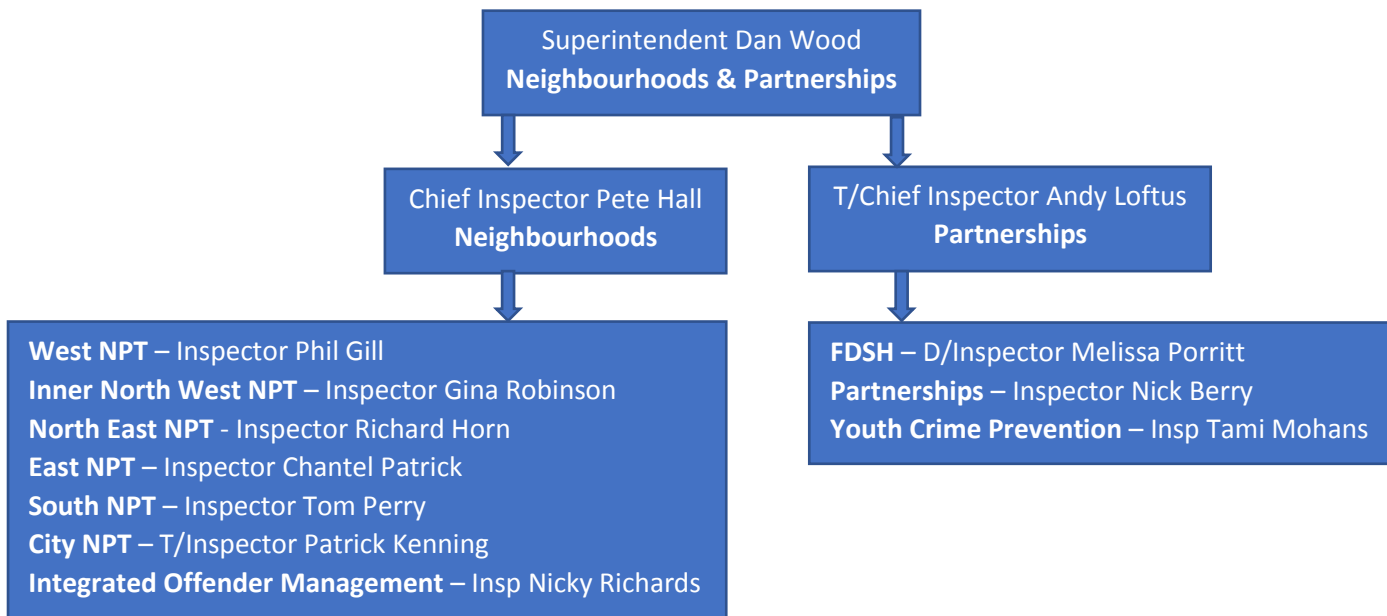


Leeds police update to Environment, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Board 21/07/22

The purpose of this report is to provide a short overview to Board of the current efforts, successes and challenges associated with Leeds District's Neighbourhood and Partnerships work to support community safety in the city.

The current policing leadership structure for Neighbourhoods & Partnerships:



People

I (Superintendent Dan Wood) took up post in February 2022 and have an extensive neighbourhood policing background, having worked at all policing ranks and a wide variety of roles at Leeds over the previous 19 years. Chief Inspector Pete Hall took up post in January 2022 and brings with him a wealth of experience from neighbourhood policing at Bradford district. T/Chief Inspector Andy Loftus has been in the Partnerships role for the past 18 months, ensuring the consistency required for this key position.

We have, and continue to strengthen, an excellent working relationship with the Safer Stronger Communities Team and recently the entire policing structure shown above met with the SSC Chief Officer and Heads of Service for a half day of planning and coordination; something we plan to repeat regularly.

The current Neighbourhood Policing context

The pandemic required unique policing requirements and then the latter half of 2021 saw us adjusting to a steady return of community normality and associated crime, anti-social behaviour etc. The night-time economy appears to be close to pre-Covid footfall which brings many associated issues, e.g. drug dealing, alcohol-related violence, street robbery etc. February 2022 saw a notable uplift in what might have been previously Covid-suppressed demand, with the volumes of issues like missing persons and domestic incidents all notably increasing. The current context sees us striving to maintain a problem-solving, partnership approach whilst accepting we have to, at times, respond reactively to urgent demands.

Successes / Developments

I have to sought to base these, where relevant, on the priorities outlined in the Safer Stronger Communities Plan.

ASB and Public Order

Our partnership approach, utilising Ward Tasking, continues to prove effective. Earlier this Spring, Bramley and Halton Moor emerged as clear threat areas but responsive problem-solving efforts have proved very effective. Issues in Bramley, thanks to work by LEODIS, partnership injunctions and the imprisonment of a key ringleader, have greatly reduced. Likewise in Halton Moor, ward tasking has led to the involvement of the Fire Service and local Safer Schools Officers to great effect.

Hirsts Yard in the city centre continues to be a focus but there are now joint plans to achieve gating to alleviate crime and disorder there. A new Sergeant (PS Secker) joins the Licensing team soon, providing an ideal opportunity to refresh our approach in this area with plans to take a more proactive approach during licensing hours. Inspector Robinson is also working with the SSCT to holistically tackle the perennial issue of the 'Otley Run' and alcohol-related behaviour.

Our daily use of the 'ASVAT' system by our Neighbourhood Support Officers is exceptionally strong – allowing immediate insight and response into any trends of concern regarding repeat victims of ASB and crime. We are also developing a new analytical product to provide understanding of vulnerable, repeat demand locations for problem solving purposes.

Given the persistent problems of motorbikes and quad bikes being ridden anti-socially, our Off Road Bike Team is another area of significant ongoing development for us. Chief Insp Hall has appointed a Sgt to better coordinate their activity and we are looking to add dedicated PCSOs to the team, stingers, drone capability and covert bikes.

Domestic Violence and Abuse

This year saw us move to a Daily Risk Assessment Meeting (DRAM) for domestic abuse which allows the Police, CSWS and an IDVA to meet and discuss the latest cases and risks – which is crucially held each afternoon after the IDVA has had the opportunity to contact the victim and hear their voice. The DRAM provides effective triage of overall caseload, allowing the now twice-weekly MARAC to properly focus on the more urgent and concerning instances. We are currently working with the Local Authority, Social Care and other partnership colleagues to enhance Operation Encompass – the process by which schools are informed daily of pupils involved in domestic abuse incidents within the previous 24 hours.

Hate Crime

Reported hate crimes have increased 22% - a suspected combination of societal factors and greater victim confidence to report. Our Hate Crime Coordinators are striving to contact these victims at the point of recording and also finalisation to provide the best 'wrap-around' service we can. We also regularly hold a partnership Hate Crime MARAC to provide multi-agency supportive interventions for victims. We are also the only district in West Yorkshire to have a LGBTQ+ scrutiny panel to examine the police's investigative actions against incidents of hate crime.

Illicit Drugs and Substance Use

Over the past year we have dramatically increased our custody-based drugs testing – for instance in the past six months we conducted 1375 tests, versus 742 in the six months prior to that (an 85% increase). 52% of these tests were positive for cocaine / opiates and resulted in referrals and requirements for the individuals.

Our small but dedicated Neighbourhood Improvement Team (NIT), along with the regular NPTs, continues to target drug activity particularly at dealer level with approximately two search warrants per week for the NIT alone. By way of example, the NIT recently developed intelligence that led to a search warrant in Beeston and the seizure of £350,000 in cash and £500,000 of heroin and cocaine.

Offending Behaviours

Early Help and Liaison & Diversion are strong, embedded systems that we use to great effect to support and divert offenders and families. T/Ch Insp Loftus and I recently visited all three Leeds Early Help Hubs and we recognise that our entire frontline officer workforce needs to better understand how to address offending behaviours based on severity so we are seeking to uplift their training in key referral mechanisms.

Our partnership Integrated Offender Management approach was overhauled in November 2021 in line with National Operating Guidance. Working with Probation and other key partners, the role of the police has rightly primarily transferred onto 'Catch and Control' offenders who are not complying and are harming communities with neighbourhood offences such as robbery and burglary. Since the changes in November, there have been 65 arrests - mainly for Recall to Prison for statutory licensed offenders. Joint work is ongoing to bring even more agency provisions into the revamped IOM approach in order to deter and divert offenders.

Organised Crime and Street Gangs

Whilst a continual concern, we do have embedded processes to respond to this threat. Daily searches are done across a variety of platforms to identify emerging issues (e.g. threatening videos) and we hold Serious Organised Crime (SOC) and Urban Street Gang (USG) meetings on alternate weeks, feeding into the Most Serious Violence Youth Task Group. Via Operation Aspenglen, our Field Intelligence Officers follow up on intelligence daily with appropriate referrals, visits etc.

Operation Dietbank is an outstanding example of our Operation Precision SOC team capability. Focussing on the 9'ers / 3-7 gangs in East Leeds and their drug dealing activity has led to a raft of charges and the significant disruption of these groups. The majority of offenders pled guilty to charges and await sentencing.

Partnership work against a retailer in Leeds suspected to be the primary supplier of machetes to young people was also highly effective with a search warrant and subsequent closure order vastly reducing the threat from this outlet. Regular weapons 'sweeps' in communities have also yielded many recovered machetes and other weapons. Where appropriate, in response to incidents of serious violence, we also utilise our S.60 stop and search powers and have received widespread community support for this thanks to our open and communicative approach.

Exploitation and Radicalisation

Leeds has a really strong cohort of 101 Prevent 'champions' – officers and staff who are specially trained to understand the signs and vulnerabilities involved with those who may be exploited or radicalised and raise this awareness in the wider network of policing and partners. The champions receive regular inputs and we have just begun using a Teams channel to better understand how we can best support their vital preventative work.

People with multiple needs

Spring 2022 saw us go live with Public Protection Notices (PPN) in conjunction with Adult/Child Social Care. PPN provides a 'watertight' way for officers to refer concerns for adults / children so that wider consideration of their needs can take place.

Our policing teams are alive to the wide variety of ways that individuals in Leeds can present with needs and vulnerabilities – we regularly encounter and robustly respond to 'cucooked' addresses where vulnerable residents can be exploited for drug dealing or other criminal purposes.

Violence and sexual crime

The safety of students is a key priority in this area and has led to strong partnership relationships. Detective Chief Inspector Andy Cass sits on the Student Safety Overview panel which led to clinics being delivered on all the university sites. Detective Constables with a specialist safeguarding background attend these clinics (in non-uniform) to provide an approachable point of support for those who may have experienced sexual crimes. In turn, the

universities have also invested in Independent Sexual Violence Advisers. We have also developed a series of 'bitesize' videos about reporting sexual crimes, ready for the Sept 2022 term of students. Operation Vigilant, a proposed project to tackle persons with potential predatory intent, is still in development by the Violence Reduction Unit.

On-street harassment towards females from males in vehicles can also be an issue in the City and we are hopeful the proposed PSPO will give us even greater opportunity to tackle this.

Challenges / Ongoing efforts

Domestic Violence and Abuse

This continues to be a focus for us. Incident demand has increased 15% over the past year with no significant improvements seen in overall instances of repeat victim / suspect cases (although High risk repeat cases have reduced). Earlier this Spring, staffing to the Safeguarding department (particularly the Domestic Abuse Team) was bolstered to give this specialist department the capacity and capability to best address the threat associated with this offending.

Youth Violence

We are enthused to be involved in the developing Youth Violence tasking group work and other proposed measures to strengthen our coordination and response to youth violence concerns. This Spring, a Youth Crime Prevention officer (PC French) took up post and we continue to support the Youth Justice Partnership.

Miscellaneous

Due to the pressures on Patrol (response) and also Safeguarding teams, the neighbourhood policing teams are operating with some Constable vacancies across their teams. The influx of new Student Officers arriving (national Police Uplift Programme) should see us able to further strengthen the NPT numbers from Autumn onwards.

We continue to encourage partnership use of the Intelligence Portal (PIP) to gain a wider picture of offending across Leeds.

Societal conditions (e.g. cost of living, people seeking asylum etc) mean we are especially mindful of need to closely monitor and respond to tensions, likely protests etc.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 has recently altered the law in relation to unauthorised encampments. We are awaiting a Force Policy update in this area and have begun working with local authority colleagues to interpret this change and refresh our Service Level Agreement so we can apply the law in this area consistently and ethically.

Superintendent Dan Wood
Neighbourhoods & Partnerships
Leeds District Police