

# Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 September 2022

By Head of Housing and Community Services

## INFORMATION REPORT



Not Exempt

### Annual Crime and Disorder Update

## Executive Summary

This report aims to raise awareness for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the crime and disorder situation for the calendar year 2021. It was delayed due to the late provision of the 2021 census data, which was used by the West Sussex County Council Partnership Analyst to produce the 2021 Strategic Impact Assessment on which this report is based.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic in 2020, where behaviours differed to the norm, the 2021 data has been compared to both 2020 and pre-pandemic figures in 2019.

Nationally and locally, recorded crime in 2021 was similar, or lower, than pre-pandemic levels.

In the Horsham District, overall crime increased by 1.3% compared to 2020 but was down 7.5% compared to pre-pandemic levels. Horsham had the second lowest recorded crime rate across West Sussex.

There are however some nuances to this with specific crime types with some evidencing an increase. The overall crime rate in 2021 was 44 per 1000 of the population. This is the second lowest recorded crime rate in West Sussex. Further details are added throughout the report.

53% of recorded crime in Horsham was Violent Crime<sup>1</sup> However, this is comparable to rates across the whole county. Weapon related crime remained low in Horsham and one of the lowest in the county. Knife crimes accounted for only 1% of all crimes across the district and gun related crime remained low.

In 2021 there were 2751 incidents of anti-social behaviour which, although lower than 2020, is up 64% on 2019. A vast number of these incidents (88.5%) was regarding neighbour nuisance. Horsham was the second lowest across West Sussex for Personal ASB and total ASB (includes Personal ASB, Nuisance ASB and Environmental ASB).

Sexual offences across the county increased in all areas except Horsham, where offences were down 10% and were the second lowest in West Sussex. Vehicle crime, shop thefts and theft from a person were all lower than pre-pandemic levels.

In 2021 the Safe & Well Partnership agreed to focus on two key priority areas, accepting that having two priorities which were so broad in nature would make the best use of resources. It also reflects what the group can positively impact, separate to police priorities.

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<sup>1</sup> In a violent crime, a victim is threatened with or harmed by violence. Violent crimes include rape and sexual assault, robbery, assault, and murder.

- 1.Young people and mental health support
- 2.Vulnerable older people

Overall, in 2021 Horsham was, and continues to be, one of the safest districts to live in West Sussex.

Section 9 of the report details the role of Horsham District Council in respect of crime and disorder, another key partner is Sussex Police, who for context have seen an increase in Police Officer numbers year on year since 2018. Sussex Police also had 291 Police Community Support Officers in the year 2021, an increase from 203 in 2018.

## **Recommendation**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to note the report

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

The report is a Statutory Requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998)

## **Background Papers**

N/A

## **Wards affected:**

All Wards

## **Contact:**

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## Key Information

### 1. District profile

- 1.1 The 2021 Census recorded the population of the Horsham District as 146,800 – an increase of 11.8% from 2011. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%). The Horsham District accounts for 17% of the West Sussex population.
- 1.2 The population is split as 51% female and 49% male. 45% of the population is of working age, between 25 and 59 years. 22% are under 19 years old.
- 1.3 Of the 316 local authorities in England, Horsham is ranked as 303<sup>rd</sup> most income deprived.
- 1.4 91.2% of residents are satisfied with where they live. This is higher than the average across West Sussex (84.8%).

### 2. Total recorded crimes

- 2.1 There were 6449 recorded crimes in 2021. This is an increase of 1.3% since 2020 but down 7.5% since pre-pandemic levels. The increase was driven mainly by an upsurge in Theft & Handling, Criminal Damage offences and Violent Crimes.
- 2.2 The overall crime rate in 2021 was 44 per 1000 of the population. This is the second lowest recorded crime rate in West Sussex. Nationally and locally, recorded crimes are returning to similar or lower levels than pre-pandemic.

### 3. Violent Crime

- 3.1 In a Violent Crime, a victim is threatened with or harmed by violence. Violent Crimes include offences such as assault, rape and sexual assault, and harassment. Assault was the most common violent crime in the district.
- 3.2 Horsham has the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest number and rate per 1000 of the population (23) of Violent Crime offences, accounting for 12% of the county's total.

Violent Crime rate per 1000 population	4. Jan – Dec 2021	5. Rate	6. Violent Crime % of West Sussex
Adur	1,959	30.4	7%
Arun	5,684	34.5	20%
Crawley	6,110	51.6	21%
Chichester	3,650	29.4	13%
Horsham	3,411	23.2	12%
Mid Sussex	3,392	22.2	12%
Worthing	4,385	39.4	15%

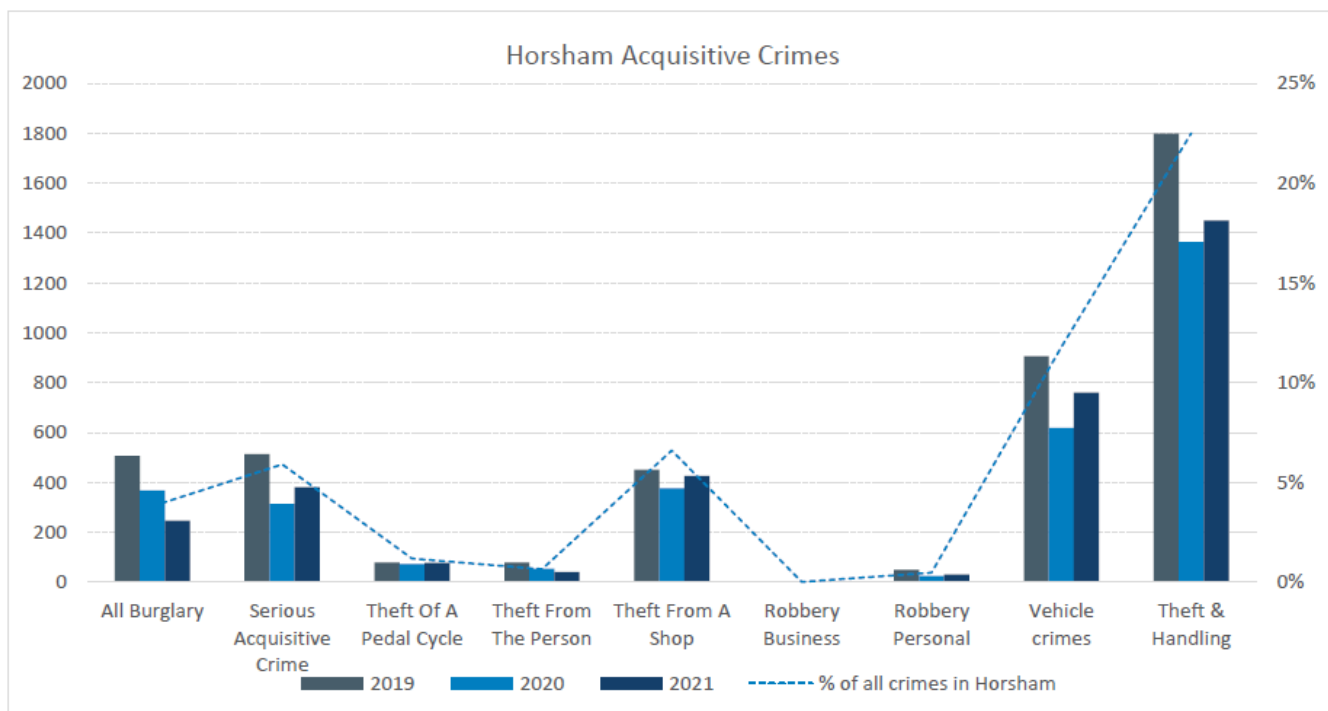
- 3.3 53% of recorded crime in Horsham was Violent Crime (3411 instances). This is an increase of 1.7% since 2020 and an increase of 3% since 2019. 92% of these offences

were categorised as acts of violence against the person. Over three quarters of the Violent Crimes were committed by someone known to the victim.

- 3.4 However, Serious Violence accounted for less than 1% of the district's recorded crime and has decreased compared with both 2019 and 2020. It was the second lowest in the county. Serious Violence includes crime types that cause, or are intended to cause, serious injury and includes homicide, knife crime, personal robbery and gun crime, where these occur in a public place.
- 3.5 Sexual offences across the county increased in all areas except Horsham, where offences were down 10% and were the second lowest in West Sussex.
- 3.6 Weapon related crime remained low in Horsham and one of the lowest in the county. Knife crimes accounted for only 1% of all crimes across the district and gun related crime remained low (5 offences in 2021).
- 3.7 The severity of recorded crime in Horsham was the joint lowest in West Sussex. The severity score reflects the relative harm of the offence rather than the number of offences.
- 3.8 The average age of young suspects (u18) involved in violence was 15 years. 15% of all Violence Against the Person involved children and young people as victims.
- 3.9 The average age of those involved in violent crimes in the district was 33 years, with 20% occurring in Horsham Town Centre (Denne and Riverside), 10% in Billingshurst and 8% in Storrington & Sullington.

#### **4 Acquisitive Crime**

- 4.1 Acquisitive Crime refers to crime that is committed to gain possessions and includes residential burglary, robbery of business property, robbery of personal property, theft of a vehicle and theft from a vehicle.
- 4.2 In 2021 theft from a shop, burglary, vehicle crime and theft from a person were all lower than in 2019.
- 4.3 Theft and Handling accounted for 23% of the district's crime but was 19% lower than 2019.
- 4.4 Theft of pedal cycles increased 6% from 2020 but was 4% lower than 2019.



## 5. Drugs offences

- 5.1 In 2021 there were 219 drug offences in Horsham District which accounted for 3% of total crime. That figure was down 16% since 2020 but up 11% compared to 2019. It accounted for 10% of all West Sussex drugs crimes.
- 5.2 There were 35 instances of Drugs Trafficking and Supply in 2021 (down 45% from 2020 and up 133% since 2019, but the actual figure remained low). This was the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in West Sussex.

## 6. Anti-social behaviour

- 6.1 In 2021 there were 2751 incidents of anti-social behaviour which, although lower than 2020, is up 64% on 2019. However, Horsham was the second lowest across West Sussex for Personal ASB and total ASB (includes Personal ASB, Nuisance ASB and Environmental ASB).
- 6.2 88.5% of reported ASB was regarding neighbour nuisance. This was reflected in the number of complaints sent to the Community Safety inbox. Speeding issues (and related vehicle noise) was also regularly reported to the community safety team.
- 6.3 Spikes of youth violence have become apparent across West Sussex with groups of young people (typically aged 12-16 years old) engaging in multiple incidents of ASB and escalating levels of aggression. Police intelligence suggests that there is a potential peer group involved in ASB, drug use, criminal damage, serious assaults and other criminal activities, moving between Southwater and Horsham Town Centre due to some Police disruption activities; with some also causing issues in Billingshurst, Storrington and Broadbridge Heath.

## **7. Emerging threats in the Horsham District**

7.1 The following are emerging threats:

- Distraction thefts targeting elderly people in supermarket or public car parks. Victims are distracted then cards, money or purses are taken.
- There were 810 Action Fraud reports in Horsham, which was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest across West Sussex. This included online shopping fraud, investment fraud and romance fraud.
- Youth related ASB in Storrington, Southwater and Broadbridge Heath continue to be an issue.
- Train networks are being used to transport and deal drugs, including young people involved with County Lines originating from London. Gangs are using Billingshurst station to travel from outside the area to potentially deal cannabis. The village is ideally located on a main line to London, has no ticket gates and is near to a large secondary school.
- High value jewellery burglaries were recorded in 2021.
- Although Horsham District has very low levels of income deprivation, there is nonetheless an issue. In 2019 there were 7,600 people experience deprivation relating to low income. 1,700 children aged under 15 were in income deprived families and 2,500 over 60s experienced income deprivation. With the current economic climate, this will only increase and could lead to young people becoming vulnerable to exploitation and youth related ASB could increase.
- Ongoing neighbour disputes are expected to increase resulting from stress due to the economic climate.

## **8. The role of Horsham District Council**

8.1 Horsham District Council has limited or no influence on crimes such as Homicide, Serious Organised Crime, Domestic Abuse, Road Traffic Accidents, Modern Slavery and Trafficking.

8.2 However, the council can influence antisocial behaviour, neighbour disputes and offer support to younger and older people. The Council, in partnership with Parish and Neighbourhood Councils enable seven warden schemes across the district. This positively supports the speed of addressing issues such as ASB on a local level. It should be noted however the role of the warden schemes isn't solely focused on crime, but also local community issues identified by the Parish and Neighbourhood Councils.

8.3 Working in partnership, representatives of the Community Services team are active at a number of forums and boards including:

- Horsham District Safe & Well Partnership
- West Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership
- Community Safety Partnership (PCC)
- Police Partnership Tactical Tasking & Co-ordination Group
- HASBRAC (Hate and Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference)
- Safer West Sussex Partnership Executive Board
- Peer group conferences
- Community Triggers
- Local Community Network
- Anti-Social Behaviour working groups

- Hate Crime Engagement Partnership
- Neighbourhood Warden provision and steering groups
- West Sussex Suicide Prevention Partnership
- Horsham Partnership Advisory Board

8.4 The Safe & Well Partnership agreed to focus on two broad priorities in 2021: young people and mental health support; and vulnerable older people and HDC has played a lead role in these two areas. Priorities for 2022 will continue to be young people and mental with the addition of Cost of Living.

8.5 Horsham is a relatively affluent district with lower-than-average crime levels, and deprivation among the lowest nationally. Vulnerability is lower than county and national levels and communities are typically more satisfied with their neighbourhoods than other areas of West Sussex. Horsham was in 2021, and continues to be, one of the safest districts in the county.

## **9. Relevant Council policy**

9.1 The work programme of the Safe & Well Partnership supports the Council Corporate Plan by playing an active role in ensuring our district is a safe and enjoyable place to live. It also enables the Council to work in partnership with other agencies to tackle the causes of crime and disorder and improve the quality of life in our local communities.

## **10. Next Steps**

10.1 A further report will be provided to the Committee within the next 12 months in respect of 2022 data.

## **11. Resource consequences**

11.1 There are no associated resource consequences.

## **12. Legal considerations and implications**

12.1 There are no associated legal consequences.

## **13. Risk assessment**

13.1 There are no associated risks.

## **14. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

14.1 None – information report

## **15. Environmental implications**

15.1 None

## **16. Other considerations**

16.1 There are no other considerations