilst empowering communities to be more resilient. The Community Safety Partnership will continue to focus activity on acquisitive crimes, such as burglary to homes, and supports a multi-agency approach to raise awareness of home and personal security. Partners will continue to tackle some of the highest priority crimes, such as Domestic Violence.

#### **6.1 Aggressive Begging**

A co-ordinated approach to the issue of “Aggressive Begging” in Aylesbury town centre will explore ways in which those engaging in such activity can be deterred and diverted to more positive behaviours. A stakeholder group is to be formed to agree an action plan. This will ensure that those genuinely homeless receive full support, under the Rough Sleeper Initiative, whilst those engaging wilfully in anti-social activity are held to account. The raising of public awareness of alternative giving methods will form part of this work. Scoping work is underway to assess the current impact.

#### **6.2 Criminal Drugs Exploitation – Youth Project**

The original youth project involving Youth Concern, Thames Valley Police and AVDC aimed at vulnerable young people who are in danger of being trapped into County Lines and other criminal activity delivered sessions promoting social cohesion. Participants also discussed subjects such as the practice of Stop and Search by the police. This initial engagement has now been developed into a larger project which will focus on mentoring young people who are engaged in, or on the cusp of involvement in criminal activity. Interventions supported by a wider partnership have been planned to encourage a motivation to learn basic work skills and to engage in positive activities that will steer them towards healthier choices. This project will be a pilot for six months and has attracted joint funding from partners, such as Bucks Learning Trust. Other partners including Thames Valley Police and the Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust have shown interest in supporting the initiative.

### **7 Annual plan 2019/20**

7.1 Due to resourcing issues Aylesbury Vale CSP was unable to secure a bespoke Strategic Assessment this year. There is currently a recruitment process underway to secure a jointly funded partnership analyst. Crime data supplied by Thames Valley Police and the annual public consultation exercise has assisted in identifying priorities for the new Community Safety Annual Plan for 2019/20.

(i) Violent crime has seen increases across the UK and this is reflected in the Aylesbury Vale. This is similar to the rise in the previous year. A new crime reduction analyst post, jointly funded by partners, has been created to carry out further analytical work to provide the partnership with more information around violent crime, such as high-risk locations, victims and offenders. AVDC will employ the analyst on a fixed-term who will be hosted at the police station in Aylesbury, to facilitate access to crime recording data.

ii) Each year the AVCSP circulates a consultation survey to residents, members and partners about the priorities for the refreshed action plan. People are asked to tell us how safe they feel in the Aylesbury Vale, how

informed they feel about the emerging areas of crime and where they would seek information. The results of the survey will help to shape the activities and awareness raising campaigns during the 2019/20 plan. This year saw record returns with 752 responses, compared with 425 the previous year – a 56% increase. The channels for response were:

Newsletter - 58  
 Connect - 22  
 Partner Emails - 134  
 Social Media - 538

This year respondents were asked how safe they feel in Aylesbury Vale on a scale of 1 (completely unsafe) to 3 (completely safe). 26.46% reported feeling completely safe, 63.30% neither safe or unsafe, with 10.24% saying they felt completely unsafe. A free text box was provided for comments as to the reason respondents felt safe or unsafe. Comments varied from poor street lighting, to speeding and lack of police visibility. It remains a strategic priority to build community resilience, helping people to prevent themselves from becoming victims. When asked “Do you know how to protect yourself from becoming a victim of crime” 38.96% responded –Yes. Only 5% felt they did not know how to prevent themselves from becoming victims. Respondents were asked to say which three crime types from a menu of 10 choices they think the CSP should prioritise in their 2019/20 action plan. The results were as follows:

Cyber Crime	13.30%
Child Exploitation	47.24%
Domestic abuse	18.39%
Adult Exploitation	10.61%
Violent Crime	60.68%
Hate Crime	7.92%
Burglary	41.44%
Vehicle Crime	16.69%
Drug Crime	40.74%
Anti-Social Behaviour	39.46%

(iii) Serious Violent Crime has become a national priority. The organised supply of controlled drugs adopting the “County Lines” model involves the exploitation of children, some as young as nine years in some areas. Often violence is used as a form of intimidation and recent isolated incidents have shown that the Vale of Aylesbury is not immune. The 2019/20 plan will reflect the priority placed on this, the CSP working as a partner on the Serious Violence sub-group that will sit directly under the Safer & Stronger Partnership Board. This will provide effective governance to work carried out across Buckinghamshire and respond tactically to pervading and emerging issues. The Crime Reduction Analyst post will be crucial to focusing work on priority areas identified.

AVCSP has worked closely with the Office of the Police Crime Commissioner and other CSPs across the Thames Valley Police area to support the successful bid to the Early Intervention Youth Fund (EIYF) raised by the Home Office. The initial cap was 700k but due to the strength of the bid, the full amount of the original application for 822k has been secured. The Thames Valley-wide bid was selected from 106 others, including 10 from the

London area. This money will support identified projects including mentoring and intervention programmes within schools, aimed at helping children make better choices.

## **8 Update on the Antisocial Behaviour (ASB), Crime and Policing Act 2014.**

- 8.1 Due to re-structuring, Thames Valley Police no longer has a designated Anti-Social Behaviour officer for the Aylesbury police area. The decision to delete the post was queried by the lead member for Communities with the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police but his position remained unchanged. The previous incumbent before that role was deleted came up to retirement and has now been recruited by AVDC. He replaces AVDC's ASB Officer who has moved on to another position within the authority. The police retain a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) for Anti-social behaviour and have provided enhanced training for all officers likely to deal with such matters.

A new Anti-social behaviour policy outlining the response of AVDC to ASB contacts has been drafted and passed through both Scrutiny and Cabinet.

- 8.2 Reducing ASB incidents is one of the AVDC's key objectives. There has been a general decrease in reported incidents of Anti-Social behaviour in most areas across the Vale, compared to previous years. Some of the partnership activity contributing to this includes problem-solving activity around open spaces, such as Edinburgh playing fields, use of closure orders as a tool in tackling County Lines drug dealing; and as a tactic in tackling the persistent anti-social behaviour of a family in Bedgrove.
- 8.3 Consideration going forward is around strengthening the position of AVDC as an active partner in ASB processes and ensuring residents receive appropriate support in the event that they become a victim. Work continues through the Tactical Advisory Group (TAG) to support housing providers to tackle ASB within their stock.

## **9 Other information**

- 9.1 The transition to the new unitary authority has identified a number of work streams that include Emergency Planning, Finance, Customer Service, Etc. to ensure a "safe and legal" authority in April 2020. AVDC Community Safety officers are assigned to this work, alongside officers from all the current authorities in Buckinghamshire. This is not seen as a particularly contentious area as the processes are already in place under the Local Resilience Forum, with a long history of collaborative working aimed at providing a co-ordinated response to emergencies or major incidents.

Contact Officer  
Background Documents

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AVDC Annual Plan 2016/17 AVDC Strategy 2017-20  
& Annual Plan 2017/18