

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

19 September 2017



<b>Title</b>	Anti-social Behaviour in Staines-upon-Thames		
<b>Purpose of the report</b>	To note		
<b>Report Author</b>	Keith McGroary		
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Nick Gething	<b>Confidential</b>	No
<b>Corporate Priority</b>	Clean and Safe Environment		
<b>Recommendations</b>	To note the report		
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	Not Applicable		

## 1. Key issues

- 1.1 During the last 12 months period, the level of crime and anti-social behaviour has risen within the Staines-upon-Thames town centre area. In the financial period of 2016 – 2017 compared to the previous year, there was a 19% increase in reports of anti-social behaviour; this is a rise from 443 to 527 incidents. Despite an overall reduction of anti-social behaviour (ASB) across the Borough, Staines-upon-Thames town area was the only location to have an increase of ASB incidents.
- 1.2 With regards to crime, Staines-upon-Thames town area had an 11.9% increase in the total number of reports made to the police compared to the previous financial year of 2015-16. Compared to the rest of the Borough, this was just above the average of an 8.1% increase across Spelthorne as a whole.
- 1.3 Staines-upon-Thames has been a regular destination for specific communities who visit on a Sunday afternoon and evening, particularly the younger generation who historically have met for initiating courtships.
- 1.4 These communities belong to the wider Traveller community. Defining the Traveller community is very complex and may include people who live on static caravan sites, in houses or indeed have a truly nomadic lifestyle.
- 1.5 This results in particularly large groups of smartly dressed young people spending long periods of time in the town. They can often be quite loud and draw attention to themselves, but are not committing any crime or anti-social behaviour. The impact of these large groups of youths does however, have

an effect on many of the people who use Staines-upon-Thames as a destination to shop, eat out and relax; in the main there have been anecdotal reports of feeling intimidated by the presence of these large groups of young people. Anecdotally it has been reported that visitors to the town are put off from visiting Staines-upon-Thames due to such fears, albeit unfounded.

- 1.6 There have been occasions when very small numbers of these visitors have committed anti-social behaviour or incidents of petty crime; however this group are also often tarnished with the blame for all such ASB or crime, when in fact it is often committed by local offenders not connected to the specific community groups.
- 1.7 Over a number of years there have been various attempts to deal with the problem / perceived problem. This has included bringing in experienced people who work within local government and also a member of the Traveller community, whose role it is to act as an intermediary, to help resolve issues and enhance community cohesion. There have also been occasions when the police have allocated additional resources to patrol the town on a Sunday due to public demand.
- 1.8 A number of premises have felt the need to employ additional security personnel on a Sunday to help protect their premises from misuse or from ASB or potential crime. This has obviously added to the cost of running a business and has a potentially profound impact on potential profits.
- 1.9 In response to public concerns Surrey Police targeted the area with additional resources. Incidents dealt with (Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August) included a report of a pick up being used to bump into a member of security at Two Rivers (no injury and not as drastic as it sounds). Two arrests were made for common assault and public order. Out of this there was one successful community resolution and another being considered and a person reported for no vehicle insurance and driving without due care and attention. 2 tickets were also issued for littering and those offenders were required to clear up their nitrous oxide canisters.

## **2. Options analysis and proposal**

- 2.1 In September, Surrey Police will be introducing a 6 month pilot using a 'small but effective' neighbourhood team and some dedicated Specials. The highest demand/perceived demand is on a Sunday between 1300 and 2100 hours. This is when the public, Councillors and businesses have informed the police that there are significant ASB issues.
- 2.2 Surrey Police are developing a 3 pronged response to the issues raised concerning ASB on a Sunday:
  - Committed to providing a resource on Sundays to deal with ASB and 'any youths who cause it'. This may include some dynamic Special Constables to help take ownership of the problem.
  - Work with the community and businesses to deal with the problem/perceived problem. This could include extra training for security staff, possibly additional powers given to them to deal with ASB.

- To change the mind-set of the community and businesses with regards their perception that this is a problem created by the Travelling Community
- 2.3 The Elmsleigh Centre and the Two Rivers employ their own security staff, but they only patrol their respective shopping centres. The Business Improvement District (BID) has identified a lack of overt security in the High Street and are in the process of recruiting 2 Town Rangers who would provide both a visible presence in terms of improving confidence for the visitor, and provide an ambassador role on behalf of the town.
- 3. Financial implications**
- 3.1 There are no financial implications for the Partnership to be considered within this report. Surrey Police and the BID have already given this consideration.
- 4. Other considerations**
- 4.1 Some of the visitors are from specific community groups and as such have a legal status of belonging to an ethnic minority group. Any responses must be based solely upon the basis of the problems in an area and not the ethnicity of those who may visit such locations.
- 5. Timetable for implementation**
- 5.1 The BID expect to have recruited Town Rangers by December 2017 and Surrey Police have already commenced work on their 3 pronged response.

#### **Background papers:**

**Appendices: Appendix A: Staines Annual Crime Stats April 16 to March 17**  
**Appendix B: July Crime Staines-upon-Thamesv2 (002)**  
**Appendix C: ASB 2016-17**  
**Appendix D: ASB Latest Stainesv2 (002)**