

**EXTRACT FROM SCRUTINY PROGRAMME COMMITTEE MINUTES –**  
**14 MARCH 2016**

149 **CRIME & DISORDER SCRUTINY - PROGRESS ON SAFER SWANSEA**  
**PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE. QUESTIONS TO CO-CHAIRS:**

Chief Superintendent Joe Ruddy (South Wales Police) and Chris Sivers (Director of People) attended to provide a progress report on Safer Swansea Partnership Performance and answer questions.

A presentation was given which encompassed:

- Recorded Crime Trends;
- Domestic Abuse;
- Sexual Offences;
- Robbery;
- Burglary;
- Hate Crime;
- Autocrime;
- Other Thefts;
- Criminal Damage and
- Sectors Recording Biggest Crimes.

The Chief Superintendent stated that crime has reduced over 5 years, making Swansea one of the safest Cities in the UK to live.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 the revised Home Office Counting Rules came into effect. The Home Office Counting Rules provide a national standard for the recording and counting of 'notifiable' offences recorded by police forces in England and Wales (known as 'recorded crime').

Despite the changes made to how crime is recorded Swansea has only experienced a 0.7% increase (118 more offences) in recoded crime during 2015 compared against a 1.3% increase in recorded crime across the South Wales Police area.

Violent crime continues to be a priority for the Community Safety Partnership. It is important to note that while reported incidents of overall violent crime increased by 17% (826) the sub-category violence with injury actually reduced by 0.5% (10). The largest increases were seen in the 'less serious' sector of this crime category (assault without injury, harassment, public order offences).

He referred to the work being undertaken with Licensees and TASS (Tackling Alcohol Substance in the Community). The main theme and priority for Safer Swansea Partnership was domestic violence. 29.3% of all violent crime was domestic related.

The Director of People referred to the 13.9% increase in domestic violence since last year which was a significant increase in terms of how this is managed across the board. A strategic group had been established to deal with this, and work was underway to embed this within Partnership. Additionally, a systems review had been undertaken. Changes were in the process of being implemented. The domestic violence 'one stop shop' which had opened last year had proved to be a success.

It was noted that domestic abuse was a Local Service Board top priority. All Councillors will be offered domestic abuse training from the Summer of 2016. The Welsh Government have revised the funding arrangements for Domestic Abuse and work was underway regarding a plan of how this money would be spent. Progress was being made to analyse the data and understand the issues surrounding the high levels of domestic abuse and implications for children in Swansea.

The Chief Superintendent referred to the Police and Crime Reduction Plan in order to increase the level of recording. He referred to the high level of crime in Wind Street and the need to draw resources from other areas of the City.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Superintendent stated that there was an upsurge of incidents of domestic abuse on sports international days.

The Chief Superintendent referred to an increase of 17.2% (52 more cases) in respect of sexual offences, many of which were historic cases. He referred to the work of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which provided emotional and practical support. The increased figures were deemed to be a success in providing victims with the confidence to come forward.

Members' noted that:

- There had been a reduction of 2.9% in relation to robbery;
- There had been a reduction of 13% in relation to burglary;
- Hate Crimes has increased by 52 in 2015 and racial crimes had increased to 50;
- There had been a 11.2% increase in auto crime;
- There had been no increases in other crimes such as shop lifting;
- There had been a 2.5% increase in criminal damage and a restorative approach had been adopted in dealing with such issues;
- The sectors recording biggest crime were Gorseinon, Townhill (and other areas);
- The emerging crime areas included cyber crime; child sexual exploitation; community cohesion; new psycho-active substances and the student population.

In response to Member questions, the Chief Superintendent stated that:

- The Police had met with students during ‘freshers week’ to raise awareness of burglaries and the need to secure properties. It was felt that police operations and close working with the Universities has contributed to a reduction in burglaries;
- The Police were working with other agencies in the community to target specific areas suffering with high levels of anti-social behaviour. He referred to the work of the targeted action meeting and the need to deal with issues in a proportionate manner. He referred to the benefit of ISTAM meetings as part of this work. He was asked to review whether these meetings would benefit from councillor involvement;
- The Police often see ‘peaks and troughs’ in areas as a result of premises becoming less secure or known individuals being in custody;
- The violent crime reduction campaign in the press had been used to address crimes against women and girls. However, this type of crime is difficult to manage when it is committed in the home. He stated that much of the effort needed to be about reducing alcohol consumption because of the link to domestic violence;
- There was no clear connection between alcohol and sexual crimes. Work was on-going with SARC in order to raise awareness and increase victim support. Work was also being progressed with schools to let them know what is and is not acceptable behaviour;
- There were no current plans to introduce a drunk tank within the City although discussions had taken place between the Leader regarding the redevelopment of the City Centre and ways to manage crime;
- The Council’s decision to reduce budgets for CCTV within the City was a political matter although the Police and Crime Commissioner has had discussions with the Leader and Chief Executive;
- CCTV is a useful tool in protecting the City, and Swansea does enjoy more CCTV coverage than other cities in England and Wales;
- The seemingly high turnover of Police Officers at senior level in Swansea was linked to a previous Police recruitment initiative and many reaching the age of retirement. He expected the number of PCSOs in the area to be more settled now;
- A lot of work is ongoing with schools at Key Stage 1, 3 and 4. Crucial Crew are involved in raising awareness regarding internet safety for young people.

In response to Member questions, the Director of People stated that discussions had taken place with Councillor P M Meara regarding research to better understand the problem and relatively high levels of domestic violence / abuse within Swansea. This issue remains as a top priority when Welsh Government grant money is received.

The Chair thanked Chief Superintendent Joe Ruddy and Chris Sivers for the informative presentation and was pleased to see progress in a number of key areas.

**RESOLVED** that the report be **NOTED**.