

Neighbourhood Profile

Cambridge City West/Central – September 2020



Wards: Castle, Market and Newnham

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1. Introduction

Aim

The aim of the Neighbourhood profile update is to provide an overview of action taken since the last reporting period, identify on-going and emerging crime and disorder issues, and provide recommendations for future areas of concern and activity in order to facilitate effective policing and partnership working in the area.

The document should be used to inform multi-agency neighbourhood panel meetings and neighbourhood policing teams, so that issues can be identified, effectively prioritised and partnership problem solving activity undertaken.

Methodology

This document was produced using data received from the following sources:

- The Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team for the area;
- The City Council's Community Safety Team;
- The general public, via online and telephone crime and intelligence reporting; and
- Consultation with elected Ward and County members.

2. Current Areas of Concern

At the West/Central Area Committee meeting of 5 March 2020, the committee recommended addressing the following local areas of concern:

- Street-based ASB around The Grafton Centre and Park Street car park areas;
- Anti-social activity on the green spaces in the area; and
- Night-time economy.

Lead officers and actions to be taken were agreed following the committee meeting. The work undertaken and current situation is detailed below.

Street-based ASB around The Grafton Centre and Park Street car park areas

Objective: To deal with the issue of street-based anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around The Grafton Centre and its car parks, and the Park Street car park area.

Action Taken: There is an ongoing operation, which is aimed at dealing with street-based ASB across the City, called Operation Ferndale. Whilst this covers the whole City, most of the work is centred around key locations, several of which are in the West/Central area. There are several different streams of work, which target both key problematic locations and individuals. Over the reporting period, there has been some key multi-agency work carried out. Although the effects of the lockdown have changed the dynamics of this situation, the work carried out by the various support services to house and support this

cohort of people has been outstanding, and whilst it is true to state that some of the issues have reduced, it has not stopped completely. The reduced numbers have meant that there have been no identified trends within the car parks or the area around the Grafton Centre. Whilst there are no issues in this area, we have continued to work within this area of business across the wider panel area. The previous report refers to people who have been given orders not to be in the car parks and these orders have had the desired effect and they have not caused any further issues.

Current Situation: There are still occasional issues at the locations, but these are limited due to the reduction in rough sleeping. Reports of anti-social behaviour (ASB) are being dealt with as part of the ongoing work on Operation Ferndale. The focus of this operation is around dealing with problematic locations and individuals, working with the City Council and various other support agencies to ensure that people engage with the support available to them. Targeted enforcement action will be taken against those who decline to engage. As a result of this operation, there have been several notable successes with people who have accepted help and accommodation. This, coupled with the support that they have received, changed their behaviour and the offending has significantly reduced. The purpose of this project is to work with our partners, to understand how and why a person is offending, and look to address these issues.

Lead Officer: PS 686 Kevin Misik

Anti-social activity on the green spaces in the area

Objective: To deal with reports of ASB on the various green spaces across the area.

Action Taken: This item took on a very different spin when lockdown occurred, and the use or misuse of the City's green spaces became one of the major tasks undertaken by the team to support the lockdown. As the lockdown has lifted, the team has continued to focus on this piece of work. The issues that we have encountered have ranged from small gatherings of people during lockdown to larger, organised yet unofficial events. These have been dealt with via a range of different tactics ranging from the 4E (engage, explain, encourage, then enforce) COVID-19 Engagement Strategy, to the use of dispersal orders and major policing operations to deal with issues that have presented themselves, for example, the issues on Midsummer Common on the day of the cancelled fair. That is not to say that since the further relaxing of lockdown that there have not been any issues. With the hotter weather, there continues to be reports of ASB across the green spaces, most noticeably Jesus Green, which has resulted in targeted patrols in these areas to prevent and deal with any issues that are reported.

Current Situation: The hot weather, coupled with time away from schools, has resulted in higher calls for service to green spaces. Lockdown has increased this as people have been keeping away from town centres, with restrictions on the night-time economy and consumption of alcohol on licenced premises. Police patrols with neighbourhood policing resources and other policing resources will continue.

Lead Officer: PS 686 Kevin Misik

Night-time economy

Objective: Working in partnership to effectively manage the night-time economy in Cambridge.

Action Taken: Given the lockdown, the night-time economy shut down for a considerable period of time and the gradual unlocking of the sector has itself presented a number of issues which both the police and our various partners have worked to address. There have been several changes to the night-time economy and people are starting to return, albeit in lower numbers.

Current Situation: There are still challenges with the policing of the night-time economy, but the timing and numbers have changed, and it remains a key function of the neighbourhood and wider policing teams. We have had to adapt the operation we run following the changes in the night-time economy. There has been a need to support the people who work in this sector, to understand and implement the government guidelines, which effects both the on-site sales as well as potential off-site sales. This has meant that our patrols in the night-time economy are now much more inclusive of the green spaces in the City than they have been historically. As well as working to prevent alcohol-related disorder and crime, we have carried out a range of safeguarding work both directly in the night-time economy itself and also work from our Communications team around a variety of issues, for example on-line dating after COVID-19. As the guidance from the government changes, so will our work in this area.

Lead Officer: PS 686 Kevin Misik

3. *Proactive Work and Emerging Issues*

Cambridgeshire Constabulary

Over the period of lockdown, the Neighbourhood team has continued to work to address the issues effecting the people who live and work within the West/Central area. Our partnership links have allowed us to understand and address the wide number of issues that have become evident during the pandemic, ranging from working with the City Council around their commitment to house the homeless people in the City, to work with a range of partners to help safely reopen the retail and leisure functions of the City. These challenges have been unique in nature, but the officers have been able to understand and deal with the issues that have presented themselves over this time.

Now, the issues around the area are now returning to what is being described as the “new normal”. There are developing issues around King Street/Manor Place with street drinking and associated anti-social behaviour (ASB), which the team are looking into. We are also adapting our plans with the night-time economy to reflect the current changes in this sector. We continue to work with our partners to deal with street-based ASB.

Cambridge City Council

Throughout the lockdown period, the Community Safety Team has continued to operate a frontline service. We have continued to provide a responsive service, using virtual options where appropriate, and would encourage residents to contact us with their concerns.

During the lockdown, the landscape has been different to what we would have expected during normal times. During this time, the Community Safety Team has continued to work with partners around any reported issues. The Team has been involved in the work being undertaken by the City Council to house the homeless within the City.

We are aware that as restrictions have been relaxed and the “new normal” is taking form, our client group have been quite mobile and we are starting to see emerging issues around King Street/Manor Place in terms of alcohol-related anti-social behaviour (ASB) reports. The good weather means we are now receiving reports of congregations on open spaces and associated ASB. We will continue to highlight these hot spots with the strategic forums of the multi-agency problem solving group (PSG) and the street life working group, with a view of tasking and actioning, as appropriate.

Cambridge City Council welcomes the fact that its initiative [Cambridge Street Aid](#) has been shortlisted as a finalist for a national award. Street Aid has continued to raise donations and provide grants throughout the lockdown period and beyond.

4. Additional Information

At neighbourhood level, the [POLICE.UK](#) website allows for swift access to local crime and anti-social behaviour data at street level. The website can display crimes on a map as well as in chart format, along with trend lines. The three most important sections within this website are: ‘overview’; ‘crime’; and ‘view detailed statistics’. This gives a good overview of issues within the local area.

5. Recommendations

None are advised. We seek views from this committee on those local areas of concern that the police and partner agencies can work together to action and report on at the next reporting committee meeting.