

Committee: Council

Date: 5 February 2020

Wards: All

Subject: Strategic Objective Review – Safer and Stronger Communities

Lead officer: Chris Lee, Director of Environment and Regeneration

Lead member: Councillor Edith Macauley

Contact officers: Neil Thurlow, Head of Safer Merton

Recommendations:

A. That Council consider, and note, the content of this report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1** Council at its meeting on 6 March 2019 approved the Business Plan 2019-2023.
- 1.2** The Business Plan sets out how the council will deliver the Community Strategy, which is grouped into five strategic themes:
- 1.2.1 Sustainable communities,
 - 1.2.2 Safer and stronger communities,
 - 1.2.3 Healthier communities,
 - 1.2.4 Older people and
 - 1.2.5 Children and young people.
- 1.2.6 Performance against these themes, plus an additional theme of corporate capacity, is monitored by Council. Each meeting of Council will receive a report updating on progress against one of these strategic themes.
- 1.3** This report provides Council with an opportunity to consider progress against the priorities that are to be delivered under the theme of **Safer and Stronger Communities**.
- 1.4** The key outcomes set out in the Business Plan relating to this theme are:
- 1.4.1 Reducing the fear of crime,
 - 1.4.2 Reducing alcohol related violence and supporting those who are affected by alcohol misuse
 - 1.4.3 Reducing anti-social behaviour and its effects on communities as well as individuals.
- 1.5** This report focuses on progress in relation to those areas sited under 1.5 and provides a wider update in regard key areas of importance – ASB enforcement and burglary.

2 DETAILS

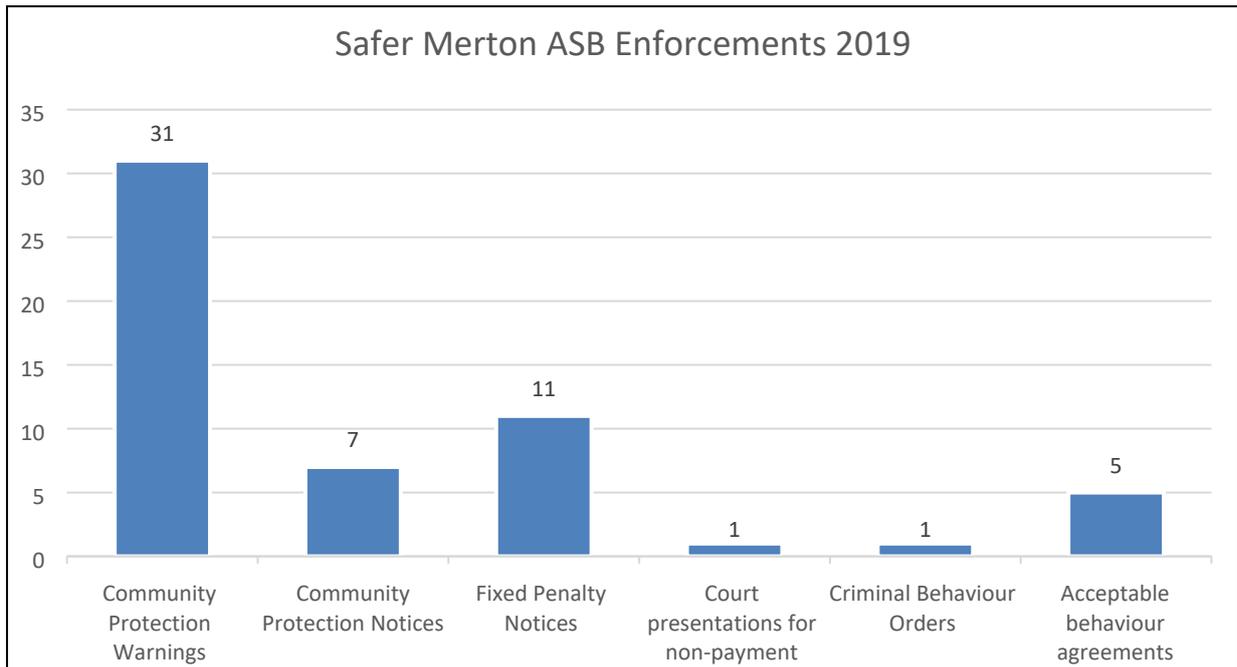
2.1 Reducing the fear of crime

- 2.1.1 Whilst Merton is consistently one of the safest boroughs in London, concern about crime still remains an issue for some. The results from the borough's young people's annual resident's survey 2019 highlighted that crime and gangs were amongst the top concerns for young people alongside bullying.
- 2.1.2 In relation to the adults' survey, most residents surveyed felt safe in their local area during the day (98%) and with 84% stating they felt safe after dark.
- 2.1.3 This summer, Safer Merton carried out our own Community Safety Survey and received over 600 responses. Of those whom responded 43% felt that crime was much greater or slightly greater than a year ago. Alongside this 48% of respondents felt that ASB was much greater or slightly greater than a year ago.
- 2.1.4 The Community Safety Partnership will ensure that these concerns are reflective in our work programme for 2020/21 and 2021/22

2.2 Reducing alcohol related violence and supporting those who are affected by alcohol misuse

- 2.2.1 Much work has been done to reduce alcohol related violence within the borough
- 2.2.2 The council, and partners, concluded, at the end of March 2019 a two year project with the Home Office – the Local Alcohol Action Area (LAAA). The LAAA focuses on two areas, night time economy in Wimbledon and street drinking in Mitcham
- 2.2.3 Night time economy work focused on re-engaging businesses with each other, the police and the councils CCTV
- 2.2.4 Working with Love Wimbledon a “communications triangle” was formed and, every evening, from 20:00 to 02:00 (03:00 at weekends) a formal method of checking in and checking out was underway, information and intelligence was shared allowing problems to be resolved quickly and without escalation
- 2.2.5 Work with the boroughs Street Pastors provided additional eyes on the ground and a reassuring presence for vulnerable people who had consumed alcohol
- 2.2.6 The two year pilot reduced alcohol related violence in Wimbledon and these methods of joint work remain in place today
- 2.2.7 After the pilot an assessment of crime was undertaken which showed a reduction of 170 offences (24%) across the four wards which converge on the town centre (Trinity, Hillside, Dundonald and Abbey)
- 2.2.8 In Mitcham, the approach, and challenge, was different but the work remains ongoing today
- 2.2.9 Safer Merton, alongside colleagues within the Police and Kingdom have undertaken patrols to enforce the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). The PSPO is designed to address problematic street drinking and as such is not a carte blanche for use against anyone drinking within the borough
- 2.2.10 Those drinking in the town centre are offered engagement and intervention services prior to enforcement. At this time no person has requested support for their alcohol needs and as such enforcement has taken place

2.2.11 In 2019 we have seen the following served against problematic individuals: for anti-social behaviour activities including street drinking and begging

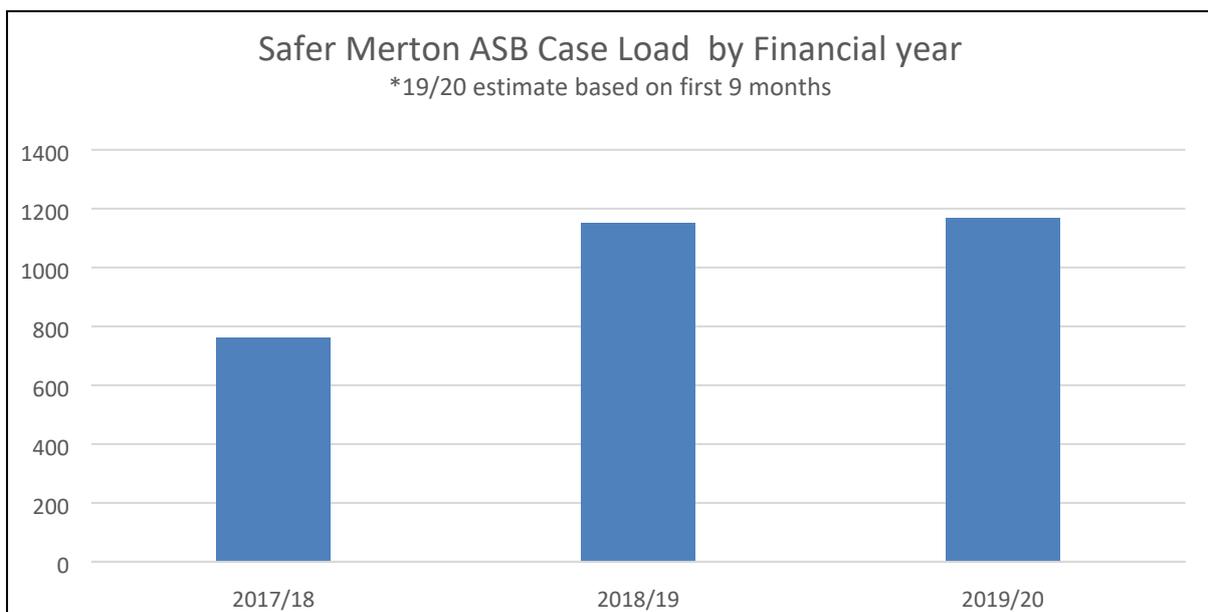


2.2.12 Safer Merton are also working to better engage businesses as we seek to better understand their challenges in this area so that they can operate their business without the risk of threat or harm

2.2.13 The PSPO expires in early November 2020 and in early 2020 work will commence to explore future solutions to tackling this issue

2.3 Reducing anti-social behaviour and its effects on communities as well as individuals.

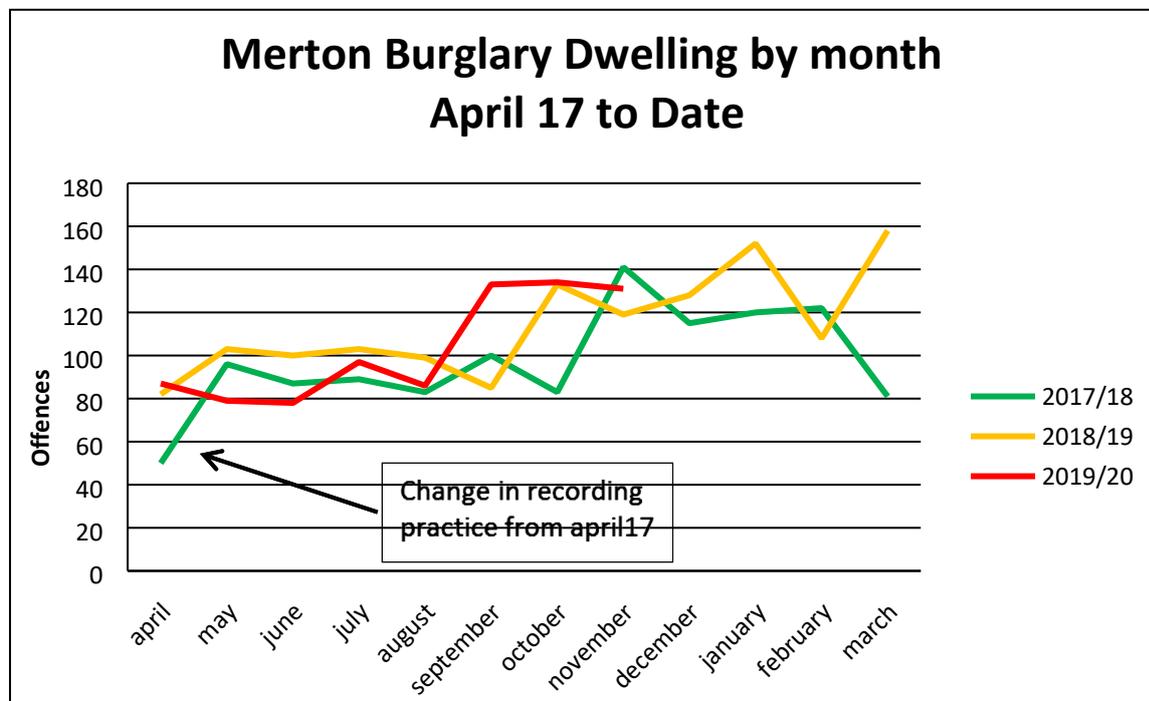
2.3.1 The Safer Merton ASB service has seen a significant increase in demand over the last couple of years and based on the first 9 months of this year 2019/20 will be even busier.



- 2.3.2 ASB investigation and enforcement is a priority for the Merton Executive, Community Safety Partnership and Safer Merton with two officers covering the borough
- 2.3.3 Merton's ASB officers work on all cases aside from social housing matters which are dealt with by the respective social landlord
- 2.3.4 Working to investigate and uncover the facts of each case the workers interview the complainant and the accused to decide on the appropriate approach to take
- 2.3.5 2019 has seen the service address large scale challenges resulting in:
 - 2.3.5.1 Six residential premises being closed under the Antisocial Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 due to anti-social behaviour impacting on the community or properties being used as brothels.
 - 2.3.5.2 Joint enforcement operations to tackle beggars operating in the town centres. These beggars were all provided with care packs as part of this work prior to the issuing of a warning
 - 2.3.5.3 The pre-emptive closure, and securing, of Lavender Park to prevent ASB from taking place during the Halloween and Bonfire periods Safer Merton also erected a rapid deployment camera to the area for this period
 - 2.3.5.4 Problem solving work to prevent and protect residents from being exploited
 - 2.3.5.5 Maintained and improved Community MARAC meeting – sited by the Home Office as one of best practice
- 2.3.6 In 2020 our plan is to further our enforcement work and to refine our response further
- 2.3.7 Enforcement takes time, casework is complex and detailed, court cases more so and require staff to present cases to the bench
- 2.3.8 We will work with residents to ensure they understand our commitment to them in investigating ASB but also that they understand our “ask” of them for information and intelligence
- 2.3.9 We will also be clear as to where boundaries lie as some matters, viewed as ASB, are not such cases that allow for investigations and outcomes to occur

2.4 Burglary.

2.4.1 The number one concern for residents remains burglary as evidenced in our recent survey. 48% of over 600 respondents felt burglary was a fairly big or very big problem. Residential burglary has risen in each of the last 3 years



2.4.2 To support this work Safer Merton have undertaken a range of measures this year to promote awareness and deliver crime prevention messaging.

2.4.3 Completed an analytical profile on Residential Burglary to guide the efforts of Neighbourhood Watch and highlighted, to police and partners, the boroughs areas of greatest risk

2.4.3.1 Working with the Safer Neighbourhood Board commissioned the Police cadets to door knock the top 10 most affected roads to promote neighbourhood watch and encourage sign up

2.4.3.2 Relaunched Neighbourhood Watch newsletter to increase breadth and depth of conversation

2.4.3.3 Undertaken online and printed promotion of burglary tips

2.4.3.4 Worked with the police and probation to engage, support and divert convicted offenders from returning to crime whilst being strong when breaches of orders are made requiring further punishment

2.4.3.5 Undertaken a focused problem solving approach to burglary in our most affected wards working to improve their safety and awareness of how to protect their properties

2.4.3.6 Our work on burglary requires a whole host of partner engagement as it is such a complex crime to prevent. With our network of neighbourhood watch members we have a strong, engaged community whom are keen to support Safer Merton and the wider partnership in protecting communities. The neighbourhood watch membership is reliant on a constant stream of new, and interested, residents and as such all support from members is welcome

2.5 Wider updates

2.5.1 The Safer Merton service provides all members with quarterly newsletters capturing the most recent work and successful outcomes achieved

2.5.2 However in order to capture key information from other parts of the service:

2.5.3 Domestic Violence and abuse

2.5.3.1 16 Days against Violence and abuse Campaign – November-December 2019

2.5.3.2 New commissioning for IDVA and Refuge services. These went live 1st July 2019. Victim Support provides the IDVA contract and Hestia provides the refuge contract.

2.5.3.3 Training of staff around DVA

2.5.3.4 Review of the VAWG Strategy and business plan

2.5.3.5 The Safer Merton service and Community Safety Partnership are also preparing for the expected delivery of the new Domestic Abuse Bill. The government will introduce a Statutory Duty on Local Authorities to provide refuge and safe accommodation for domestic abuse survivors. Local Authorities will be required to develop and publish strategies that set out the range of support services available for those fleeing violent relationships, including refuge accommodation and specialist support from safety through to independence. The duty will be funded from April, 2021(subject to future spending reviews). The Bill will bring about the first ever statutory government definition of domestic abuse to specifically include economic abuse and controlling and manipulative non-physical abuse. The Bill would introduce a new definition of domestic abuse to the law of England and Wales as well as providing a detailed framework for two new civil protection orders - Domestic Abuse Protection Notices (DAPN) and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DAPO)

2.5.3.6 More information will be provided on this in due course

2.5.4 Hate crime

2.5.4.1 Hate Crime Advice Surgery in conjunction with Tell MAMA and partners. In February 2019 the first of Merton's Hate Crime Advice Surgeries launched. Taking place once a month at the Civic Centre, this service is the first of its kind in South London and sees representatives from Tell MAMA (Measuring Anti Muslim Attacks), Polish Family Association, Merton CIL and Inner Strength Network offer advice and support on hate crime and how to report it. This is a drop in service available to all victims of hate crime living in the borough.

2.5.4.2 *Hate Crime Awareness Week 2019 (HCAW)* – running 12th-19th October 2019, HCAW saw a programme of engagement events running at locations across the borough, including a successful launch event at Merton College for secondary school students in Merton. Over the course of the week Safer Merton, police and partners engaged with nearly 2,000 residents from a range of backgrounds face to face, raising awareness of hate crime and providing a strong reassurance message that hate crime in any form is not tolerated in this borough.

2.5.4.3 The design and launch of Merton's '*Protect Yourself from Hate*' video which was made in conjunction with Merton College and Leaders Unlocked – Safer Merton funded the production of a video on hate crime and how it affects young people developed, scripted and produced by students at Merton College. This video has been circulated to police schools officers and will be used as an educational resource for students aged 11-18yrs across the borough going forward.

2.5.5 Analytical functions

2.5.5.1 Designed and delivered a community safety survey which reached more residents than any previous survey of its type.

2.5.5.2 Delivered a range of analytical reports to support the strategic priority decision making including Domestic violence, and hate crime.

2.5.5.3 Exported our analytical skills to neighbouring borough Kingston to deliver their community safety strategic assessment

2.5.6 CCTV

2.5.6.1 Merton CCTV has been working in close partnership with Merton's Enforcement Team. The partnership resulted in multiple fines for the fly tipping as well as in seizure and subsequent crushing of the tipper lorry used by prolific offenders.

2.5.6.2 Work has begun to upgrade Merton's aging camera stock. We have upgraded the cameras in Mitcham Town Centre and Colliers Wood. There are ongoing projects to upgrade cameras in Wimbledon Town Centre and the car parks across the borough. Upgrading to high definition greatly improves our ability to detect and prevent crime.

2.5.6.3 Merton CCTV has been working with more partners than ever before. Our collaboration with Safer Merton, the police, housing and the Councillors among others has a big influence on the increased public safety and the wellbeing of Merton residents. We've had great success tackling knife crime, anti-social behaviour, drug-dealing and begging, helping Merton to remain one of the safest boroughs in the country.

2.5.7 Knife crime

2.5.7.1 *Knife Crime Event, May 2019* - In May, Safer Merton led on the delivery of a 'Communities and Knife Crime' event which took place at Morden Baptist Church. A range of partners were involved including the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade and their cadets, Jigsaw4u and Victim Support. There were also a number of talks and a Q&A, which allowed community members to pose questions to those individuals involved in the effort to tackle and prevent knife crime, and support and educate young people and victims. Over 100 people attended, and we received positive feedback and great engagement.

2.5.7.2 *Community Weapons Sweeps* – Safer Merton and the Metropolitan Police South West BCU teamed up to deliver a Community Weapons Sweep Offer. This involved providing training to residents, on how to undertake a sweep, and then subsequently organising sweeps to take place at strategic locations. This was also done in conjunction with Merton's Communications team, in order to add to public reassurance and provide information on what work the council is doing.

2.5.7.3 *Additional Partnership Engagement* – work has been undertaken to engage partners in the Knife Crime Plan, as well as engaging partners who do not feature in the plan, in order to ensure the work to tackle knife crime and awareness is spread as widely as possible in the borough. This has included presenting to the Sustainable Communities and Transport Partnership, Secondary and Primary Headteacher Forums respectively, and working with Crimestoppers and the 'Fearless' strand of their charity on a number of occasions to improve rates of reporting crime in the borough.

2.5.8 Other successes to note

2.5.8.1 Safer Merton, and partners, were successful in a bid to work with the Design Council to undertake a review of how the partnership works on standard and medium risk DV cases. Applications were taken from across the country to undertake this work over six months ending in March 2020. A report on findings will be made in April's overview and scrutiny board

- 2.5.8.2 Working with colleagues in Children's Schools and Families the service supported the bidding, and delivery of a Home Office funded scheme supporting young people at the edges of crime. The Early Intervention Youth Fund
- 2.5.8.3 The CCTV service has been working with colleagues in the South Wimbledon Business Association (SWBA) to help them source new CCTV coverage of their industrial site. The works, due to complete early 2020, will also feature connected cameras feeding back to LBMs CCTV control room where, via formal contract, the CCTV service will monitor their cameras. This work is the first phase of the service intention to become more commercial

3. REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS/PANELS

3.1 Safer Communities

- 3.1.1 Since the last update to Council on this strategic theme in July 2019, the Overview and Scrutiny Commission has had a further meeting with a focus on crime and community safety issues.
- 3.1.2 The BCU Commander and the Head of Safer Merton provided reports to the Commission's meeting in September 2019. The BCU Commander provided the latest crime statistics and answered members' questions on a wide range of issues including knife crime, stop and search, resourcing levels and policing of the Eastern Electrics festival.
- 3.1.3 Safer Merton's update report provided detail, as requested, of work on anti-social behaviour, knife crime and street drinking. The Commission noted the public health approach that has been adopted nationally and regionally in respect of knife crime.
- 3.1.4 The Commission endorsed the planned community weapon sweeps and recommended that these be publicised to all ward councillors. The Commission also resolved to endorse and promote the Safer Merton Community Safety Consultation.
- 3.1.5 Restorative justice and modern day slavery will be scrutinised at the March 2020 meeting and there will be further focus on crime and community safety, including an update on domestic violence, in April. The April meeting will be attended by the BCU Commander, the Chair of Merton's Stop and Search Monitoring Group, Head of Safer Merton and the Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector, Partnerships and Community Safety.

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

None for the purposes of this report.

5. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purposes of this report.

6. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purposes of this report.

7. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

None for the purposes of this report.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

None for the purposes of this report.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

None for the purposes of this report.

10. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

None for the purposes of this report.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None for the purposes of this report.

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