

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Commission

Date: 11 September 2019

Wards: All

Subject: ASB, Knife crime and Street Drinking – the challenges, successes and future work streams

Lead officer: Neil Thurlow – Head of Community Safety

Lead member: Cllr Edith Macauley, Cabinet member for Community Safety, Engagement and Equalities

Contact officer: Neil Thurlow, x3240

Recommendations:

- A. Councillors are asked to consider if they are interested in being involved with, or otherwise asked to publicise, community weapon sweeps for their wards. (2.3)
 - B. O&S panel members are asked to promote the Safer Merton Community Safety Consultation to all constituents – via email and/or in Cllr surgeries - promoting its importance in shaping future work to tackle crime and ASB (2.3.12)
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1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report is presented to the O&S Panel to provide an update from Safer Merton regarding work on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), knife crime and problematic street drinking (incorporating the Public Space Protection Order).
- 1.2. The report focuses on outcomes achieved over the last 12 months from both the Safer Merton service alone and the wider Community Safety Partnership.
- 1.3. **ASB headlines**
 - 1.3.1 Safer Merton officers now have delegated authority to use some tools and powers under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014.
 - 1.3.2 Safer Merton staff now issue Community Protection Warnings and Community Protection Notices. These have been issued for ASB alongside street drinking matters. In the near future, the officers will also commence issuing Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs).
 - 1.3.3 Officers are also using ASB Closure Powers to address ASB in problematic premises resulting in reduced ASB for our residents.
- 1.4. **Knife crime headlines**
- 1.5. Levels of knife crime have fluctuated over the last 12 months. Both nationally and regionally, there has been increases in both knife crime offences and knife related homicides.
- 1.6. London has seen a smaller percentage increase compared to the national picture but the risk and impact that knife crime causes is both a cross party and community concern.

- 1.6.1 Whilst Merton is not unaffected by knife crime, we remain the fourth safest borough in the Met, and knife crime incidents remain lower than the London average.
- 1.6.2 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP), led by Safer Merton, completed and returned our updated Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Plan to MOPACs Violence Reduction Unit in May. This plan was presented and discussed at the previous O&S meeting. The plan remains a live document, which is monitored by the CSP each quarter.
- 1.6.3 The delivery of actions contained within the plan sits across a range of governance boards including the CSPs Safer Stronger Executive Board, Locations board and CSFs MARVE panel to name a few.
- 1.6.4 In July 2019, the Home Office announced that there would be a new statutory duty placed on CSPs to address knife crime and Serious Violence. The announcement followed the Home Office Serious Violence Strategy that was released in April 2019.
- 1.6.5 Once implemented, the new duty will ensure that information is shared more effectively between agencies, and that all partners deliver targeted interventions. In the coming months Safer Merton will work to implement any requirements made of CSPs relating to this announcement.

2 DETAIL

2.1. Detail of ASB Delivery

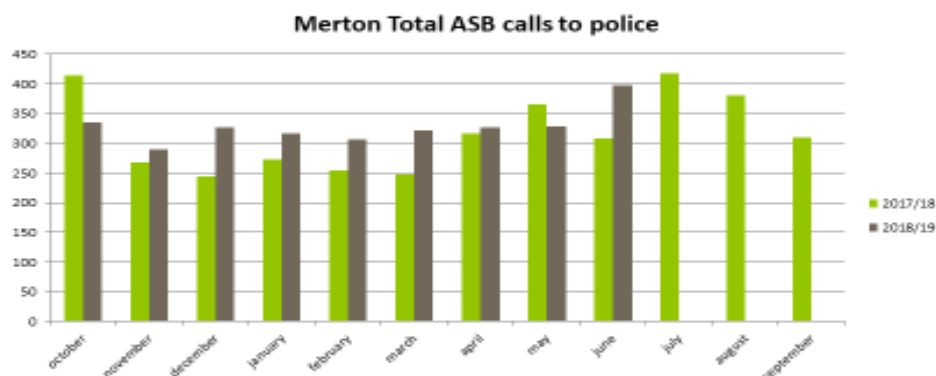
- 2.1.1 Demand placed on ASB services are increasing both within Safer Merton and across the Metropolitan police service.
- 2.1.2 Safer Merton's ASB service has dealt with, and resolved, some 1237 cases in the last 12 months (July 2018 – June 2019). This is an increase of some 363 cases compared with 874 in the previous 12 months.
- 2.1.3 The following charts illustrate the changes in demand on Safer Merton's ASB service over a wider period of time (April 2015-April 2019) and also illustrates the last two years' ASB demand being placed on Police colleagues (October 2017 to June 2019):

Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement



Safer Merton

Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement



Police ASB calls have been consistently higher in the last 8 months compared to the corresponding months last year.

Safer Merton

- 2.1.4 Both charts show that the increases are consistent with August the peak month for reports to the council.
- 2.1.5 When addressing cases of ASB, the team undertake investigations liaising with the victims, alleged perpetrators and any other community members whom are affected.
- 2.1.6 Following investigations officer use a number of interventions to address behaviours ranging from softer interventions such as warning letters, acceptable behaviour agreements and mediation through to action that is more punitive in nature.

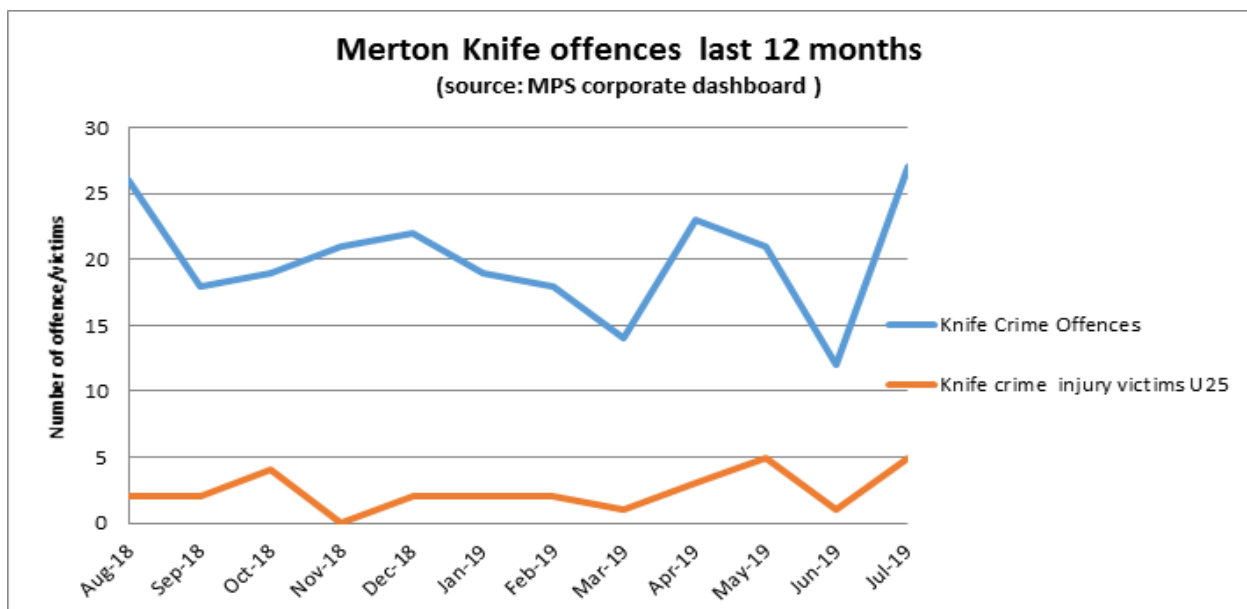
- 2.1.7 The Safer Merton service, in conjunction with Police and others, have, over the last 12 months, used both civil and criminal powers resulting in the issuing of community protection warnings, community protection notices; premises closure orders, fixed penalty notices, injunctions and criminal behaviour orders against offenders whose behaviour required a more stringent approach.
- 2.1.8 Four (4) brothels were identified in this period and closed by Safer Merton using the ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The Police worked with Safer Merton on this case and at some of the brothels, arrests were made for immigration offences.
- 2.1.9 One (1) premises associated with disorder – Loud partying, congregation, intimidation, littering and illicit drug activity – was closed under the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014.
- 2.1.10 During 2019, the team have broadened their tasking's with CCTV to capture ASB in certain hotspots. These tasking's have delivered successes including the disruption and deterrence of ASB on Martin Way / Joseph Hood Recreation Ground and street drinking in Mitcham Town centre.

2.2. Detail of Knife Crime Delivery

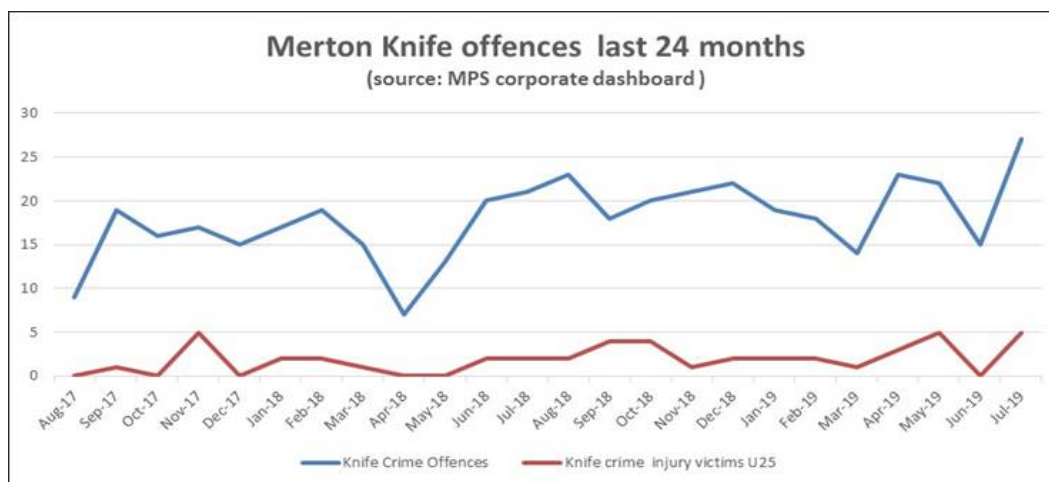
2.2.1 Statistics

2.2.2 The 12 month totals (July 2018 - July 2019) for knife crime incidents in Merton are split into knife crime (KC) and knife crime with injury (KCI). The 12-month knife crime total is 245, and the knife crime injury totals 64. These figures equate to roughly one in four knife crimes resulting in injury in Merton.

2.2.3 The chart below illustrates the split:



2.2.4 The longer-term pattern, for the previous 24 months is below. Looking at 24 months data there are no discernible patterns with peak months for either knife crime offences or knife crime with injury



2.2.5 Work on knife crime is dynamic and as such when incidents of knife crime occur, they are responded to and acted upon in the most appropriate manner.

2.2.6 **Work undertaken to address knife crime**

2.2.7 The Knife Crime and Serious Youth Violence Plan was initially drafted and approved in September 2018. The existence of the plan, and the overall engagement of partners in its delivery, is an essential tool to ensuring that each organisation engages and supports the CSP in tackling this issue.

2.2.8 The plan has been brought to the O&S panel previously as it sets out a range of interventions ranging from engagement and education to enforcement.

2.2.9 Safer Merton has been working with partners to deliver the plan ensuring it remains a live and accurate document. As a partnership, we have delivered outcomes such as:

2.2.10 The 'Towards Employment' programme – delivered from colleagues within CSF the council has supported a number of young people who are ex-offenders, or vulnerable to becoming involved in crime, into employment, work experience and apprenticeships. This programme has recently secured further funding so that it can continue to deliver its valuable services.

2.2.11 The Responsive Community Engagement Team (ReCET), run from the Contextual Safeguarding and Participation team within CSF, and externally funded by the Home Office Early Intervention Youth Fund, carries out detached youth work with young people across the borough. Intelligence lead tasking's see them engage young people whom are concerned about crime and ASB in the areas where they live. The team are also working with local business owners and other community members to develop a group of 'Community Guardians'. These people, residents, community leaders, business owners, will be trained to engage in a more positive way with young people whom are vulnerable to serious youth violence, by offering them diversion opportunities and/or offering them a safe space in their business.

- 2.2.12 A Weapons sweep offer is also being developed in conjunction with the Metropolitan Police (MPS). There have been a number of community members and groups who have registered interest in being part of this offer to help maintain safety within the borough.
- 2.2.13 Residents will undertake training, delivered by the MPS and Safer Merton, which will then allow them to support co-ordinated community sweeps across the borough.
- 2.2.14 Saturday 18 May saw Safer Merton host the borough's first Knife Crime Event in Morden Baptist Church. The event, designed to raise awareness of work being done to tackle knife crime in Merton, provided information and reassurance to our residents and attendees mobilising members of the public who want to get involved as a community approach to this challenge. The event received 122 attendees, had positive feedback, and good engagement from a number of different organisations that engage in youth work, crime prevention and enforcement, and victim support. These included Crimestoppers, Catch 22, and Unique Talent.
- 2.2.15 Merton's Stop and Search group now also has a small group of community members on the reviewing panel. This group, which meets regularly, reviews some Stop and Search cases assisting the wider community, and police, to better understand some of the issues which stop and search can cause between police and community. The panel also receives feedback from the MPS as they respond to the panel's challenges and queries, and are forthcoming with providing body worn camera footage when requested.
- 2.2.16 The Youth Justice Service within the council provide a range of interventions for under 18s involved in knife crime. These include trauma informed support, a mentor offer through to breaching of orders where necessary. The MARVE panel, which takes place every month, continues to facilitate effective multi agency working, and interventions.
- 2.2.17 Bespoke care plans are put together for Looked-after Children and Care Leavers vulnerable to knife crime.
- 2.2.18 Knife test purchase operations carried out by the Trading Standards team in LBM continue to have positive outcomes, with only one retailer failing the test purchase operation, which is now under investigation. Over the last 12 months all knife retailers in Merton have been visited.
- 2.2.19 Training on knife crime, and recovery of knives have also been delivered to contractors ID Verde and Veolia on "what to do if you find a knife". This training is attached as an appendix.
- 2.2.20 ***Knife crime next steps***
- 2.2.21 Safer Merton will work with public health colleagues to ensure that all relevant partners are aware of the CAMHS referral pathway in place for young people involved in violent crime. This is particularly important as the links between mental health and knife crime become clearer.
- 2.2.22 Safer Merton will work with MOPAC and LBM's communications team, and residents to develop and embed a new critical incident response process. Particularly important for matters such as any fatal stabbings which may occur. This work will, once delivered, minimise risk of misunderstanding of

incident details being known within the community and provide reassurance to those affected residents.

- 2.2.23 Safer Merton and the wider CSP are awaiting MOPACs own post incident response toolkit which will contain guidance on how to co-ordinate a response, and provide the appropriate support to those impacted.

(i) The 'Public Health' approach to tackling serious violence is advocated by the Home Office, MOPAC and the World Health Organisation. Merton's Community Safety Partnership, as represented at the Safer Stronger Executive board will approach the new Violence Reduction Unit to seek guidance on how this approach can be best delivered, alongside the existing Knife Crime Plan and the current successful working that is already taking place. By utilising and working to the public health approach, we would seek to see, over time a constant decline in the number of knife crime incidents within Merton, and for figures to remain consistently low.

- 2.3. To deliver co-ordinated community weapons sweeps, or guidance on what to do if you find a knife. Councillors are asked to consider if they are interested in being involved, or otherwise asked to publicise this offer to community members.

2.4. **Detail of Street Drinking Delivery and Public Space Protection Order enforcement:**

- 2.4.1 Since October 2017, there has been a borough wide street drinking Public Space Protection Order (PSPO). This order, allows authorised officers to take action where street drinking behaviour is in breach of defined prohibitions and where behaviour of drinkers is likely to cause alarm, harassment or distress to others.

- 2.4.2 At this time, the majority of enforcement is taking place in, and around, the wards of Figges Marsh and Cricket Green wards, with proactive enforcement around Mitcham Town Centre.

- 2.4.3 A focused partnership enforcement approach has been operational since June 2018. This has resulted in alcohol being seized and disposed of from street drinkers alongside the issuing of Community Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices and Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN).

- 2.4.4 The enforcement is delivered with the offer of treatment and care in the first instance to ensure that, for those with alcohol dependency needs, they are offered access to the borough's alcohol treatment service – WDP. At this time no person(s) engaged in the enforcement work have taken up the offer of support implying that they do not believe they have an alcohol dependency need.

- 2.4.5 Our enforcement work has resulted in a significant reduction in visible street drinking in Mitcham Town Centre although some displacement has occurred. Enforcement work will continue, utilising intelligence to focus resource deployment.

- 2.4.6 To report street drinking, residents and members can call Police on 101 where there is need for police response, or to provide retrospective reporting this can be done via the Met Police website www.met.police.uk

- 2.4.7 Residents and members can also report incidents, intelligence and concerns to the Safer Merton service via our webpages on the councils website or via email - asbu@merton.gov.uk
- 2.4.8 **PSPO consultation process**
- 2.4.9 The current street drinking Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is time limited. Changes in Home Office legislation introduced PSPOs but with the requirement that these are reviewed and renewed every three years with the option to extend again following another review. Merton's street drinking PSPO will expire in October 2020.
- 2.4.10 In order to gather evidence and understand the community's concerns regarding street drinking Safer Merton have launched a public consultation process which will capture the views of residents, businesses and visitors on a range of community safety matters. Street drinking is included in the consultation that runs until Friday 18 October.
- 2.4.11 The evidence from the surveys, alongside evidence gathered from LBM and Police systems will then provide a framework of options moving forward. It is hoped that, from the survey feedback and wider crime and ASB data, there will be sufficient data to support a continuation of these powers for a further three years
- 2.4.12 Members are asked to share the survey with all community contacts and to complete the survey themselves to ensure maximum numbers of responses are received.
- 2.4.13 In early 2020, the Safer Merton service will commence the formal option appraisal process taking the preferred PSPO option to members for sign off and adoption.
- 2.4.14 Members should note that if there is insufficient evidence to continue with a PSPO post October 2020 or if there is insufficient evidence to support the renewal of a borough-wide PSPO, changes in enforcement will need to be made.

3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 3.1. Should members wish not to review and seek to renew the PSPO from October 2020 the Safer Merton service will use the survey responses purely for business as usual matters.
- 3.2. There are no other alternative options for this report.

4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- 4.1. The Safer Merton is currently out for consultation with the Community Safety Survey. The results of the survey combined with an analysis of all crimes that happen in the borough will help Safer Merton set the partnership's priorities for the year.

5 TIMETABLE

- 5.1. In relation to the Community Safety survey, which is live between 4th August and 18th October, it is requested of members to get as many of their

constituents as possible to complete it. It is available online and paper copies are available.

<https://www.merton.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/crime-prevention-and-community-safety/safer-merton-consultation>

6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. The work detailed in this report is undertaken as business as usual.

7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

7.1. N/A this is an update report only.

8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

8.1. N/A this is an update report only

9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

9.1. It is the statutory duty of the Crime and Disorder Act, which governs the work of Safer Merton, and the service discharges the CSPs responsibilities around this.

9.2. There are no specific crime and disorder implications for the contents of this report which members require sighting on

10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

10.1. N/A this is an update report only

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

11.1. Safer Merton Community Safety Survey PDF leaflet

11.2. Safer Merton Anti-Social Behaviour Leaflet

11.3. 'What to do if I find a knife' toolbox briefing sheet

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