

BRIEFING NOTE ON CRIME RECORDING AND FUTURE CRIME FIGURES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 In October the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety met the Police and Crime Commissioner, Simon Hayes. At that meeting he discussed changes in Crime recording in Hampshire and requested that that matter was brought to the panel's attention for future reference.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The way crimes are recorded has been the subject of much discussion in Police Forces across the UK. Many forces, including Hampshire have been criticised for what was considered incorrect recording. Hampshire Constabulary were inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in 2014 and had one of the lowest compliance ratings for crime recording. Following the inspection Hampshire made considerable changes to the way they record crimes to rectify the issue.

3. RESULTS OF THE CHANGES IN RECORDING OF CRIME

- 3.1 As a result of the changes the Constabulary were expecting a significant rise in crime figures. Given the potential impact on the District Councils Statutory duties the Crime Commissioner requested this matter be brought to the attention of the Panel. It should be stressed that there is not a significant increase, generally, in crime but the way it is now being recorded might suggest this.
- 3.2 The new practises that have been brought in have been designed to focus on victims and ensure that they are treated with the respect that they deserve. A consequence of these changes is that a single call or incident may now result in multiple crimes being recorded.
- 3.3 It is thought that the changes may result in the figures looking like there is at least an 8% increase in overall crime. However in certain types of incidents this may be considerably more. The types of crime particular responsible for the rise are -
- Sexual offences
 - Violent crime
 - Public order
- 3.4 Hampshire Police said they welcomed the increase in reports of rape and sexual offences as a sign of confidence from the public in reporting such crimes, and a great deal of progress working with their partners across the counties.
- 3.5 The way in which they record certain types of crime has changed significantly – where formerly they may have recorded one offence, they are identifying multiple offences and recording all of them as individual crime reports. The Police are also proactively asking victims of assaults – such as domestic assault – if they have previously been assaulted, and if they have, these historical offences are now being recorded as crimes. Previously, these accounts would have just been recorded as intelligence.

- 3.6 The increase in public order crimes is directly attributable to changes in the classification of crime – what used to be anti-social behaviour in many cases, such as a neighbour dispute, is now classified as a public order offence, and recorded as a crime.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The constabulary report that there are actually fewer calls being made to them to report a crime. There is also no increase in footfall through the custody centres – both of these measures give some reassurance.
- 4.2 As Hampshire was previously once one of the least compliant their rise is likely to be one of the highest.
- 4.3 The changes in crime recording in Hampshire will result in an apparent rise in Crime Statistics. As a District Council we have a number of Statutory Duties where we have to have regard to Crime, as a result we need to be aware of these changes and the impact they will have on our ability to compare year on year trends.

5. FINANCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL, EQUALITY & DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no implications directly arising from this report however the core subject relates to Crime and Disorder.

7. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 7.1 “The District Commander, Simon Tribe, has kept me updated on the changes that have occurred in crime recording in Hampshire. New Forest remains a low crime area and I will ensure that we focus our resources on the priorities that are identified from the Partnership Strategy and that we understand where the real crime changes are.” Cllr Jill Cleary.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the changes in recording be noted and that Panel be advised if there are significant upward changes in crime reports.

For further information contact:
Annie Righton
Head of Public Health and Community
Safety
Tel 02380 285588
Annie.righton@nfdc.gov.uk

Background Papers:
None