

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director (Communities)	Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Thursday, 25 January 2024

Town Centre Action Plan Update

Is this report confidential?	Yes Information relating to businesses/individuals and ongoing enforcement action
------------------------------	--

Is this decision key?	No
-----------------------	----

Purpose of the Report

- To provide an overview of the matters related to anti-social behaviour (ASB) in connection with Chorley Town Centre.

Recommendations

- To review and comment on the issues and actions presented.

Reasons for recommendations

- To review the actions taken and proposed are an appropriate response to reduce ASB and its associated impacts.

Other options considered and rejected

- None considered.

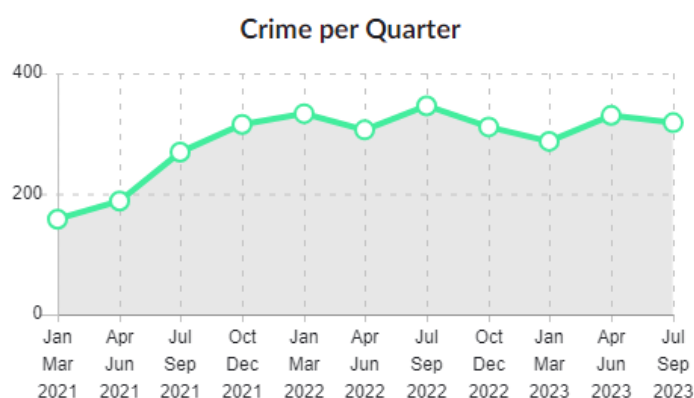
Corporate priorities

- The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Housing where residents can live well	A green and sustainable borough
An enterprising economy with vibrant local centres in urban and rural areas	Healthy, safe and engaged communities

Background to the report

6. ASB features as one of the primary concerns for Chorley as detailed in the most recent Strategic Assessment and the Lancashire Talking Survey. Therefore, ASB is one of the authorities' key priorities in the Community Safety Partnership Action Plan 2022-2025.
7. In accordance with The Strategic Assessment Local Profile the wards with the highest volume of ASB reported are: Chorley South East, Chorley South West and Chorley North East.
8. Specifically, there has been an overall increase in crime and disorder in connection with the Town Centre over the last three years. Shown in the image below – data taken from: [Chorley Town Centre | Police.uk \(www.police.uk\)](https://www.police.uk)



9. ASB has contributed to over 40% of the outcomes during this three-year period shown in the table below:

Type	Total	Percentage
Anti-social behaviour	1391	40.4%
Criminal damage and arson	245	7.1%
Drugs	42	1.2%
Other theft	126	3.7%
Possession of weapons	41	1.2%
Robbery	21	0.6%
Shoplifting	287	8.3%
Theft from the person	28	0.8%
Vehicle crime	36	1%
Violence and sexual offences	904	26.3%
Other crime	34	1%
Bicycle theft	25	0.7%
Burglary	52	1.5%
Public order	207	6%

10. This increase in unreasonable behaviour has led to local visitors, business operators and residents reporting negative impacts on their livelihoods and wellbeing.

11. Anti-social behaviour in the Town Centre led to the exceptional use of Section 34 Police Dispersal Orders on two occasions during the past 12 months, previously these powers were unknown/not required prior to this period.

12. On occasion the behaviour has led to local negative media.

Key Issues

13. The key issues brought to the attention of the authority and partner agencies relate predominantly to youth related anti-social behaviour, shop lifting, begging and ASB in relation to supported living accommodation.

14. Youth related ASB is the most predominant contributor to ASB in the Town Centre. Young people gathering in the town centre and triggering disruption in a manner causing alarm distress and harassment to those in the locality.

15. There are various known hot spots which include environmental factors such as shelter, music, Wi-Fi and the sale of low-cost hot food or illicit's/vapes. The following premises are known hot spots:

- McDonalds
- Chapel Street, specifically Chorley Interchange and Mr Zee's Hot Food Takeaway
- Escape Lounge and Reel Cinema

16. Shop lifting, is unfortunately a common issue connected with town/city centres. There are known prolific individuals that not only undertake theft but have reported to harass and intimidate staff members of town centre businesses.

17. Begging is not a persistent issue, and numbers are very low ranging from one or two. However, this historically has not been seen in the borough, as there are various support pathways that should prevent this behaviour. Those identified begging in most cases either come from outside of the borough or have refused despite all attempts to engage positively in support leading to enforcement action. The Housing team try to work with these individuals to provide support and the Council provide accommodation for rough sleepers in Cotswold House.

18. Supported Living Accommodation – there are various accommodation facilities in the borough which provide supported living to individuals who require additional support. This may be in connection with rehabilitation from drug or alcohol or criminality. Specifically, there are two identified premises in the Town Centre which have been reported due to a connection with ASB both as a target and their residents causing the ASB.

Actions and Interventions

19. Due to the increase in cases of ASB the Public Protection Team has been working proactively and reactively to reduce the behaviours and its impacts and provide support to victims and perpetrators and their families. The authority has and continues to work both independently and closely with partner responsible authorities and voluntary organisations to tackle this problem. The following action has been taken:

20. Multi-Agency Meetings – There are various meetings where responsible authorities, partners and voluntary organisations come together to discuss key issues and agree actions. These include, weekly police taking meeting, dedicated town centre ASB fortnightly meetings and Bimonthly Community Safety Partnership Officer working group. These meetings are very focused on operational delivery and to ensure action is undertaken to disrupt the ASB.

21. Enforcement Action is used as a last resort where agencies have exhausted all positive interventions, which may include support offers, warnings, negotiation, mediation and diversionary activities. The enforcement powers used are civil orders in connection with the Anti-Social behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014. Below are some of the most recent examples of enforcement action taken:

- 8x Community Protections Warnings - issued on local problematic businesses, beggars and shop lifters.
- 4x Community Protection Notices – where the above are not complied with escalated to Notice.
- 2x Fixed Penalties – where the above notices have been breached, or other offence including breaches or the Public Space Protection Order.
- 1x Closure Order Power – In an exceptional case of persistent ASB and non-compliance from the business operator. The Council has obtained its first business closure. Which is restricted to 3 months, an extension application obtained for a further 3 months.

22. Designing Out Crime Officer a Lancashire Police service which assesses and reports upon Environmental weaknesses and recommendations of improvement to help reduce crime, disorder and ASB and provide better security has reviewed the ASB hot spots in the Town Centre. These reports have been completed at various town centre businesses who have been working on implementing the recommendations, including Reel Cinema, Escape Lounge and Chorley Interchange Bus Station.

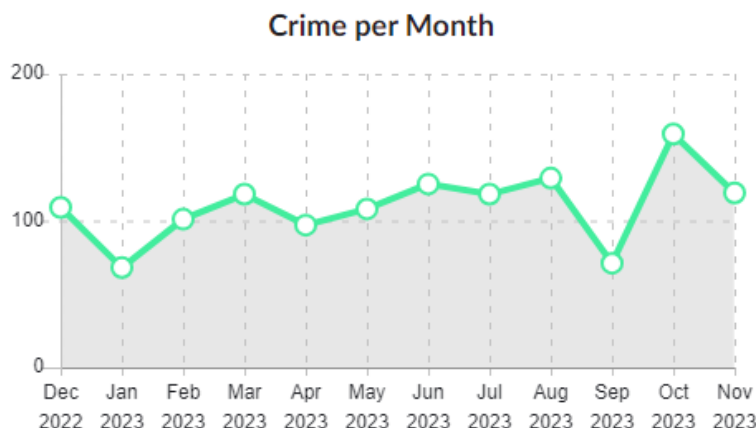
23. Town Centre Ambassadors are an asset to the town centre who have played a vital role, in being eyes and ears and building local relationships. They help deter low level ASB and provide valuable evidence for enforcement action.

24. Op Centurion is a police led intervention funded through the PCC, providing extra police patrols in ASB hotspots across. The Council have been working jointly with the local poling team to support the operation. Accompanying the extra patrols and working together in reaching resolutions to problems identified.

25. Op Sunshine lead by the Council's Public Protection team undertook an information exercise engaging with young persons. It was identified that there was a lack of diversionary facilities that appealed to some of the teenage cohort and that this group were hard to reach and engage with. Therefore, the team used the information to make funding applications to the Police Crime Commissioner and LANPAC to deliver alternative diversionary activities during school half terms in ASB hot spot areas.

26. Outreach work was delivered by members of the Public Protection team, with support from local policing neighbourhood team, Chorley communities' team and Preston North End Community Trust. The sessions were held at hot spot ASB locations, one being Coronation

Recreation Ground, off Devonshire Road. They were highly successful engaging many young persons. It was noted, where you would normally see a spike in ASB during the summer half term period, a significant drop was evident as shown below:



27. The Public Protection Team worked with Supported Living Accommodation providers to identify the issues and take action under their tenancy agreements. The Public Protection Team have worked effectively with providers to improve the circumstances leading to the complaints. Mainly through informal effective communication, however enforcement has been used action where required.

28. It is recognised that in order to continue to prevent, reduce and eliminate ASB specifically in connection with Chorley Town Centre to ensure Chorley is safe place to live, work and visit a medium/longer term action plan is required. Therefore, a plan has been developed shown in appendix A, this plan however is now being redeveloped as part of a borough wide Corporate project.

Climate change and air quality

29. The work noted in this report does not have an impact on the Councils Carbon emissions and the wider Climate Emergency and sustainability targets of the Council.

Equality and diversity

30. Equality implications or considerations will be reviewed and assessed as part of the corporate project and/or where enforcement action is considered.

Risk

31. Reputational – The authority’s reputational risk could be challenged if not seen to be appropriately responding to ASB and its impacts.
32. Harm – There is a risk of harm to residents, business, and visitors in connection with impacts of ASB.
33. Financial – The financial risk could be considered in the costs associated in delivering the actions to reduce ASB and its impacts.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

34. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

35. As this is an update report confirming actions and initiatives undertaken there are no legal comments.

Appendices

Appendix A – Town Centre ASB Action Plan

Report Author:	Email:	Telephone:	Date:
Laura-Jean Taylor (Head of Public Protection)	Laura-Jean.Taylor@chorley.gov.uk		11.01.24