

Report of the Community Safety Partnership Board to the meeting of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held on 5th October 2023

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Subject:

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR RELATED TO FIREWORKS AND PLANS FOR THE BONFIRE PERIOD 2023.

Summary statement:

This report provides a summary of the key actions and activities being taken following the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Review of the use of fireworks. The report includes the key partnership approaches and actions to minimise anti-social behaviour during the period around Bonfire Night.

Equality Assessment:

It is recognised that the noise and disturbance caused by fireworks can impact particular groups more than others. Those with ongoing health issues, disabilities and the elderly are more severely affected. This can particularly affect those who already have a disturbed sleeping pattern and whose mental health is impacted through lack of sleep.

Anti-social behaviour is often more prevalent in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the anxiety this causes can be exacerbated over the Bonfire period.

David Shepherd – Director of Place

Portfolio:

Neighbourhoods and Community Safety

Report Contact: Michael Churley

Phone: (01274) 431364

E-mail: michael.churley@bradford.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny Area:

Corporate

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report provides a summary of the key actions and activities being taken following the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Review of the use of fireworks. The report includes the key partnership approaches and actions to minimise anti-social behaviour during the period around Bonfire Night.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** District residents have expressed concerns for a number of years about fireworks being used anti-socially and outside the permitted hours within the law. Fireworks are used responsibly by most, but celebrations now appear to be happening more often throughout the year. The loud noise from fireworks cause nuisance to people across the district as well as distress to livestock and pets.
- 2.2** This is especially the case over the Bonfire Night period. Significant partnership efforts have curtailed disorder in recent years; however, levels of anti-social behaviour remain at unacceptable levels in parts of the district.
- 2.2.1** The large majority experience the Bonfire period in a positive and safe way. However, incidents of anti-social behaviour, misuse of fireworks, disposal of waste via fly tipping and attacks on public sector workers are all issues that we continue to contend with.
- 2.2.2** The Bonfire period requires a significant multi-agency response with preparation and planning beginning in early Summer. November 5th remains the busiest night of the year for the Police and Fire Service and the period is also a significant drain on Council and 'Safer Bradford' (Community Safety Partnership) resources.
- 2.2.3** In response to continuing anxiety around fireworks, in particular, a comprehensive review of the use of fireworks in the district's neighbourhoods was undertaken by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2021.
- 2.3** The review made a number of recommendations to tackle some of issues regarding firework nuisance and progress on these was reported back to this Committee in January 2023. Further actions since January are included in the next section of this report.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1** Discussion at the Committee in January included the difficulties faced by services in enforcing against those who breach firework regulations. It remains a continued challenge to be able to identify the actual offender who 'lights the blue touchpaper' and penalise them appropriately.
- 3.1.2** However, there are a wide range of ways in which we can work with agencies and communities to try and tackle this problem. For example, we have engaged with wedding venues around the use of fireworks. The large majority are compliant, but one has been issued with a Community Protection Warning following anti-social use of fireworks.

- 3.1.3 Council Officers have visited and spoken to a number of properties that were identified as preparing for a wedding over the summer. They were advised about the firework laws and advised not to allow fireworks to be let-off late at night and were given a poster. We will continue to work proactively with those who are having weddings and appropriate advice will be given.
- 3.2 What is clear through feedback from our communities is that the vast majority are fed-up with being disturbed by fireworks, especially late at night. It is, therefore, imperative that we seek to amplify this narrative and encourage more in our communities to share their frustration within their neighbourhoods and communities.
- 3.3 In 2023 we have begun a campaign to heighten awareness of the level offence being caused by the thoughtless use of fireworks. **Appendix One** shows a poster/postcard that has been developed to support the campaign. The poster also highlights what the law says about the use of illegal fireworks.
- 3.4 In addition, a short video has been produced to educate and make people aware of the impact late night fireworks have on the wider community. The film consists of a range of interviews with local residents, professionals and faith representatives relaying the nuisance caused by late night fireworks.
- 3.5 Sections of the film will be used as social media shorts throughout the year and particularly during periods when firework use is a significant problem.
- 3.6 Posters were left with local retailers/wholesalers of fireworks. The owners were spoken to, and some have agreed to give the poster out to customers who purchase fireworks.
- 3.7 The Leader of Council, has written to the Districts MP's and requested they lobby government to:
- (i) Reduce the noise levels of all categories of fireworks,
 - (ii) Stop the sale of the more powerful fireworks, such as category 3 and 4,
 - (iii) For individuals who sell fireworks to have a licence, which demonstrates that they are a fit and proper person to be able to sell fireworks.
- (See **Appendix Two**)

4. THE BONFIRE PERIOD

- 4.1 The period leading up to Bonfire Night has, for a number of years, been a particular pressure point for services. A history of anti-social behaviour has meant the period requires a significant partnership response from the Police, Fire Service and Council in particular, but also a wide range of other agencies including Incommunities, third-sector groups and volunteers from our communities.
- 4.2 The level of disorder has been declining gradually over recent years. In 2022 this trend continued with the need for the police to dispatch 'Public Order' response units extremely low relative to the situation a few years ago.

- 4.3** As of 2022 Bradford District established the Prevention and Risk Reduction Group (PRRG) attended by Silver level decision makers from a range of partner organisations. This group co-ordinated the agreed prevention and risk reduction action specific to Bradford between July and November.
- 4.4** Aims of the group:
- To ensure members work collaboratively and proactively to implement prevention and risk reduction work streams targeting specific risk and areas,
 - To act as the tactical receiving/decision making point with regards to collaborative prevention/risk reduction efforts for the five constituent areas of Bradford District specific to the Bonfire Period.
- 4.5** In addition to prevention and risk reduction activities, Bradford District partners will come together in a Special Operations Room (SOR) over the nights of the Bonfire weekend. The function of the SOR is to monitor incidents and deploy suitable resources from the range of support services that are available on the night.
- 4.6** Area Teams will lead the local response in their Constituency. This is led by both the Area Co-ordinator and the Neighbourhood Policing Team Inspector who are able to develop their own bespoke local partnership to prevent and reduce problems. Each Area responds to key local issues and 'Safer Bradford' has provided grants of up to £5,000 to focus on minimising the risk of disorder in 'hotspot' locations.
- 4.7** Partnership efforts in 'hot spot' locations are led by the Council's Neighbourhood Service and Neighbourhood Policing Team partners. This often involves engaging the local community to be a key part of the solution and in committing resources to youth provision and engagement.
- 4.8** The Local Authority/Police Anti-Social Behaviour Team focus on those who have been involved in nuisance behaviour related to fireworks and the 'bonfire period' indicates significant risk. Where appropriate warning letters are issued, and visits made to those most vulnerable to becoming involved in anti-social or dangerous behaviour.
- 4.9** The Youth Justice Service deliver an input to all the young people they are supporting on the consequences of ASB. This includes the 'Consequence Card' attached at **Appendix Three**.
- 4.10** During October and early November, the Council's Youth Service are engaging, educating, and protecting young people from harm. They deliver awareness raising sessions at generic youth clubs, sharing resources designed by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service (WYFRS) and Bradford Council.
- 4.11** Safer Schools Police Officers and WYFRS staff deliver a bespoke education package about the 'bonfire period' to a wide range of schools including supplementary schools. Last year it is estimated this programme reached over 20,000 young people.
- 4.12** As in previous years, communities, elected members, faith, and voluntary sector groups will work alongside statutory services providing a significant partnership

response across our neighbourhoods. The partnership and support from local communities is a fundamental part of our collective response.

- 4.13** The use of Outreach Youth Workers has deterred many young people from taking actions that could have resulted in danger to themselves and distress to others. The Workers engage and challenge young people's behaviours, often preventing incidents from developing. This allows more effective deployment of blue light services during a period where services can be stretched.
- 4.14** The perception by young people of a 'non-confrontational approach' from youth workers very often pays dividends in ensuring that situations do not escalate and are managed with young people in a way most likely to decrease problems. It is also worth noting that many problems that occur involve adults and that young people should not be singled out for blame.
- 4.15** Incommunities' Operatives work across the period, last year removing 4.9 tonnes of waste from dangerous bonfires and areas which posed fire risk/potential spread. Incommunities staff committed to spend time within wards dealing with build ups of waste, engaging with residents around safety and highlighting reporting mechanisms.
- 4.16** Council, Police and Fire Service Communications Teams worked together to ensure communities are aware of the partnership effort and the role of residents in helping to report ASB. Social media is also widely employed and greatly extends the reach of our joint communications strategies.
- 4.17** West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Campaign 2022 - Key messages:
 - a) Fake fireworks, real danger. Cheap fireworks aren't worth the risk, stick to the real thing,
 - b) One night could leave you scarred for life. Just one mistake with a firework or bonfire can be a disaster,
 - c) Prank 999 calls are no laughing matter. A fake call to the emergency services is a criminal offence,
 - d) Do you want to remember, remember, the 5th of November? Take the family to an organised firework display for a night they won't forget.2023 campaign to be released imminently.

5. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

- 5.1** Funding is provided from the West Yorkshire Mayor to commission services and activities to address the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) priorities and to support delivery of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan. The annual grant for 2023/24 is just over one million pounds and supports: local responses to drugs and alcohol; the Youth Justice Service in preventing and tackling youth crime: partnership responses to serious and organised crime and serious violence, anti-social behaviour, violence against women and girls; hate crime support, reducing re-offending and dangerous/ nuisance driving.
- 5.2** There is currently no indication what the allocation will be for 2024/25. This does not have a direct effect on the Council's mainstream funding.

6. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

- 6.1** The Community Safety Partnership Board reports through to the Health and Wellbeing Board governance arrangements.
- 6.2** Risks likely to cause community tensions are monitored and mitigating actions put in place through the Community Safety Partnership structure.

7. LEGAL APPRAISAL

- 7.1** Aspects of the Community Safety Partnership Board's work are governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and associated guidance.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

- 8.1.1** The Safer Communities Plan and work on community safety supports the following Corporate Equality Objectives:

- 8.1.2 Community Relations** – Ensure that people of the district get on well together:

By working to reduce crime and the fear of crime delivery of the Safer Communities Plan provides a means of encouraging confidence in communities and social mixing. Some crime types are carried out by perpetrators from specific groups, age, gender etc. and any reduction in this behaviour can support more effective community relations.

- 8.1.3 Equality Data**

The CSP Plan on a Page is an evidence based approach that is built on a strategic needs assessment document produced by Police and Council analysts. By using evidence-based decision making and having a better understanding of the demography and geography of criminal and anti-social behaviour the partnership is able to deploy resource against the areas that are likely to result in the greatest impact

8.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.2.1** There are no sustainability implications apparent.

8.3 TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.3.1** There are no climate emergency implications apparent.

8.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.4.1 Reductions in the anti-social use of fireworks would positively impact community safety across the district.

8.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

8.5.1 There are no Human Rights Act implications apparent.

8.6 TRADE UNION

8.6.1 There are no trade union implications apparent.

8.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

8.7.1 A number of wards experience greater difficulties with the anti-social use of fireworks and disorder on Bonfire Night. The noise from fireworks affects more people in densely populated areas.

8.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

8.8.1 It is recognised that looked after children can be more vulnerable to specific crime types and appropriate Corporate Parent leads should be kept up to date with trends and concerns in relation to community safety via the Community Safety Partnership structure.

8.8.2 Young people can be more vulnerable to harm from anti-social use of fireworks and dangerous bonfires.

8.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

None

9. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

N/A

10. OPTIONS

10.1 The Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the work carried out to reduce and minimise disorder over the Bonfire period and to tackle late night fireworks and refer observations and matters for consideration back to the CSP as appropriate.

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 The Committee notes the work to reduce and minimise disorder over the Bonfire period and to tackle late night fireworks

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 – Fireworks poster/postcard

12.2 Appendix 2 – Copy of letter to MP's

12.3 Appendix 3 – Consequence Card