

Public Document Pack



Safer Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 13 September 2022 at 6.30 p.m.
Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

S. Young

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Valerie Hill (Vice-Chair)	Labour
Councillor Sandra Baker	Labour
Councillor Victoria Begg	Labour
Councillor Laura Bevan	Labour
Councillor Irene Bramwell	Labour
Councillor Chris Carlin	Labour
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Angela McInerney	Labour
Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe	Liberal Democrats
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 511 8059 or e-mail gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 8 November 2022*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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1. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	
2. MINUTES	1 - 3
3. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item.	
4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	4 - 6
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 19 July 2022 at the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors N. Plumpton Walsh (Chair), V. Hill (Vice-Chair), Baker, Begg, Bevan, Bramwell, Loftus and Ratcliffe

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Carlin, A. McInerney and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Ashcroft, I. Booth, G. Ferguson, S. Semoff and P. Wright

Also in attendance: Councillor M. Lloyd Jones under Standing Order no. 33

**ITEM DEALT WITH
UNDER DUTIES
EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD**

	<i>Action</i>
SAF1 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	
<p>At the start of the meeting the Chair welcomed everyone and thanked the Vice Chair – Councillor V. Hill for her support over the previous 12 months.</p>	
SAF2 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
SAF3 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>It was reported that no questions had been received.</p>	
SAF4 DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE	
<p>The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Environment, which provided an update on the activities taking place across the Borough in response to domestic abuse and sexual violence. The Executive Board at its meeting on 16 June 2022 had approved a revised approach to delivering specialist domestic abuse support and services in Halton (Minute EXB 9 refers). Details of the SafeLives Whole Picture Approach,</p>	

adopted in Halton, was outlined in the report.

The report provided Members with further information on:

- the increase in domestic abuse cases since Covid-19. Halton had the highest rate of cases discussed at MARAC (compared within Cheshire) (Q3 2021/22);
- the Halton domestic abuse accommodation service;
- the domestic abuse service offer for children, young people and families; and
- Halton's bid to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, to improve the local service offer for victims in Halton, specifically those who had been subjected to historical domestic abuse that would not have been eligible for domestic abuse support within the current commissioned service. A total of £163,200 had been awarded over a three year period.

Arising from the discussion, the Board requested further information on the proposals for the Women's Centre and if this service would be rolled out across the Borough.

Operational
Director –
Community and
Environment

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF5 EMERGENCY PLANNING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Policy, Planning & Transport, which provided an update on the work undertaken by the Emergency Planning team during 2021-22.

Members received a presentation which highlighted the teams statutory duties to comply with the following legislation:

- the Civil Contingencies Act 2004;
- Control of Major Accident Hazard Regulations (COMAH) 2015; and
- Major Accident Hazard Pipeline (MAHP) Regulations 1996.

Members noted that Halton had a number of Emergency Plans in place with the aim to ensure resilience. These Plans were regularly updated and tested. The Board was advised on examples of local risks, details of the exercises that take place at COMAH sites in the Borough, information on Emergency Centres and the work the Emergency Planning team carried out with partner agencies both within Cheshire and Cross-Border and as part of

Cheshire Resilience Forum.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

SAF6 HALTON'S MODERN SLAVERY TOOLKIT

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Environment, which advised Members that a working group had been established to develop a new toolkit for practitioners to deal with issues of modern slavery and human trafficking in Halton. The toolkit could be used by officers to see what support was available and how they could escalate issues and to whom. A copy of the modern slavery toolkit was attached to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the work being undertaken to develop this toolkit and that the main responsibilities for victim support sits within safeguarding.

Meeting ended at 7.55 p.m.

REPORT TO: Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 13 September 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chair will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO:	Safer Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	13 September 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director – Community & Environment
PORTFOLIO:	Community Safety
SUBJECT:	Creation of a Community Safety & Protection Division.
WARDS:	Boroughwide

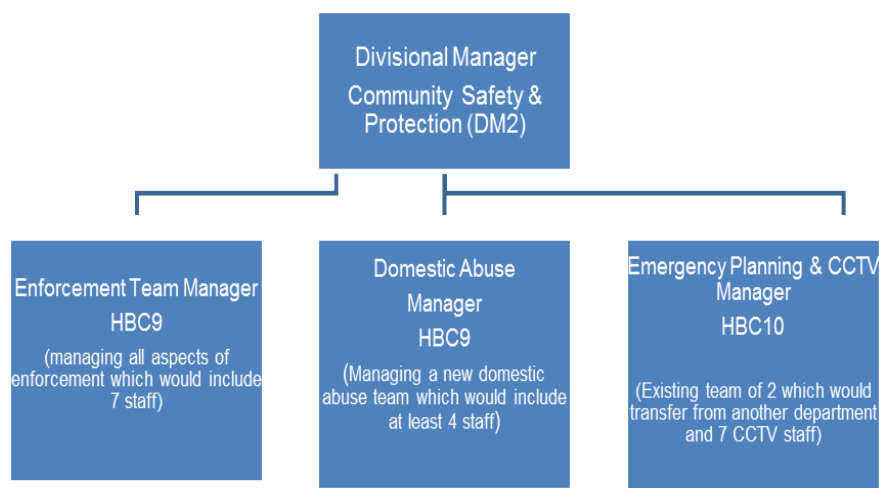
1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the members of the Board about the creation of a new Community Safety & Protection Division that will bring together a number of disparate activities into one service area answerable to one Portfolio holder.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At present there is a Community Safety section that sits within the Community & Environment Department. It has a number of statutory duties (including some that have only been imposed upon the council recently). Other related statutory duties are carried out elsewhere in the Council and do not sit within this section which makes it difficult to coordinate a strategic approach. The section also has responsibility for aspects of enforcement and it is responsible for partnership working with the police.
- 3.2 Other aspects of both safety (community and corporate) and enforcement sit within other parts of the Council which sometimes makes coordination difficult and has resulted in a lack of understanding by Members, as to who should be responsible for certain aspects of work.
- 3.3 In order to strengthen the Council's approach within this area of work the Operational Director of Community & Environment has proposed the creation of a Community Safety & Protection Division that would sit within his department. The new Division is to be a one stop shop for all aspects of community safety, corporate safety and enforcement. The division, under a Divisional Manager, would manage the CCTV section, enforcement officers, a new domestic abuse team and emergency planning. It would take the form shown in the table below.



3.4 The proposal was discussed with The Leader and the Portfolio Holder late last year and has been agreed at Senior Management level last month. It has been through the Management/Trade Union Steering Group and consultation opened with staff on Monday 22 August 2022 and is currently ongoing. Consultation will close on 21 September 2022 after which directly affected staff will be put at risk and the recruitment process will begin (there are enough jobs within the new Division for all of the directly affected staff in the current services).

3.5 The intention is to have the new Community Safety & Protection Division in place by no later than 1 February 2023. The Division will fall within the remit of the Safer Halton portfolio.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The creation of the new Division will help the Council to deliver on its policies around community safety, community protection, enforcement and emergency planning.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The creation of the new Division will deliver a £32k saving.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The creation of the new Division will have a positive impact on this priority through the work that it will undertake to make neighbourhoods safer and through the work it will do around domestic abuse.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The creation of the new Division creates new job opportunities within the service.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The Divisions enforcement activities and its emergency planning function will contribute directly to ensuring a Healthy Halton.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The Divisions work with the police, its enforcement activities, its CCTV function and its emergency planning will contribute directly to a Safer Halton.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The work of the Division will have an impact on Halton's Urban Renewal by making neighbourhoods safer and thereby creating confidence.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with the proposal.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no equality and diversity issues.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
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None under the meaning of the act

REPORT TO:	Safer Policy & Performance Board
DATE:	13 September 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director – Community & Environment
PORTFOLIO:	Community Safety
SUBJECT:	Race Equality Work in Halton
WARDS:	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To inform the members of the Board about the ongoing work across the Borough to raise issues related to race equality and encourage a more tolerant society.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In March 2021, following the Black Lives Matter global movement, Steve Rotherham, the Metro Mayor, supported by the other LCR Leaders and Chief Executives, issued a Statement Of Intent, detailing how the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority will tackle institutional and systemic racism.

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/metro-mayor-sets-out-declaration-of-intent-on-race-equality/>

- 3.2 Since then, Halton has played a key role in the work of the Steering Group and the initiatives which are part of the work programme. This has included things like the development of a Black Business Hub, the World Reimagined Art project, Anthony Walker Foundation Hate Crime Project, and a BAME LA Staff Network.
- 3.3 Another key element of the work programme is a dedicated Race Equality Training Programme for all local authority staff across the City Region. For Halton that means 2,500 staff. Focus groups and one-to-one interviews have taken place to ensure that people's lived experiences are embedded into the training programme.
- 3.4 Attached as appendix A is a list of other pieces of work which highlight aspects of Equality and Diversity activities that have been going on across Halton over the last couple of years, which Members may find of interest.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct policy implications from this report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

There are no direct implications for this priority.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications for this priority.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

There are no direct implications for this priority.

6.4 A Safer Halton

There are no direct implications for this priority.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications for this priority.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no direct equality and diversity issues, although the report is helping to raise awareness of the ongoing work to make Halton a better place to live for everyone, regardless of whatever protected characteristic they might have.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None.

Appendix A

Ongoing Equality and Diversity Activity Across HBC

Corporate Training Programme now has modules on Uncomfortable Truth, Uncomfortable Conversation and Unconscious Bias

HBC has recently been reaccredited for Disability Confident Leader (DWP benchmark and award programme)

Data collection processes and performance indicators are being reviewed, refreshed and redesigned to include more equality, diversity, inclusion information - previously not always included. So for example at the moment we can't say how many businesses are owned by BAME individuals. Also, there is work going on which could be included but isn't currently being captured, especially around things like inclusion.

Four BAME staff have taken part in a dedicated BAME Management Development Programme at LJMU, and several are involved with the LCR LA Staff Network.

Funding has been identified to ensure Halton's participation in the training programme to be delivered by the LCR Race Equality Hub.

LCR BAME Business Hub information has been shared with the Chamber and a couple of BAME business owners have been signposted and encouraged to engage with the Hub. One in particular is interested in sitting on the Board.

Information about The World Reimagined circulated to schools (part of the LCR Race Equality work – an education project looking at the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade)

Halton is involved with an LCR project around Black History Month, working with libraries and Writing on the Wall.

Elected Members seminar on Halton's Changing Demographics (asylum seekers and refugees), and modern slavery and human trafficking - which highlighted ways to report concerns, hate crimes and identify vulnerable victims. Gets Councillors to see population as more than just "white Christians".

Working with Anthony Walker Foundation (AWF) on Hate Crime Project. Presentations at various Boards/Partnership meetings.

Working with Heartstones Charity – use storytelling to focus on learning to live together and accept people for who they are – in schools and libraries. All are working towards a National Book Festival in November.

Various raising awareness sessions delivered to community organisations about asylum seekers and refugees and other vulnerable migrants.

Our Halton funding ring-fenced to help 3rd sector organisations accessing interpretation and translation support.

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Please note that this is not a complete list – there will be things going on that the report writer is unaware of.

REPORT TO:	Safer Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	13 th September 2022
REPORTING OFFICER:	Operational Director – Community & Environment
PORTFOLIO:	Community Safety
SUBJECT:	Community Trigger Update
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update the Community Safety Partnership on the amendments to the current Community Trigger scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report and action plan be noted; and**
- 2) **The Partnership consider the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Community Trigger across Halton

The Community Trigger element of the Home Offices Reform of anti-social behaviour powers initially was launched on the 1st October 2014. Updated guidance was published in respect of Community Trigger in January 2021. This document outlines how we will be dealing with requests/applications for the Community Trigger within Halton.

- 3.2 This process will be managed for Halton within the Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) and will be under regular review through close working arrangements in place with the Managers of each of the Local Strategic Partnership across the Sub Region.

As a result of the amendments to the guidance, there will be a formal press release with information on the Trigger and who to contact for further information within Halton Council with a similar message from Cheshire Constabulary and The Police and Crime Commissioners Office.

4.0 TRIGGER THRESHOLDS

4.1 It is proposed for agreement, from the SHP board, that the threshold to be met in order for a Trigger application be accepted as;

- A complainant or a third party (with the victim's consent), such as a family member, friend or local elected representative (a councillor or MP) has reported the same problem **3 or more times in the past 6 months** to the Council, Police or their Landlord and no or inappropriate action has been taken in line with the relevant agencies policy and procedure.

In addition to this, the application process will not be able to continue under the following circumstances:

- If someone has reported Anti-Social Behaviour and received a service but the problems and the investigation are on-going;
They will be advised to contact the agency they are working with to tell them what is happening
- If someone has reported Anti-Social Behaviour and received a service but they're unhappy with the service received or action taken;
They will be advised to submit a complaint under the agency's complaints procedures
- If there is already a formal complaint with the relevant agency/agencies underway with reference to the incidents that have been reported.

5.0 TRIGGER PROCESS

5.1 Guidance will be available to members of the public, agencies and members/Cllrs on our Halton Website. This outlines the Trigger, what it is for, how to apply and also what can be expected following an application. A link to the application form is also provided.

Discussions are currently ongoing that could see Cheshire Constabulary have this information on their "Cheshire wide" website, which will direct members of public to the correct LA contact for more enquiries about the Trigger.

Consultation will be started with the main Registered Social Providers with reference to putting information on their websites about the trigger, directing anyone who would like to apply for the trigger to the Halton webpage. It is anticipated that information on the trigger will also be included on the registered social landlords' newsletters/bulletins.

The Manager responsible for Community Safety will receive all applications for a Community Trigger and will then liaise with the relevant agencies in order to test the threshold and gather further information in order to progress the application.

A “SPOC” (Specialised point of contact) across Halton will be identified for each agency and initial SPOC’s had already been agreed and identified by some of the agencies who we believe will be key partners in the “trigger” applications and resolutions.

There will be an identified SPOC whom will investigate any reported incidents on the trigger application and forward to the Community Safety Manager. There will also be a SPOC (who may be the same contact) for attending any Local Problem Solving group if the trigger application requires this action.

The table below will show the anticipated identified SPOC’s once the consultation has concluded and those agencies who we are currently liaising with.

As Safer Halton Partnership will be the centre referral point for application for the trigger, formal approval of the process is needed from SHP board. Reporting of the trigger process will be submitted to SHP board periodically along with regular reviews across the sub-region.

All Trigger applications/enquiries to go to Community Safety Manager:		
Agency	SPOC for incident and case research on trigger applications	SPOC for review of trigger meeting/Local Problem solving group
Police		TBC
Environmental Health (also representing licensing and other relevant depts.)		
Halton Housing	TBC	TBC
Plus Dane Housing	TBC	TBC
Other registered Providers	TBC	TBC
Halton ASB Team	Equivalent area ASB Co-ordinator	
Youth Offending/Youth Engagement Service	TBC	
Clinical Commissioning Group (Health)	TBC	TBC
Probation	TBC	TBC

Timescales (Previously agreed and not changed)

- Case Review Officer will request case information from **SPOCS by email with COMMUNITY TRIGGER REQUEST** as the subject within **3 working days** of receipt of completed Trigger Application
- Spocs will be given **7 working days** from receipt of request to return to information to Case Review Officer
- Case Review Officer will write to applicant within **15 working days** from receipt of Trigger request to respond to applicant with decision
- If Trigger **not met** case can be referred to local Problem Solving Group for discussion (refer to procedure document), action planning and relevant contact with applicant (where applicable).
- If Trigger **not met** and case is not referred to Local Problem Solving Group the applicant should be referred back to the agency dealing with their original complaint via the spocs below.
- If Trigger **is met** then panel should be convened (refer to Community Safety to convene a panel)
- If Trigger is met but further information is required before panel can be convened, spocs should be re-contacted and given **10 working days (or 15 working days for complex cases as determined by the Case Review Officer)** to return further information.
- Panel should be convened and formal review concluded within **60 working days** from receipt of original application and applicant informed of findings by ASB Case Review Officer.
- Applicants can **appeal** decision if trigger **not met**. ASB Case Review Officer will forward to Community Safety Manager for independent review of decision by sub-regional Colleagues
- Where the trigger **is met** and full review takes place the applicant can **appeal** the decision. Case review officer will inform the community safety manager for independent review by sub-regional colleagues.
- **Appeals must be submitted within 20 working days** of notification of decision on Trigger being met or outcome of review.
- ASB Case Review Officer review or **Independent Review must take place within 15 working days** of receipt of appeal.

6.0 APPEALS

6.1 Threshold not met:

If an applicant appeals the decision that the threshold has not been met, this will go back to the Community Safety Manager to review and the final decision will be with them. Even through the trigger has not been met, the partnership will do it's best to see if there is any way that the application can be given assistance with their issue (consideration will be given for referral to the Anti-Social Behaviour Team for instance).

Trigger outcome appeal:

If the Trigger threshold has been met, but the outcome of the review is appealed, this must be done in writing, this will go to an "Independent Scrutiny

Officer” within a neighbouring Cheshire Area responsible for Community Safety. Outcomes of this will then be sent to the applicant and the decision will be final.

The table below details those individuals whom will be responsible for Cheshire area independent reviews on appeal:

Appeals against application not meeting trigger threshold – final decision lies with the Partnerships manager responsible for Community Safety		
Appeals against Trigger application review (for those applications which meet the threshold);		
Independent Scrutiny Officer Cheshire East	Richard Christopherson	Locality Manager - Community Safety Richard.christopherson@cheshireeast.gov.uk Cheshire East Council Partnership Unit Macclesfield Police Station Brunswick Street Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 1HQ 0300 123 5010
Independent Scrutiny Officer Chester and West	Michelle Nicholson	Community Safety Manager Cheshire West and Chester Council 01244 972360 michelle.nicholson@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk HQ, 58 Nicholas Street, Chester CH1 2NP
Independent Scrutiny Officer Warrington	Theresa Whitfield	Warrington Community Safety Partnership Manager
Independent Scrutiny Officer Halton	Mike Andrews	Community Safety Manager Safer Halton Partnership Halton Borough Council Municipal Building Kingsway WIDNES Cheshire WA8 7QF Lync: 0151 511 7695 Mobile: 07500 089784 mailto:mike.andrews@halton.gov.uk

- The trigger thresholds have been agreed following discussions with LSP Managers across the Sub Region based previous experience of Trigger applications received following the introduction of Triggers in 2014.
- Following the amendments to the guidance LSP Managers across the Sub Region have agreed to continue with the management of applications received though should an increase in applications prove evident this will impact on the resource capability and will require review.

The Safer Halton Partnership will monitor and review the Trigger process to include the following information

- How many requests made
 - Which did not hit the trigger criteria
 - Which did hit the criteria
 - Which went to review
- Which received recommended further action where the trigger was not met.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The policy implications of the review relate primarily to the Safer Halton priority. However this is a cross cutting work area which has wider implications on other areas of council business.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

9.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the health, safety and well-being of young people.

9.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications for this priority.

9.3 A Healthy Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

9.4 A Safer Halton

9.5 The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

9.6 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications for this priority.

10.0 RISK ANALYSIS

10.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

11.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

11.1 **None at present**

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

12.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Safer Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 13 September 2022

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Community & Environment

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Cannabis Grow Awareness Scheme

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the policy and performance board on the Cheshire Constabulary pilot scheme to raise awareness around cannabis growing within the private rented housing sector (Police Operation 'Instinct').

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) **the report and presentation be noted; and**
- 2) **The Partnership consider the information presented and raise any questions of interest or points of clarification following the presentation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The “underground,” cannabis market in the UK is worth an estimated £3 Billion*, with 29.4% of 16 – 59 year olds in England and Wales believed to have now used the drug during their lifetime. (**Statista Survey 2022*).
- 3.2 Organised Crime Groups (OCG's) are using increasingly sophisticated methods to ensure yields are maximised and detection opportunities are limited; increasing profits along the way. There has also been an increase in cannabis produced on a personal level, as opposed to cultivated in more commercial circumstances.
- 3.3 This kind of growing activity can cause thousands of pounds worth of damage to the properties in which it is carried out and can pose a serious risk to the public due to the bypassing of the electrical supply. As a result police officers will be speaking to landlords and letting agents across Halton, in order to make them aware of the signs that would indicate that a cannabis factory might be being operated in one of their properties and what to do if they suspect that there is one.
- 3.4 This pilot scheme aims to raise awareness among a group of people who are best placed to help with this issue of drugs factories and it will increase awareness

thereby leading to more detections. It is also important that landlords understand that if they know that a tenant is growing cannabis on their property, and they fail to inform the police, technically they are guilty of an offence. The punishment depends on how much cannabis is involved but can range from 12 months to five years in jail and/or a fine.

Spotting the signs of potential cannabis growing:

- Strong, sickly smells different to the smell of cannabis being smoked
- Excessive security
- High levels of condensation
- Lots of visitors - often at unsociable hours
- Lack of snow frost/snow on roofs in times of cold weather
- Bright lights on in the house during the day and night
- Constant buzz of a ventilation system
- Cannabis growing equipment, for example lighting and ventilation equipment.
- Windows constantly covered
- Windows blacked out either using black plastic or heavy fabric
- High levels of heat and condensation in a unit, resulting in peeling paint or mildewed carpet. Heavy condensation at the windows may also be seen
- Lots of cables, or electrical wiring being tampered with and bypassed circuitry
- A sudden jump/fall in electricity bills
- Bin bags full of vegetable material being thrown away. The stalks and roots of cannabis plants are discarded when the plants are harvested.

3.5 Attached as appendix A is the presentation outlining the Pilot scheme and the local problem across the Cheshire Constabulary Northern division (Halton/Warrington).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The policy implications of the review relate primarily to the Safer Halton priority. However this is a cross cutting work area which has wider implications on other areas of council business.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the health, safety and well-being of young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

There are no direct implications for this priority.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 The Community Safety Service as a universal service impacts on the Health, safety and well-being of the residents of Halton.

6.6 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no direct implications for this priority.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 **None at present**

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

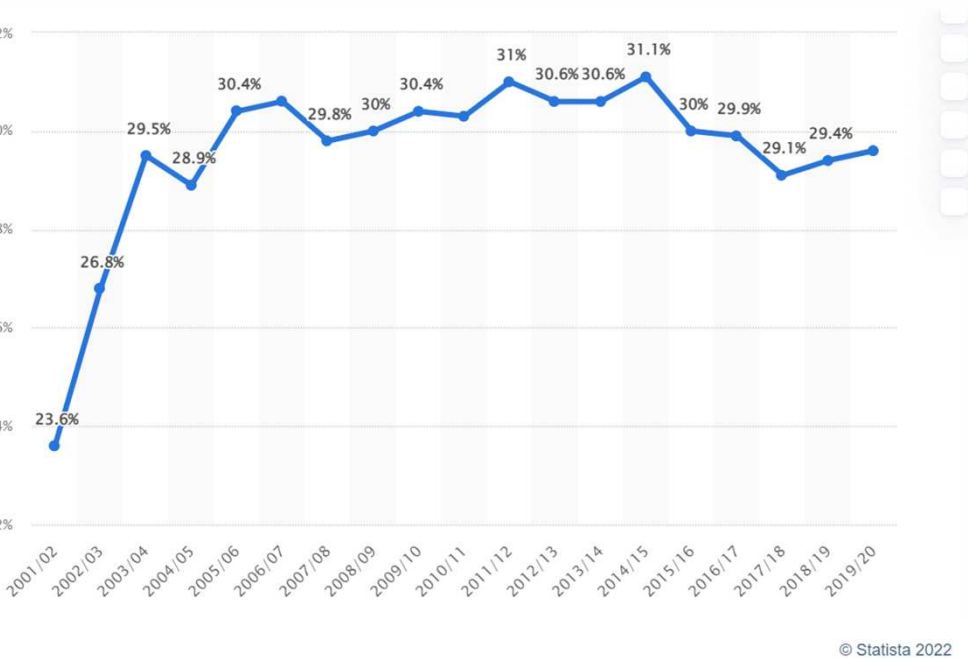
Op Instinct.

Cannabis Grow Aware Scheme (CGA).

*Sgt Anthony Sullivan – Northern Problem Solving
Team.*

Cannabis: What's the problem?

Proportion of 16 to 59 year old's in England and Wales reporting use of cannabis ever in their lifetime from 2001/02 to 2019/20



The “underground,” cannabis market in the UK is worth an estimated £3 Billion*, with 29.4% of 16 – 59 year olds in England and Wales believed to have now used the drug during their lifetime.

(Statista Survey 2022).

Organised Crime Groups (OCG's) are using increasingly sophisticated methods to ensure yields are maximised and detection opportunities are limited; increasing profits along the way.

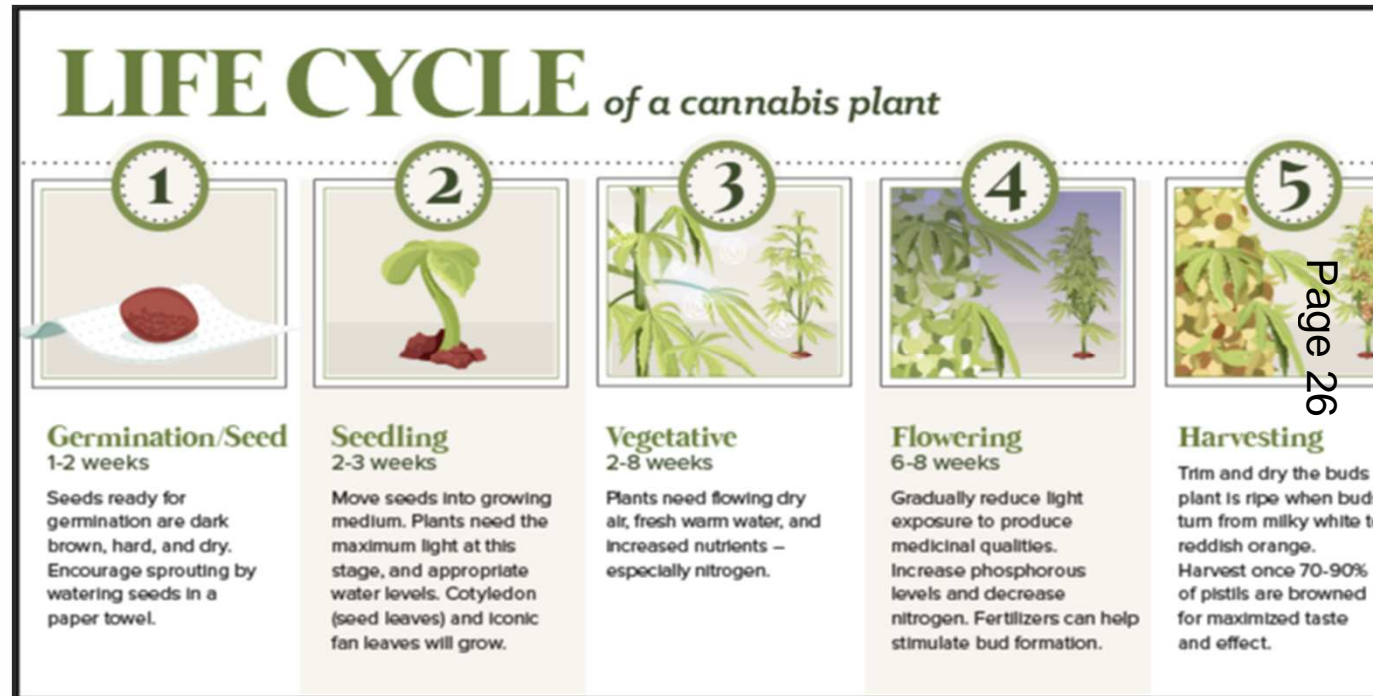
There has also been an increase in cannabis produced on a “personal,” level, as opposed to cultivated in more commercial circumstances.

(*Institute of Economic Affairs report 2021.)

canning: *What's the problem?*

The cannabis life cycle is shown opposite this is not an exact science and the grow rate will depend on the knowledge and experience of the person setting up the hydroponic system.

The average plant price in Cheshire varies with yields netting between **£1000- £1400** a plant depending on the strain and care taken in the production process.



canning: *What's the problem?*

data was needed and obtained from the following:

- Cheshire Constabulary.
- Halton Borough Council / Warrington Borough Council /
- Chamber of Commerce.
- Cheshire Fire and Rescue.

identified issues so far:

- Private rent properties being utilised for grows.
- Criminals taxing cannabis growers (often with force).
- Fires at residential & business properties attributed to grows.
- Environmental issues associated with cannabis waste.



Analysis: What is contributing to the problem?.

Information suggests that there is a link between landlords renting out their properties and a disproportionate number of cannabis farms in these properties.

81% of grows take place in private rented properties (commercial or residential).

Little is being done to prevent and deter criminals from using private rented properties.

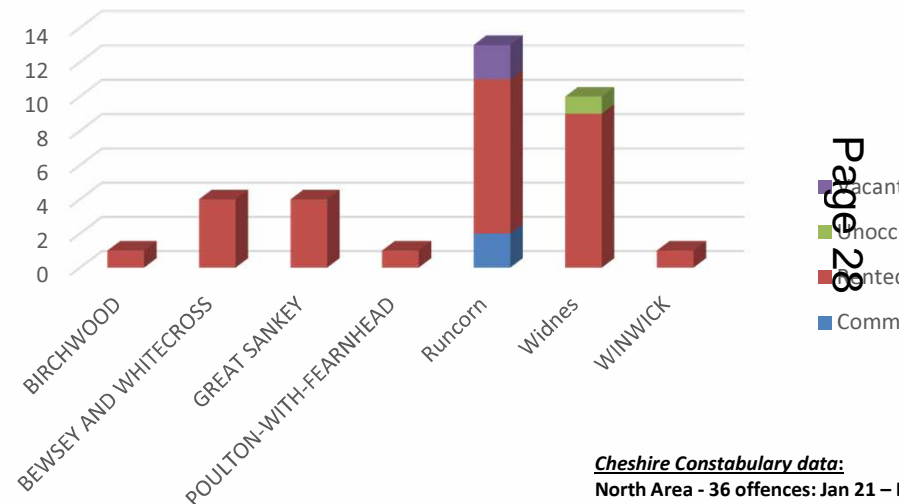
Cannabis grows place a large demand on police resources.

Cost the owner of property between **5k-10k** in damages.

8.3% of cannabis grows in the sample group resulted in house fires.

There is an environmental cost from the fly tipping of the cannabis grow waste.

A check on a property between **weeks 8-10** would make it *unsuitable* for growing cannabis as it takes 8-12 weeks to grow.



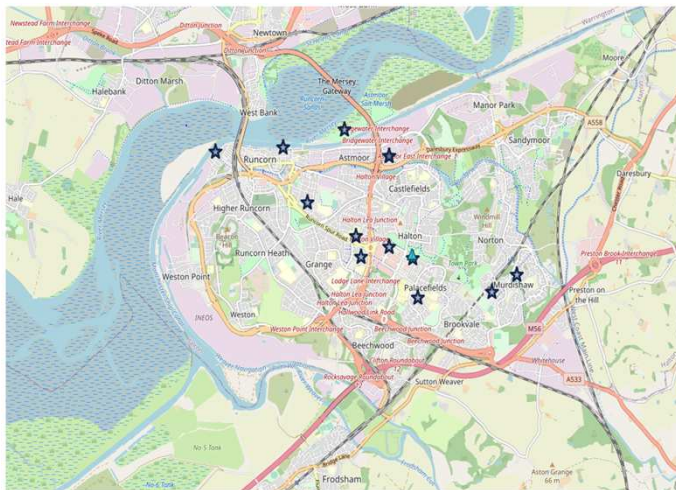
Cheshire Constabulary data:
North Area - 36 offences: Jan 21 -

Analysis: What is contributing to the problem?.

Location:

Across North Local Policing Unit (LPU) there is no identified hot spot production area.

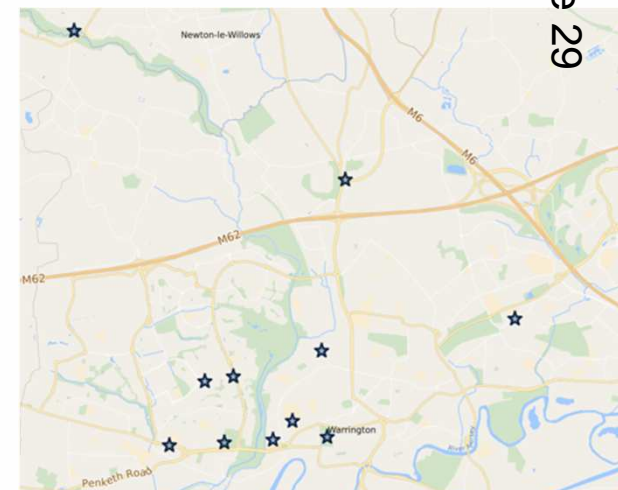
Runcorn



Widnes



Warrington



Analysis: What is contributing to the problem?.

Victims:

81% of the properties used to grow cannabis were rented either privately or through a letting agent. The other properties were vacant commercial / residential or owner-occupied.

(Cheshire Constabulary data: North Area - 36 offences: Jan 21 – Dec 21)

It is estimated that the average cost for damage caused to property involved in the production of cannabis was between **£5k &**

£10K

(Association of British Insurers (ABI) report 2020).



Response: *What can we do to improve the problem?*

Media Profile – Cheshire Constabulary and Local Council media. Constabulary & Councils to work in partnership to promote the scheme.

Leaflet Drop (Housing Providers/social landlords etc.) Promote the scheme and idea.

Promote the scheme through **Crime Stoppers**.

Sign up scheme (Cannabis Grow Aware (CGA)) promote the checks/visits & benefits of this to landlords and monitor uptake.

Op Initiators – Problem Solving Team to visit top 10 addresses in each area. All addresses in the sample group are to be re checked and CGA stickers to be placed in the windows.

Liaise with Royal Mail re increasing calls to crime stoppers (Smell/sealed letterboxes)

Landlords who avoid the scheme, and where evidence/intelligence suggest involved in cannabis grows will have all their properties as a whole scrutinised.



Response: *What can we do to improve the problem?*

ual:

of CGA stickers on properties is aimed at targeting the psychology of the offender so his or her perception of being caught would deter them from using the address.

Journal of Applied Criminology, Crime and Law 6(1), 45-59, 2000).

certainty of being caught is a vastly more powerful deterrent than the punishment:

Research shows clearly that the *chance of being caught* is a vastly more effective deterrent than even draconian punishment.

Annual Institute of Justice Report - Department of Justice (2016).

Police deter crime by increasing the perception that criminals will be caught and punished:

Police deter crime when they do things that strengthen a criminal's perception of the certainty of being caught. Strategies that use the police as "sentinels," such as hot spots policing, are particularly effective.

*Criminal's behavior is more likely to be influenced by seeing a police officer with handcuffs and a radio than by law increasing penalties - **Perceptual Deterrence Theory.***

London Handbook of Criminological Theory (2012).



Assessment: *Did the response work?*

