

## BRIEFING PAPER

### Safer Streets –North Stonehouse



#### Vision

Our proposal aims to reduce burglary (and the fear of it) by targeting 4 areas:

- Strengthening the local **environment** (including routes into the area to increase risk faced by offenders) ;
- Protecting **victims** and preventing future victimisation (targeted support for existing, repeat and potential victims);
- Working with **offenders** through a targeted restorative justice offer (existing and potential); and
- Assisting the **community** to reclaim community spaces and increase community strength and resilience.

#### Overview

The Office of Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has a longstanding partnership, supported by contracts or grant agreements with Plymouth City Council. We, 'The Council' have worked extensively with The OPCC on community safety projects and have a strong record of joint achievement. We have again partnered with The OPCC to secure funding from the Home Office to address community safety within North Stonehouse. We are also a named key stakeholder to deliver an element of the project which is linked to 'strengthening the local environment'. The OPCC will adopt its standard processes to manage the arrangement through contracts and grant agreements.

North Stonehouse (LSOAs Plymouth 29A / 29B) is an urban, densely populated residential area close to Plymouth City Centre, with a high pedestrian footfall of residents and transient population. Across the community, there are a significant proportion of residents experiencing a range of social, economic and health challenges including; poverty, mental health issues and drug and alcohol issues. Both LSOAs fall within the most deprived 10% nationally. (IMD 2019).

North Stonehouse locality historically witnesses the highest residential crime rates in Plymouth for acquisitive crime, violent crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse related criminality.

Burglary offences account for 27% of total acquisitive crime. Between 2013/14 and 2018/19, the number of burglary offences increased by 75% compared with an increase of 28% for the remaining acquisitive crime offence groups.

The 3-year average burglary rate of 13.8 crimes per 1000 population is four times higher than the Devon and Cornwall average (3.4 crimes per 1000 population) and three times higher than the Plymouth average (4.6 crimes per 1000 population). The average overall acquisitive crime rate of 51.4 crimes per 1000 population is also considerably over the threshold for the wider acquisitive crime benchmark (30.38). The OPCC's expected outcome includes improved and effective community action with a consequential reduction in demand on policing for the Force.

The OPCC's analysis of acquisitive crime has identified 'Burglary' as the projects primary focus. However, the steps to be taken to reduce burglary and improve public safety will include enhanced capable guardianship that will have a positive impact to prevent the wider range of crimes and incidents.

Further analysis of burglary offences in the bid area identified that the:

- Clusters (hotspots) for burglary offences (Ilbert Street; Patna Place; North Road West; Wyndham Street East and Wyndham Lane).
- Primary aggravating factor are drugs.
- Predominant offenders / victims are male.
- Main offenders are aged between 36-45.

- Main victims are aged between 26-35.
- Data shows no pattern in offending in terms of the time offences are taking place.

Vulnerability, poverty and social inequality were also identified as factors leading to acquisitive crime. These issues were of concern amongst some partner agencies and local community groups.

The main stolen items are:

- General Domestic Items
- Computer Equipment
- Telephone Equipment
- Cash

Small disposable items are often targeted such as mobile phones, electrical items, wallets, clothes and some pedal cycles. The characteristics of the area and proximity to the city centre make it easy for offenders to offload stolen property soon after the offence has taken place. Communal front doors and individual flat /bedsit doors are regularly being forced and compromised in order to commit burglary dwelling offences.

North Stonehouse is predominantly made up of low income, houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs), where residents are a mixture of council, housing association and private tenants. Ilbert Street and North Road West have large concentrations of HMOs and Guest Houses which predominately house people with drug and alcohol issues.

Engagement with community groups, partner agencies, local councillors and service providers has taken place through workshops. Community groups highlighted the ignorance of the historical value of the area and high levels of anti-social behaviour, the levels of drug paraphernalia littering the streets, lanes and parks as significant concern to residents, especially those with children. Community groups observed that people tend to move to the area because they are unable to afford anywhere else to live, are re-homed by statutory agencies, or experiencing a period of crisis in their life. These features combine to create a neighbourhood with little community cohesion and few amenities. There are a small number of resident groups instigating positive action but locally their capacity is constrained and the links between them are limited.

### **Funding**

The OPCC has successfully been awarded a total of £546,781 funding through the Home Office to deliver a Safer Streets project in North Stonehouse. To which we, 'The Council' are a named key partner to support the delivery of. The OPCC is the overall responsible authority and will maintain financial oversight and project leadership. Out of this total, £283,781.22 has been awarded to address the infrastructure of the bid area in partnership with us, 'The Council'. We will lead the project deliverables on CCTV, street lighting and provide a Project Management service to this and the wider projects programme delivery.

### **Proposal:**

#### **Environment**

##### CCTV

The results of our EVA and professional consultation has identified a series of actions:

- 3 cameras in Victoria Park and 1 in Patna Place to provide capable guardianship of key entry/exit routes for criminality and support space reclaim
- 1 additional camera at Ilbert Street hotspot junction
- 2 cameras on Wyndham Lane hotspot (1 new, 1 re-positioned)
- Network enhancement of Plymouth City Council private fibre network in the bid area to accommodate additional capacity and enhance security of connection for all cameras in bid area.

Additional landscaping to improve general visibility as well as for cameras to improve crime deterrence will be instigated.

##### Improved and enhanced street lighting

Street lighting assessments informed by the EVA have identified 3 specific areas for investment:

- Install lighting in Patna Park at 2 locations (replace single columns with double columns and 2 new locations)
- A 10% increase (40 units) in street lighting across the bid area to increase capable guardianship
- Adapt all lighting in area (400 units) to 'dimnable' lighting which is economical and environmentally friendly and will contribute to reducing crime.  
BMJ article *The effect of reduced street lighting on road casualties and crime in England and Wales: controlled interrupted time series analysis*: <https://jech.bmj.com/content/69/11/1118>

In addition to the above the project will address the following and work with relevant stakeholders which will be managed by a PCC Project Manager.

#### Dwelling security:

Hotspot areas identified in EVA of North Road West, Wyndham Lane, Ilbert Street and immediate vicinity:

- series of identified properties subject to repeat victimisation
- properties at key entry/escape routes where enhancement of CCTV/lighting has physical limitations.

Residents in these specific locations will be targeted to offer enhanced external security measures in form of locks, home CCTV and enhanced lighting. This work would be accompanied by crime prevention outreach via Neighbourhood Watch to ensure knowledge, understanding, and confidence.

#### Reclaiming public spaces:

Three specific areas of focus informed by the EVA and community consultations:

- Removing vandalism/creating pride: programme of graffiti clean-up - empowering, enabling and equipping the community (through Safer Stonehouse Board) to decide priority for removal and utilise own opportunities for street art to replace/deter
- Park improvements: intelligence shows us that the two parks in the area are being used as entry and exit routes for those committing burglary and other crime types. Spaces to be reclaimed through enhanced capable guardianship via resident use (alongside CCTV/lighting). To facilitate this some small works are required to renew/install infrastructure.
- Signposting: 'place / directional markers' to encourage use of spaces and to increase community identity and recognition of importance in local history

#### Introduction of active Neighbourhood Watch Schemes and Signage:

- Project to increase the number of active watch schemes and linking them into existing community groups.
- Creating a sustainable voluntary network which can continue to share crime prevention advice and reporting information beyond the bid period.
- *Launch a Feel Safe Scheme*: Small and relatively inexpensive works to be carried out at residential properties of individuals with a vulnerability, or an individual who is at increased risk. Focused on burglary risks.
- *Property Marking and crime prevention campaign, events and activities*: NHW will lead a project to distribute property marking materials and advise on their usage and to deliver wider crime prevention advice and events.

#### Crime prevention advice – train the trainer – and locally designed packs

- Delivery of 'train the trainer' crime prevention training to NHW volunteers, existing community groups, community leaders, third sector organisations working in the community and statutory partners (such as housing officers).

#### Offenders

- Existing restorative justice provider will expand services in a pilot to provide a victim-led service directly within this community, working in a holistic way with those who harm and are harmed as well as their families and the local community.
- Focus outcome is to reduce offending in the area, signpost / refer individuals into a wide range of local services

- Deliver RJ training for community RJ volunteers to provide resilience and capacity after the funding has ceased.

#### Community

Develop a stronger framework for future based on Asset Based Community Development through new Safer Stonehouse Board.

- Provide a small (£20,000) sparks fund to enable community cohesion/pride projects in the area and the reclaiming of open spaces.

#### Outcomes

The LSOA experiences on average 50 burglary offences per year and 134 other acquisitive crimes. The OPCC and partners are seeking to see a 25% to 35% reduction in burglary offences and a 20% reduction on wider acquisitive crimes. It is also anticipated that our interventions will have wider social and economic benefits on the community in the area – through the reclaiming of public spaces, enhanced community cohesion, enhanced confidence in police and local authority services and opportunity to improve the vision other parts of the city have of the area.

#### Sustainability

Our programme of activities has been designed based on evidence and expected impact, with consideration of how benefits will be sustained after the funding period. The investments associated with additional CCTV and street lighting, will be under a 5 year warranty from the suppliers and the maintenance and ongoing running costs will be met by Plymouth City Council as part of their wider network costs for CCTV and lighting.

#### Summary

This project is fully funded by an external body and does not require any capital investments from PCC. It leverages existing infrastructure, partnerships and will position the bid area to accommodate additional capacity and enhance security of connection for all cameras. The improvements to street lighting is economical and environmentally friendly and will contribute to reducing crime. There is also a significant benefit to improving the street lighting not just to deter crime – the BMJ have carried out detailed surveys across the UK to study the effects of adoption on strategy, comparing Traffic Collision and Crime Data sourced from police data across 62 local authorities. The data indicates an overall reduction on traffic collisions more interestingly, a reduction of Burglary, Robbery, Vehicle and Violence. If we choose not to proceed with this scheme The OPCC expects a fluctuating trend of increased burglary rates against a decreasing resource of policing.