

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee of South Norfolk District Council held on Thursday 30 June 2022 at 9.30am.

Committee Members Present: Councillors: J Hornby (Chairman), Y Bendle, B Bernard, J Halls, T Spruce and J Overton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: T Holden and J Worley

Portfolio Holder Present: Councillor: R Elliott

Officers in Attendance: The Director of Resources (D Lorimer), the Assistant Director of Individuals and Families (M Pursehouse), the Development Manager (T Lincoln), the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager (R Dunsire), the Internal Consultancy Officer (L Tiernan), the Senior Governance Officer (S White) and the Committee Officer (J Hammond)

Also in Attendance: Superintendent Kris Barnard – Norfolk Police

1307 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr T Holden and Cllr J Worley.

1308 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Y Bendle declared an 'other' interest in respect of minute no' 1310 as she had been involved in the development of the original policy.

1309 COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Superintendent Kris Barnard to the meeting.

The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families introduced the item and explained that it provided an opportunity for the South Norfolk Police

Command and Council Officers to engage members on current community safety priorities and issues in South Norfolk.

Supt. Barnard presented his Police and Crime Report (attached at Appendix 1 of the Minutes), which provided members with an overview of police and crime matters as well as how the Police worked with South Norfolk District Council on overlapping areas. He explained that a new Police and Crime Plan had been introduced at the start of the year which sought to:

- Protect the community
- Build and maintain trust
- Increase visibility
- Provide an exceptional service

Members' attention was drawn to the average number of acquisitive crimes per month. Supt. Barnard explained that the one robbery per month took place within a school setting as opposed to a street setting. It was noted that since the onset of Covid-19 and the national lockdowns there had been an increased demand on 'hidden' crimes such as domestic violence, which were often complex cases where some victims did not wish to prosecute the perpetrators.

With regard to cybercrime and fraud, Supt. Barnard explained that cases could be difficult to investigate as they often crossed national and international boundaries. One member raised a concern that other than raising awareness, little was being done to address these types of crimes, which often targeted older and vulnerable individuals and caused a considerable amount of distress. Supt. Barnard advised the Committee that more officers experienced in cyber-related crimes were being appointed and trained and that officers were working behind the scenes to counter cybercrime. He added that these types of crime were not going to disappear and so the Police's first focus would be to raise awareness and prevention.

Conversation turned to the number and types of calls received by the Police service over 2021/22, Supt. Barnard explained that:

- 18% of calls received related to road obstructions, disruptions, and incidents
- 15-16% related to Safe/Collapse/Injury/Trap incidents
- There had been an increase in the number of anti-social behaviour cases associated with mental health issues
- The number of calls received decreased during the Covid-19 pandemic, however, post covid there had been an increase in demand, with 13,500 calls received in May 2022
- 84.5% of the most urgent types of calls resulted in arrival within 20 minutes of the call being received.

Discussion turned to child criminal exploitation and Supt. Barnard informed the Committee that the policing of at-risk children was a growing challenge, with six cases currently live in South Norfolk. It could be a challenge to police these incidents as they sometimes occurred across district borders. He then highlighted a series of incidents which had occurred over the past year and explained that they had resulted in over 300 home visits and over 100 engagements with parents, as well as arrests made where appropriate.

Turning to engagement, it was noted that residents in South Norfolk wanted active engagement with the Police. Supt. Barnard advised the Committee of the engagement events held in South Norfolk between 1 June 2021 – 31 May 2022, which included Park Walk Talk events, priority setting meetings and online surveys.

One member highlighted the increased prevalence of pavement parking within the district. Supt. Barnard explained that pavement parking was a civil matter which should be resolved without Police intervention, he added that where there was a safety concern the Police would work with the District Council to resolve.

In response to a query on the recruitment of new Police officers, Supt. Barnard explained that there had been a drive of recruitment across the country. In order to recruit professional Police officers, applicants were now required to obtain a degree to be eligible to join the Police force. One member was concerned that this requirement could disproportionately affect ex-military veterans from joining. Supt. Barnard clarified that applicants who did not possess a degree prior to joining the Police force would be required to study for a degree throughout the first three years of service. He added that there would always be a pathway and support for veterans who wished to join the Police service, as they provided invaluable experience to the service.

Discussion turned to the increasing prevalence of mental health issues and crises in Norfolk, and it was highlighted that the In Full (NSFT) had been placed into special measures. Members queried whether this had impacted the Police, and enquired how the Police were working with NSFT to alleviate the problem. In response Supt. Barnard explained that a significant amount of officer time was spent in responding to calls relating to mental health crises and waiting with individuals whilst medical support became available. He added that whilst officers received some training, they were not a replacement for specialist medical support. Members were then advised that the Police had a mental health assessment team within the control room who could direct officers on the best course of action on a case-by-case basis, which was not always to detain the individual. In addition, a mental health response car had been provided by the ambulance service.

With regard to the NSFT, Supt. Barnard explained that the police were in regular contact with directors at NSFT. The Assistant Director of Individuals and Families added that a Health and Wellbeing Partnership was emerging which would assess the situation and investigate potential methods to improve the entire system. The Chairman suggested that, as part of the partnership-working between the Police and the Help Hub, initiatives should be explored to focus on residents in mental health crisis situations, with the aim of creating a system change, to help to alleviate pressures on the NSFT. Following discussion, the Committee agreed that this matter should be further explored to help ensure that residents in crisis could receive the most appropriate and timely care.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED

1. To receive the update on Community Safety
2. That South Norfolk Council works with the Police to focus on mental health issues and work towards a system change to alleviate pressures on the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust (NSFT) and to ensure residents in crisis receive the most appropriate and timely care.

1310 BEST IN CLASS HOUSING OFFER REVIEW ON PROGRESS

The Internal Consultancy Officer introduced the report which presented an overview of the progress on the Best-in-Class Housing Offer following its introduction on 1 April 2021. She highlighted some of the work to follow, in order to maintain momentum on best in class as well as meet the expected challenges to come.

Members were advised that a new allocations scheme had been implemented which was aligned with Broadland District Council. In addition, a shared IT system had been introduced across both Councils which included a housing portal for residents which gave them the ability to bid for properties across both districts. In response to a member's query, the Internal Consultancy Officer explained that three properties within the South Norfolk District had been allocated to Broadland applicants, whilst five South Norfolk residents had successfully bid for properties within the Broadland district.

Members' attention was drawn to the number of live applications in South Norfolk as well as the throughput in relation to the housing register for the first year of implementation and it was noted that the Covid-19 pandemic had resulted in a number of pressures on the service, in relation to:

- Increases in the demand on the service

- The ending of the evictions ban
- Nationwide lockdowns impacted on the socially rented properties becoming available
- Reduction in availability of tradespeople to undertake repairs/refurbishments of void socially rented homes
- Disruption to completion of new build homes of all tenures
- Shortages of building materials

Looking ahead, the Internal Consultancy Officer explained that the emerging cost of living crisis was likely to have a significant impact on the housing service. In terms of temporary accommodation, she explained that a robust review of the Council's temporary accommodation offer across South Norfolk and Broadland was due to be carried out, in conjunction with Campbell Tickell, which would enable the Council to benefit from their objective housing and finance expertise.

Discussion turned to the Customer Journey Transformational Project which the Council was undertaking as part of its Best-in-Class Programme. The Internal Consultancy Officer advised the Committee that phase one of the project was currently underway with recommendations due to be brought to CMLT in August. She further explained that the project sought to design and implement a clear customer journey that would put early prevention at the front of the service.

In response to a query on the average length of lets, the Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager explained that the average length was now 31 years, he added that this was expected to increase as the majority of renters were unable to afford the progression onto private rental and purchase.

One member queried whether adapted properties were exclusively rented out to residents who required them, as they were concerned that adaptations could be removed if not required by the new occupiers. The Housing and Wellbeing Senior Manager advised that in some cases this could happen, however the Housing team proactively worked to ensure that adapted properties were let to those who required the adaptations. He added that in some cases the Council could cover up to 6 weeks of rent to housing providers, to ensure that a suitable resident could be found.

After further discussion, it was

RESOLVED

To receive the review on progress of the Best-in-Class Housing Offer.

1311 CALL-IN OF MARKETING OF SOUTH NORFOLK HOUSE

SUSPENSIVE CALL-IN

In the absence of Cllr Worley, the Chairman introduced the call-in and outlined the specific reasons for call-in, which were:

- *The delegation, explore options i.e. delegation to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Opposition (for example) to ensure broad agreement (given the importance of the decision)*
- *Ask questions on how a reasonable valuation be obtained and the process to be followed to ensure that the South Norfolk House is properly marketed correctly in line with DM2.2 of the SNLP, it may assist if a member of SNC Planning team would be able to attend. We are very keen for this process to be very clear and documented in black and white.*

The Director of Resources advised members that as a result of the Council's decision on 16 May 2022, to purchase the Horizon Centre jointly with Broadland District Council, South Norfolk House would no longer be required as the office space for the Once Team. Although no decision had been made as to the future of the site, there was a need to minimise the period of time between the site becoming vacant and any future use. Were the Council to decide to undertake any redevelopment that required a change of use of the site, the Council would need to comply with Planning Policy DM2.2 and actively market the site for at least six months based on valuation(s) agreed with the Planning Authority. The Director of Resources stressed that this was only a marketing exercise not an agreement to sell and that any offers of purchase would be brought to Cabinet for decision.

With regard to the process to be followed to ensure that the site was properly marketed, the Director of Resources explained that as the District Valuer did not have capacity to carry out the valuation, the Council had sought valuations from three reputable surveyors, these being:

- Bidwells
- Roche
- Savills

In response to a member's question on the marketing of the site for business use, the Development Manager explained that any potential buyer would not be limited to using the existing building and they could re-build on the site as

long as any building would be for commercial use. The Director of Resources added that if a potential buyer wanted to apply for a change of use after purchase, they too would need to comply with Planning Policy DM2.2.

Discussion turned to the suggestion of amending the delegation to include consultation with the Leader of the Opposition alongside the Leader of the Council to ensure broad agreement. It was highlighted that the Leader of the Opposition would not normally be consulted as part of a delegated decision. Another member noted that valuations were being obtained from three independent specialist surveyors and would be verified by the Planning Authority, as part of the Planning Policy, and so felt that the delegation was not a political decision which required cross-party agreement.

Cllr R Elliott, Portfolio Holder for Customer Focus expressed the view of the Cabinet, which felt that the decision made at its meeting on 13 June 2022 was a credible and reasonable decision which allowed the Council to keep all options open with regard to the future of South Norfolk House. He reminded the Committee that the marketing of the site was not an agreement of sale and that the final decision would be carried out following the correct process.

It was then unanimously

RESOLVED

To endorse the decision of the Cabinet.

1312 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME, TRACKER AND CABINET CORE AGENDA

The Committee noted the Work Programme, Tracker and Cabinet Core Agenda.

(The meeting concluded at 11.44am)

Chairman

Police and Crime report prepared for the South Norfolk District Council Scrutiny Committee



SOUTH NORFOLK AND BROADLAND COMMAND

Superintendent Kris Barnard
28th June 2022

Acquisitive Crime

	South Norfolk			Broadland			King's Lynn & Breckland			Norwich			Gt Yarmouth & N. Norfolk		
	19/20	20/21	21/22	19/20	20/21	21/22	19/20	20/21	21/22	19/20	20/21	21/22	19/20	20/21	21/22
Dwelling Burglary	10	6	8	14	8	6	27	23	20	42	23	23	24	16	18
All Other Burglary	18	11	10	15	8	5	45	33	27	31	30	26	27	22	27
Robbery	2	2	1	1	1	1	7	6	6	18	10	15	7	6	6
Theft of M/Vehicle	7	6	5	5	2	4	17	15	15	15	9	11	12	10	11
Theft from M/Vehicle	11	8	7	10	6	6	35	21	22	29	23	24	19	16	16
Theft (all types)	80	65	71	69	51	60	223	177	212	322	225	279	199	145	163
Total	128	98	102	114	76	82	354	275	302	457	320	378	288	215	241

This demand increasingly has to be considered against other crime types, such as:

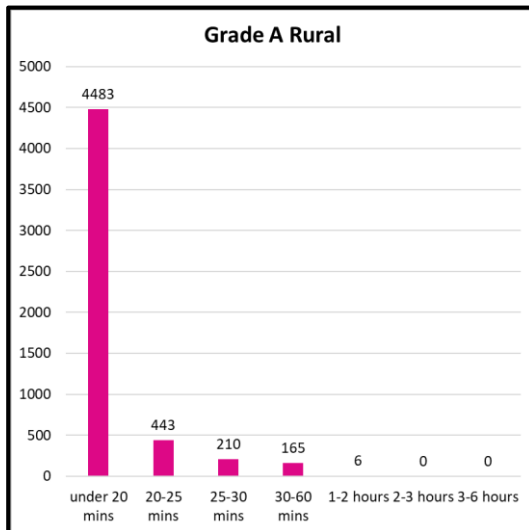
21/22 Crime	South Norfolk
Violence Against the Person	265
Public Order Offences	71
Sexual Offences	32

Calls for Service

Most Frequent CAD Disposal Types 21/22	South Norfolk
Safe/Collapse/Ill/Injury/Trap	3250
Highway Disruption	1892
Suspicious Circumstances	1682
Violence Against Person	1595
Crime - Other	1108
Administration	1072
Road-Related Offence	1031
Domestic Incident - Standard Risk	717
Total CADs 2021/22 (all call categories)	20,654

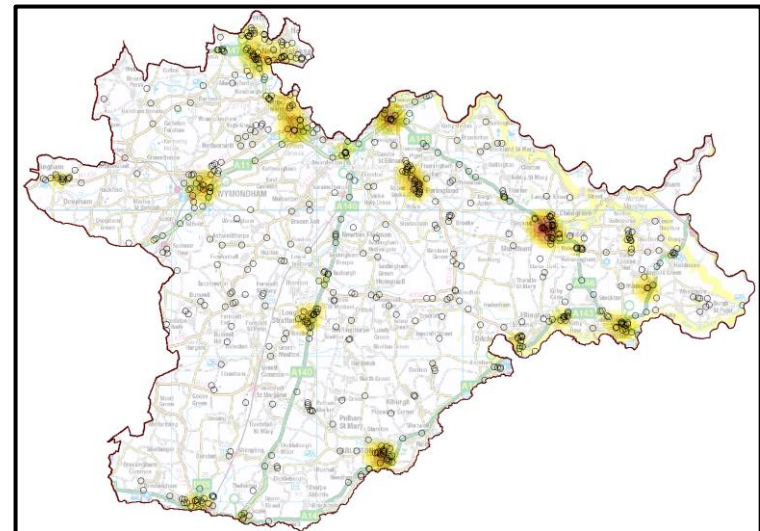
Norfolk CCR Volume	999	101
June 2021	10280	11935
July 2021	10652	11738
August 2021	10739	11835
September 2021	10133	12062
October 2021	10210	12126
November 2021	9106	10579
December 2021	9581	10207
January 2022	8712	10637
February 2022	8587	10339
March 2022	9159	10692
April 2022	9588	11367
May 2022	9963	13415

The graph here shows the district's attendance performance for the most urgent call types:



84.5% arrival within 20 mins of the call

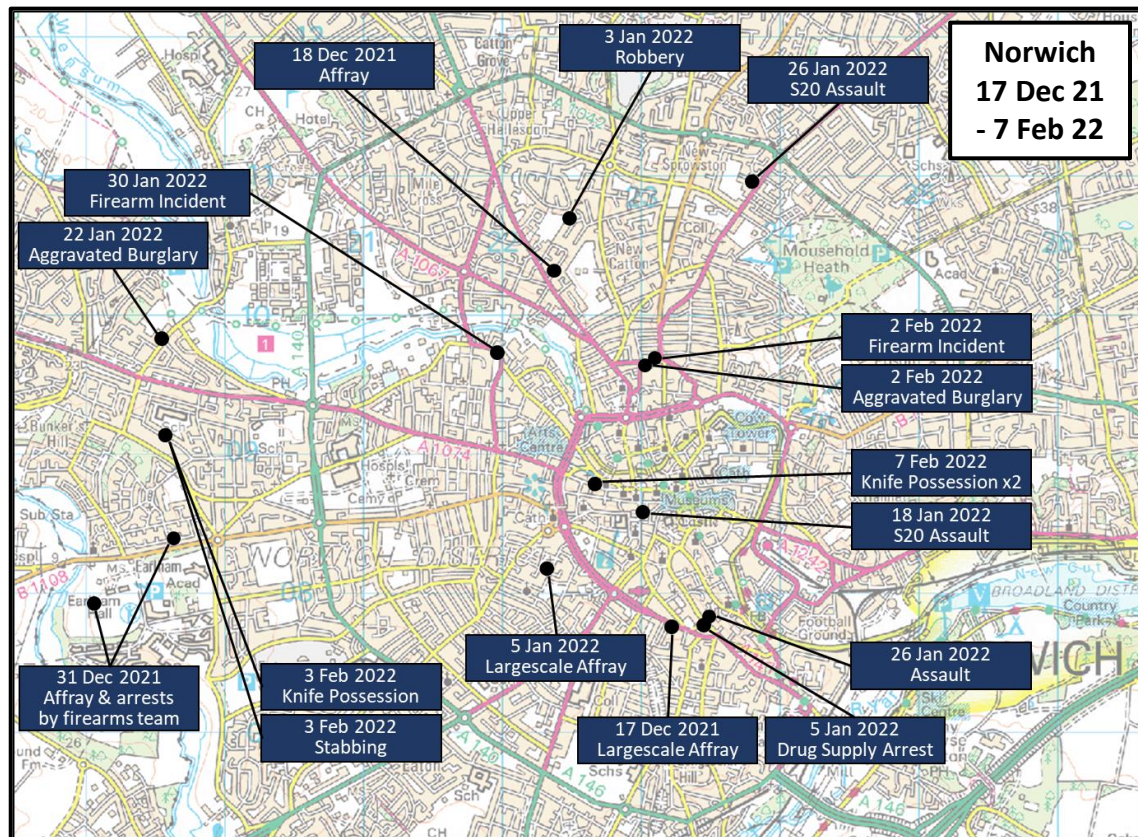
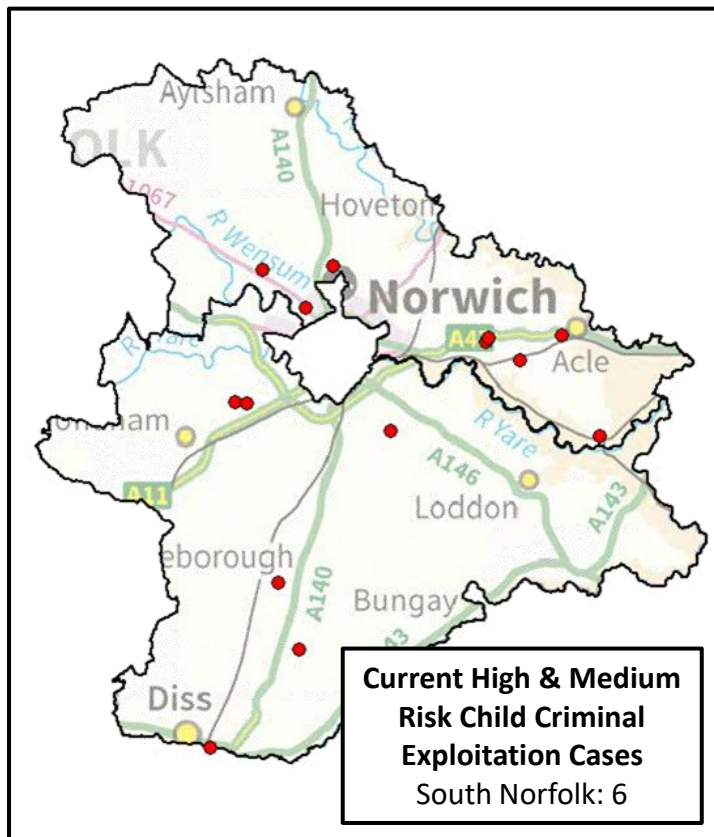
The map shows hotspots for the calls where the listed target times are **not** met:



Child Criminal Exploitation

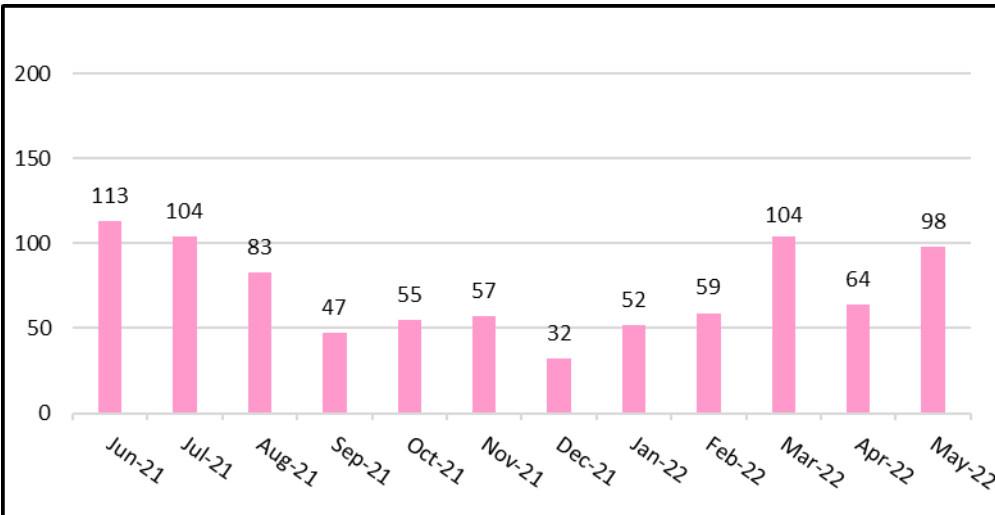
The policing of at risk children is a growing challenge, with 6 cases currently live in South Norfolk for children at High or Medium risk of Criminal Exploitation (map below).

This challenge is greater due to the exploitation of these children sometimes occurring across district borders in Norwich. The map below shows a series of incidents from earlier this year, which police have since responded to with over 300 home visits and over 100 engagements with parents, as well as arrests made where appropriate.

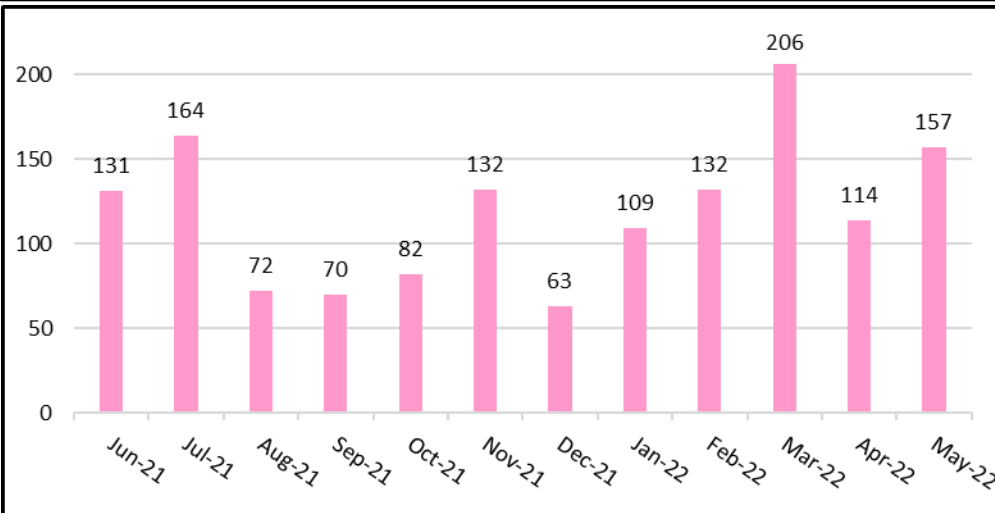


Engagement

South Norfolk - Park Walk Talk Engagements:



South Norfolk - All Other Engagements:



All Engagement Events in South Norfolk, and in Broadland, between 01/06/2021 and 31/05/2022:

