

# **Community Protection**

# **Scrutiny Report 2021**

**31<sup>st</sup> of August 2021**

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to outline the current trajectory of Community Protection in line with the Council's Recovery and Improvement Plan.

## **Background**

Community Protection provides Nottingham City Council's regulatory function, whilst working alongside multiple agencies and organisations to create a safe and clean environment in every one of the city's neighbourhoods. Community Protection covers three core service areas, Operations, Community Partnerships and Regulation. Subsections of these three core service areas are:

- Trading Standards
- Environmental Health
- Licensing
- Community Protection Officers
- Safer Places (air pollution)
- Safer Business (food health and safety)
- Safer Housing

These services form the council's statutory and regulatory functions; however, the above is not an exhaustive list.

As a result of financial pressures towards the end of 2020, there were further budget cuts to Community Protection which has had an impact on key service areas and remaining resources. Subsequently, changes to the overall structure of Community Protection have been made in addition to the introduction of a new operating model and Transformation Programme to streamline services and increase efficiency.

This report will cover four key areas; the transformation programme, statutory duties and legal responsibilities, efficiency and effectiveness and demand management.

## **Transformation Programme**

In quarter three of 2020, the number of frontline Community Protection Officers (CPOs) was reduced from 100 FTE to 76 FTE at full establishment, equating to 24%. The breakdown of those 76 posts is as follows:

### *Supervisory Posts*

- 9 Senior CPOs across all neighbourhood teams and specialist teams

### *Specialist Teams*

- Operational Response Team– 8
- Statutory Regulation and Compliance Team - 10
- Dog Control – 4 Dog Control Officers

This then leaves 45 CPOs who are based within six neighbourhood CPO teams across the city to perform day-to-day duties. The neighbourhood CPO teams work across the 20 City wards and provide coverage 365 days a year. At full establishment, there would be two CPOs operational in each ward per day not accounting for sickness absences, annual leave or the service wide shift pattern.

Due to the reduced number of CPOs a transformational programme is underway to move to an online reporting system. This transformation programme is to ensure that the Operations

service continues to deliver the statutory regulation functions of the council whilst contributing to the relevant Council Plan pledges. The technology being developed will allow Community Protection to track ward level data and hotspot areas, enabling the service to allocate the right resources and operate more effectively.

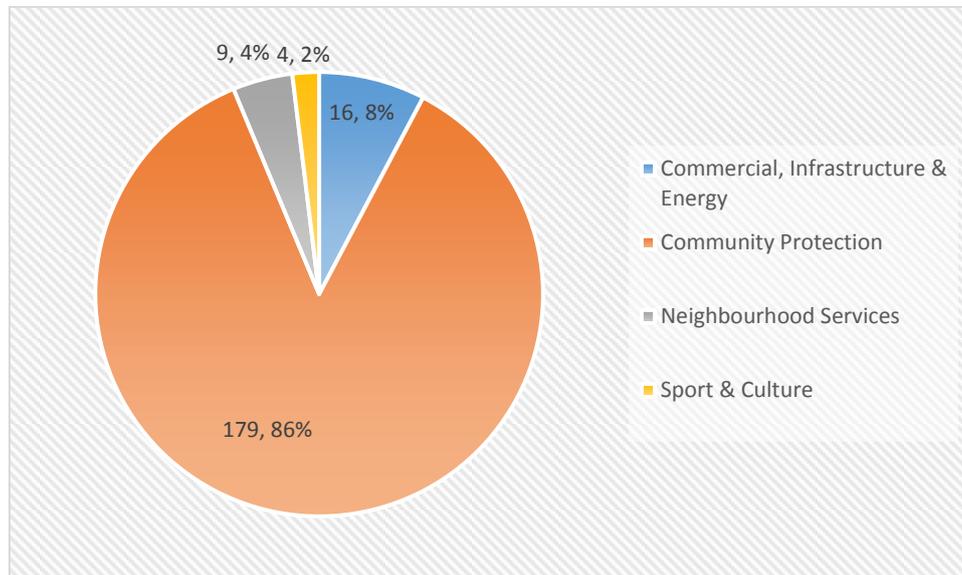
Other benefits to this transformation programme are:

- Information can be harvested from systems once implemented to assist with analysis and strategic planning
- The system has a clear process of escalation built in, and thus provides more accountability i.e. with complaints, it will be easy to see how many have been received, which are resolved or outstanding, and outstanding reports escalated to a senior officer if they breach targets for resolution
- GDPR compliance and automatic deletion after legislative timescales have expired

The system is currently undergoing live testing and problem solving to improve the way in which the service is delivered and the end customer experience. All of the above combined will result in a customer journey with improved communication and direct links with the lead investigator in any given case.

### Statutory Duties and Legal Responsibilities

There are a number of individual statutory duties which are discharged by Community Protection across its various teams and services. The graph below shows that of 208 statutory duties discharged across Resident Services, Community Protection is responsible for 179, which amounts to 86% of the total.



These statutory duties play an important role in keeping citizens of Nottingham safe, and relate to a range of issues, some of which are detailed in the below table<sup>\*\*\*</sup>:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abandoned vehicles</li> <li>• Animal health</li> <li>• Children safety</li> <li>• Civil contingencies</li> <li>• Clean air</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Noise</li> <li>• Packaging</li> <li>• Prevention of damage by pests</li> <li>• Pyrotechnic articles</li> <li>• Refuse disposal</li> </ul>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Controlling infectious diseases</li> <li>• Counter Terrorism</li> <li>• Crime and disorder</li> <li>• Criminal justice</li> <li>• Duty to involve local representatives</li> <li>• Environment protection</li> <li>• Equalities</li> <li>• Food hygiene</li> <li>• Food labelling</li> <li>• Highways</li> <li>• Homelessness reduction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Road traffic regulations</li> <li>• Sunday trading</li> <li>• Town and Country Planning</li> <li>• Toys</li> <li>• Under age sales</li> <li>• Unfair treatment of tenants</li> <li>• Weights and measures</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Immigration</li> <li>• Licensing of hackney carriages</li> <li>• Modern slavery</li> </ul>
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\*\*\*A comprehensive list of statutory duties can be provided which detail how each is discharged by the team.

### Service Efficiency and Effectiveness

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy have published data from the financial year 2018-2019 which allows Community Protection to be benchmarked against other service areas and to compare itself with other local authorities.

### Environmental & Regulatory Services

The table below shows the expenditure of the environmental and regulatory service of Community Protection (£head = per head population).

How do service line costs compare to the average across my peer geographies?							
📍 Nottingham							
Indicator	Period #1	Value #1	Period #2	Value #2	Absolute change	Relative change	Score
TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES (RO) £/head	2016-17	104.10	2017-18	97.22	-6.88	-6.61%	High
TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES (RO) £/head	2017-18	97.22	2018-19	79.25	-17.97	-18.49%	Average
TOTAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES (RO) £/head	2016-17	104.10	2018-19	79.25	-24.85	-23.87%	Average

The environmental and regulatory service was reduced by 6.88% between 2016/2017 to 2017/2018 and then a further reduction of 18.49% was made between 2017/2018 to 2018/2019, totalling a reduction of 23.87% over 2 years. As a result of these reductions, Community Protection at Nottingham City Council subsequently scored as 'Average compared to peers' where previously it had scored 'High compared to peers' in comparison to service line costs. Whilst staffing numbers are fewer, the demands faced by the service have increased.

The following table splits Community Protection's service area into categories, which are then compared by net cost per head to other authority peer groups, resulting in a score. A score of 1 = very low cost and 5 = very high cost.

RO Category	Core Cities Only (x8)	Core Cities + Derby & Leic (x10)	Metropolitan Districts Only (x35)	Unitary Authorities Only (x56)	All Unitary Auth and Met Districts (x91)
Trading standards	High	Average	High	Low	Average
Food (and water) Safety combined	Very High	Very High	Very High	High	Very High
Environmental protection; noise and nuisance	Average	Average	High	Average	Average
Housing standards	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
Health and safety	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low
Pest control	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Very Low	Low
Licensing - Alcohol and entertainment licensing; taxi licensing	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Low	Low
Crime Reduction	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High	Very High
CCTV	Very High	Very High	High	Average	Average

The majority of the comparisons evidence that Community Protection in Nottingham is operating at a 'Very low' or 'Low' cost point per head compared to other local authorities of all kinds.

Trading Standards is at a 'Low' cost point compared to unitary authorities but 'High' in cost compared to Core Cities Only or all 35 Metropolitan districts.

Crime Reduction is 'very high' in all comparisons but there are multiple variables which may affect this category – other authorities may have several alternative service provisions which don't necessarily align with Community Protection for a direct comparison. Much of environmental health and other regulatory activity such as the business regulations team is included in this category therefore can be misleading and higher than average. The services which Community Protection provides are similar to that of other core cities across the UK, and whilst the makeup of Nottingham reflects other core cities (i.e. amount of restaurants and population) Nottingham is not formally categorised as a core city.

#### Selective Licensing

Finally, when comparing the costs within housing standards to other councils which have a similar scheme, the table below shows that the income generated from Selective Licensing creates a very low spend. The negative expenditure seen within Selective Licensing is related to more money being received than expended.

RO Category	Housing standards
City of Nottingham UA	-3.36
Liverpool	-0.36
Coventry	-0.13
Wigan	-0.02
Brighton & Hove UA	0.00
<i>To help illustrate the point, I have provided the top 5 and bottom 5 for comparison</i>	

<i>purposes.</i>	
Bradford	2.45
Slough UA	2.82
Luton UA	3.04
Reading UA	3.19
Bournemouth UA	6.10

## Demand Management

There are already rigorous performance management frameworks in place, however new indicators and processes for recording and measuring statutory activity will be developed to ensure the five stage model of enforcement/engagement is captured across Community Protection. A review has been conducted and prioritised work streams are being measured against the threat, risk and harm with a particular focus on delivering quality statutory duties and day-to-day services.

As previously mentioned, there has been a reduction in the number of CPOs, which has meant that the service has had to develop and implement a new operating model, in the form of a transformation programme, to ensure that increasing demand is met with diminished resources.

The below image represents the 5 Stage Model which Community Protection Officers work towards when taking enforcement action:



The transformation programme will be centred on stages 1, 2 and 3 of the five stage enforcement/engagement model paying particular attention to the high volume, lower skilled work of the wider Community Protection service. Subsequently, CPOs will be conducting the initial stages of the statutory and regulatory work on behalf of Food Safety, Health and Safety, Trading Standards, Pollution Control, Safer Housing and Licensing. As part of the

programme specialist training will be delivered by identified trainers within each department to ensure that all CPOs are competent in completing these work streams. No key performance indicators have been set for these work streams as they are new and will be monitored only for 2021/22 in order to provide a baseline for subsequent performance indicators to be measured against in the future.

Since the launch of the new operating model at the beginning of the 2021/22 financial year, the following work has been delivered by CPOs on behalf of Regulation:

Four checks for Food Safety, 26 checks for Licencing, 41 for Environmental Health and Safer Places, 137 for Safer Housing and finally, 9 for Trading Standards. Resulting in a grand total of 217 individual statutory duties fulfilled at the end of August 2021.

2021/22	Food Safety	Licensing	EH & SP	Safer Housing	Trading Standards	TOTAL
Apr	1	9	5	20	1	36
May	0	0	10	39	1	50
Jun	0	3	14	34	2	53
Jul	2	6	6	24	2	40
Aug	1	8	6	20	3	38
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>217</b>

As demonstrated above, the service is making the most of the digital tools, embracing and embedding new technology in service delivery - specifically utilising Firmstep to manage and analyse demand to determine the allocation of CPO resources. The model of operating used before the reduction in staff and across all service areas is no longer sustainable with current workforce levels so an alternative model has been created to meet our statutory and regulatory functions.

The term 'surge' is an operational term coined for when CP pull resources out of other areas and pool them into one hotspot location with the sole purpose to reduce further impact on services and proactivity take enforcement action.

The most recent 'surge' operation was in the Lenton Triangle and Arboretum areas of the city which have a large number of students living in the residential areas. This 'surge' operation consisted of several CPOs from various teams across the city working alongside colleagues in housing.

#### Totals up to 9<sup>th</sup> of August 2021 for Operation 'Surge'

Safer Housing Departments			
Internal & External Visits	Waste Interventions	Referrals	# of Officers on ground
181 Combines internal/external visits  29 Streets Covered	175	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 – licence holders referred to ASB team due to evidence of fly-tipping</li> <li>1 – Unlicensed property</li> </ul>	23 Officers

		referred to Proactive Enforcement properties referred to Proactive Enforcement due to potentially being unlicensed.	
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Frontline CPOs				
No. of fly tips referred to the ASB team	No. of wheelie bins returned to property	No. of property referrals to the HMO team	Other reported actions	# Office time in hours
8	500+	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of bin dippers engaged with X 2</li> <li>• A number of landlords, builders and cleaning crews were engaged with too, but there isn't an exact figure.</li> </ul>	56 hours

The tables above show the activities delivered during the operation. Initial numbers indicate that the Safer Housing service have contacted licence holders and managing agents regarding a minimum of 521 properties. All works carried out by both service areas have been in conjunction with both Universities.

During the Pandemic, a Covid Response Team was created and completed regulatory and compliance work in conjunction with environmental health officers within food and health & safety.

Overall achievements by the Covid Response Team:

- 1652 Test and Trace visits conducted
- 2154 business engagements
- 1428 factsheets delivered
- 606 clinically vulnerable checks
- 3 COVID fines issued

## Conclusion

Community Protection has experienced significant financial reductions in previous years and in the last financial year a further two reductions were made. Whilst resources have steadily decreased, demand has increased which will add further complexity to the programme and test the resilience of the model. The current transformation programme seeks to make the most efficient use of the remaining resources whilst delivering a safe and legal level of regulation and enforcement. The transformation programme is in its early stages, and Officers and the Portfolio Holder will continue its implementation and evaluate the services effectiveness. The overall conclusion of this report is that the Portfolio Holder and Officers must make finely balance decisions between the risk and remaining budget to ensure Community Protection can continue to operate within the Council's Recovery and Improvement Plan and deliver against the Strategic Council Plan.