



**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date Thursday 7 September 2023
Time 9.30 am
Venue Committee Room 1A/1B, County Hall, Durham

Business

Part A

**Items which are open to the Public and Press
Members of the public can ask questions with the Chair's agreement,
and if registered to speak.**

1. Apologies for Absence
2. Substitute Members
3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 June 2023 (Pages 3 - 14)
4. Declarations of Interest, if any
5. Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties
6. Civil Contingency Planning and Storm Arwen Review (Pages 15 - 42)
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
7. Open Water Safety (Pages 43 - 62)
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration Economy and Growth
 - (ii) Presentation by the Corporate Health and Safety Compliance Manager, Regeneration, Economy and Growth

8. Safe Durham Partnership ASB Strategic Group Update
(Pages 63 - 82)
 - (i) Report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
 - (ii) Presentation by the Head of Community Protection Services, Neighbourhoods and Climate Change
9. Such other business as, in the opinion of the Chairman of the meeting, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration

Helen Lynch
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Durham
30 August 2023

To: **The Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor P Heaviside (Chair)
Councillor J Charlton (Vice-Chair)

Councillors V Andrews, P Atkinson, D Boyes, R Crute, M Currah, L Fenwick, C Hampson, K Hawley, N Jones, C Lines, D McKenna, L Maddison, E Mavin, J Miller, D Nicholls, R Potts, J Quinn, A Simpson and D Sutton-Lloyd

Co-opted Members: Mr D Balls and Mrs A Paterson

Co-opted Employees/Officers: Chief Fire Officer S Helps,
Chief Superintendent R Allen and Superintendent L Gosling

Contact: Amanda Stephenson Tel: 03000 269703

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of **Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in **Committee Room 1A/1B, County Hall, Durham** on **Monday 26 June 2023** at **9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor P Heaviside (Chair)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors J Charlton, V Andrews, D Boyes, M Currah, L Fenwick, C Hampson, P Jopling (substitute for R Potts), C Lines, D McKenna, E Mavin, J Miller, D Nicholls, J Quinn, K Rooney (substitute for A Simpson) and D Sutton-Lloyd

Co-opted Member:

Mr D Balls

Co-opted Employees/Officers:

Chief Inspector V Martin (substitute for Superintendent L Gosling)

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Atkinson, R Potts, A Simpson and Co-opted Officers Chief Fire Officer S Helps and Superintendent L Gosling.

2 Substitute Members

Councillor P Jopling as substitute Member for Councillor R Potts, Councillor K Rooney as substitute Member for Councillor A Simpson and Chief Inspector V Martin as substitute for Superintendent L Gosling.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2023 were confirmed by the Committee as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations on interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

6 Fire Home Safety Update

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided background information in advance of a presentation from County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (CDDFRS) on home fire safety (for copy see file of minutes).

The presentation delivered by Keith Carruthers, Director Community Risk Management, CDDFRS provided members with an overview of community fire safety activity with a focus on home fire safety visits.

Councillor Boyes indicated that the fire service was the most trusted of the blue light services and residents were forthcoming in providing the information as part of the visits, the problem was sharing the information with the right agencies. He commented that now that information was being shared which was a fantastic development, it was pleasing to note that the number of accidental fires was reducing.

Councillor Nicholls referred to smokers and medical equipment and asked what they were doing to keep smokers safe who may or may not have medical equipment at home. He then asked if the fire brigade were at a stage of visiting homes in affluent areas given that they had completed visits in poorer areas.

The Director Community Risk Management responded that they worked closely with oxygen suppliers and received monthly information to show which residents had a supply of oxygen and they would visit the home. This work was about education and if residents did smoke how to do it safely and night-time smoking was the riskiest behaviour. If you live alone and are smoking, there is only the one person to address any behaviours but if more than one person were in the house you could hear a smoke alarm or ensure that the cigarette was distinguished. They relied on occupiers letting them into properties and indicated that vulnerable residents presented the greatest challenge especially properties where hoarding was evident. With regard to affluent areas, less targeting happens to these properties as the risk was greater in more deprived areas. He indicated that you could go onto their website and request a home visit, and they relied on partners to refer them for a visit.

Councillor Quinn commented on the dip during COVID for the number of accidental dwelling fires and Home Fire Safety Visits and indicated that other services had a plateau. This was testament to the Fire Service that you went straight back up to

normal levels and asked how big of a problem was hoarding becoming in the County, if there had been an increase since COVID and commented that Councillors could help identify these properties.

The Director Community Risk Management responded that hoarding had increased and indicated that there had been three fatalities this year which may be coincidental. He stated that hoarding was typically due to mental wellbeing and referred to a recent incident at Darlington and indicated that it was more difficult when people owned their own home but if the home was rented, they could get the landlord involved. He stated that it was difficult to engage if the person did not want to.

Councillor Miller commented that it was good to hear that Durham was one of the best with regard to accidental dwelling fires and that residents had the trust of the Fire Service. He then referred to Durham being one of the worst in the country with regard to deliberate fires and asked by how much and asked why this was the case.

The Director Community Risk Management responded that in terms of the North East the three fire services that had the worst figures for deliberate fires were Cleveland, Tyne & Wear and Durham and Darlington based on the size of the population. It was suggested that there were some societal links and work was being conducted by Northumbria University to understand why people were deliberately starting fires. He commented that some deliberate fires were linked to crime as fire could be used as a weapon, but some fires were younger people who were starting fires as the start of anti-social behaviour and potentially move to crime.

Councillor Nicholls referred to deliberate fires and asked the officer if he could see this changing in terms of getting better.

The Director Community Risk Management indicated that deliberate fires were their biggest challenge and was a demand on resources. Their ethos was taking the education approach and going into schools to provide education and they have employed an education co-ordinator to improve the offer to schools, particular in hot spot areas. They were currently trialling a PCC funded scheme on Developing Resilience but indicated that a number of deliberate fires were due to peer pressure, fires were higher in hot weather. They were hoping that the education journey with young people would reduce deliberate fires.

Councillor Charlton referred to her personal experience with home fire safety visits and could not praise the team highly enough and wished to pass on her thanks to the team. She referred to the fuel crisis and asked if the team had seen an increase with vulnerable people using portable heaters and increase in risk.

The Director Community Risk Management responded that they had seen an increase in the use of portable heaters, but it was not a massive increase. He indicated that the use of oil filled radiators was as safe as radiators in a home the

issues were with a naked flame heater and uncontrollable heat. The advice would be to get the right type of portable heater.

Councillor Charlton asked if they would be extending the training to care companies where carers go into people's homes.

The Director Community Risk Management responded that they would offer training free of charge to anyone who was entering people's homes. He commented that they were in someone's home for 30 minutes, but a carer would be in the home every day and there was more chance of the dangers being put right.

The Chair asked if the impact of emerging technology such as electric vehicles would cause any issues.

The Director Community Risk Management indicated that technology was tried and tested, the issues were buying electronic products from unreputable manufacturers.

Resolved: That the information contained in the report and presentation be noted.

Councillor P Jopling left the meeting at 10.42 am

7 Nuisance Off Road Motor Bikes and Quads

The Committee were provided with a presentation from Durham Constabulary - Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator which provided information on the following:

- Background
- Partnerships
- What is Anti-Social use
- Definition
- Number of calls received
- Seizures of vehicles
- OP Endurance toolkit
- Next steps
- Motorcycle section
- Reporting methods

Councillor Boyes indicated that this was a big issue, and the problem was that the legislation had not caught up with what was happening. He stated that young people were wearing ski masks on bikes, and they think they are untouchable and commented taking the bikes from them was no power as they were not bothered. He commented that if he were driving a car after drinking or taking drugs you would expect to be arrested and go to court and receive a custodial sentence but that was not the case for young people on bikes. He stated that they needed these powers and provided an example of someone who had to leave the area due to repercussions following an incident with someone on a bike. Until people saw custodial sentences or people being banned public reassurance was limited.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator reassured the Member that a lot of intelligence gathering was going on, but they relied on people reporting incidents so that they could build the evidence. She understood the frustration and people were reluctant to come forward but there were other things they could do such as issuing warnings. She commented that central government made the legislation and their job was to enforce it.

Councillor Quinn referred to E-Scooters that are not illegal, but the issues were city centres where police have given a dispensation for companies to lease them out. He commented that there was no advertising to advise that these were illegal to drive on the public highway and this needed to be enforced and vendors should have to advise of this.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator responded that these companies had set criteria where you had to hold a driving licence and by agreeing to hire you are covered on their insurance and adhere to their rules, the difference was that you were insured. A number of road safety groups were discussing E-Scooters and how to deal with the vendors.

Members discussed the recent incident at Sunderland where someone was killed using a E-Scooter.

Chief Superintendent Martin indicated that government legislation was catching up and her personal opinion was that they would see a tightening up of the legislation.

In response to a question from Councillor Quinn, the Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator indicated that 617 vehicles had been seized, 56 vehicles were seized under Section 59 and commented that some vehicles were taken post incident and a lot was going on in the background.

Councillor Quinn asked if Durham Constabulary had looked into buying their own recovery truck.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator responded that they had a recovery system in place as it was not just about recovery it was also storage that came down to finances and indicated that this conversation had been held previously but was not currently an option.

Councillor Fenwick thanked the Officer for bringing Operation Endurance to Peterlee that had been amazing, they still had issues with some off-road bikes, but the main problem was quad bikes that were damaging the landscape that seemed to have ceased. She then referred to the gathering of information and asked if every police vehicle had a dashboard camera.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator responded that not all vehicles had dash cameras, but all officers had body cameras that they would switch on and that footage would be shared.

Councillor Fenwick asked if dash cameras on all vehicles could be fed back.

Councillor Mavin commented that intelligence did work, and some information resulted in two bikes been crushed. He asked how many times someone could get a bike crushed.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator indicated that they logged all the data, and this was included into the intelligence system which could be accessed by all police forces. The data could be used to look at things such as repeat offenders.

Councillor Miller asked if they had any data on the Section 59 notices issued by street wardens.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator indicated that any notices issued were logged into the system and commented that wardens do not issue notices as often as they could but their increased use by wardens was an option moving forward.

Councillor Miller then referred to calls being higher in May this year, which was good, but people were still contacting local councillors. He commented that rural areas could not compete with bigger towns as they did not have the population to witness what was happening to report it.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator referred to the Section 59 warning notices and indicated that it was not just the town they looked it was also the surrounding areas as it was the neighbourhood policing team's responsibility.

In response to a question from Councillor Miller, the Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator advised that it was the same officers who ride off road bikes and on road bikes. The motorbike section day to day were on road bikes and indicated that off road bikes were not always the most effective to catch these types of vehicles they might go off road but were more around urban areas. The newest operations they were using both types of bikes to cover both aspects to reduce the numbers.

Councillor Sutton-Lloyd indicated that it came down to the number of issues been reported and he did not think the numbers reflected what was happening and advised that he had received six calls from residents just this weekend. He commented that they needed to see some enforcement and action on the ground to encourage people to report incidents. Some progress had been seen with the anti-social behaviour teams and the funding was starting to come through and commented that it had taken a year to get the multi action team to work together to resolve a problem in his area and indicated that it came down to education.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator responded that they wanted to know what was happening and advised that they had a road safety package that they were putting into every secondary school and as part of that there was a section on off road bikes and the consequences. They also went into primary schools and gave the same information and shared some images of someone who had come off his bike. She indicated that a lot of enforcement work was going on in the background

and the neighbourhood teams do share information to members of the community. They did share a lot of information on Facebook and reminded members of the email contact.

Councillor Currah indicated that he had used the live chat to report an incident that was very good. He then referred to an incident where he was pursued by a bike for two hours.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator indicated that she understood people's reluctance to report incidents and that was why the other reporting methods were crucial and that crime stoppers were ideal for people who did not want to be identified and asked members to relay this to their constituents.

In response to a question from Councillor Charlton the Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator confirmed that the police used drones and that the bike section was located at Spennymoor but were out and about every day.

Councillor McKenna indicated that if people reported the incidents the number of phone calls would be tripled, but people were scared to report the incidents due to the repercussions and asked if the recent incident in Cardiff had impacted on the mindset of officers.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator indicated that it was a concern, but they all know there is a risk involved and be as professional as they can and do everything right. If things do go wrong, they have to deal with it, their aim was to protect the public and do what they could to uphold the law and ensure that people were safe and deal with those not complying with the law.

Councillor Nicholls indicated that the perception of the public was that the police do not care and were not pursuing people on bikes. He stated that the Police and Crime Panel were working extremely hard on this area of work and in his ward, they had eighteen anti-social behaviour incidents in a month, seventeen related to off road bikes. He continued that the method to report incidents was not available 24/7 and was not used much but the latest figures suggested a 30% increase in the reporting online and was a good method to contact the police. They were heading in the right direction and indicated that it was not just young people it was also older people offending. He asked what was being done regarding those older people and indicated that the bikes needed to be crushed so that they could not be sold on and asked when there would be a change in legislation so that they could crush these bikes.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator responded that they dealt with incidents the same way regardless of age. They would love to crush every bike, but this was out of their hands and was a funding issue.

Councillor Heaviside referred to the Section 59 notices and indicated that the bike can be taken one day but they could get it back the next day but if they used the no

insurance route as it was more likely to get the bike off the road and it being crushed.

The Casualty Reduction Co-ordinator commented that the Section 59 warning signs were perfect if the PCSO Officer could not get a police officer.

The Chair asked if Members could receive an update in six month's time.

Resolved: (i) That the contents of the presentation be noted.

(ii) That the Committee receive an update report in six months' time.

8 Safe Durham Partnership ASB Strategic Group Update

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change that provided an update on the ongoing work of the ASB Strategic Group (for copy of report, see file of minutes).

The Head of Community Protection Services was in attendance to deliver the report and presented the Durham County ASB Delivery Plan performance update for the period March 2022 – February 2023 that identified the following priorities for action during the coming year:

- Deliberate Fires
- Criminal Damage
- Flytipping
- Noise
- Intimidation / Harassment / Abuse

Members were advised that further work was ongoing to clarify the 'unknown nuisance' reports which were significant in number. The Data and Performance Team would continue to work with strategic partners regarding the quality of data so that the dashboards can present the best available information going forward (for copy of presentation, see file of minutes).

Councillor Charlton asked if the reduction in Anti-Social Behaviour on the whole was due to some items that were in this category now being classed as criminal activity.

The Head of Community Protection Services responded that it was difficult to say as there had been some changes in the reporting standards in the way the police log but there would be an element of Anti-Social Behaviour that was now logged as a crime, similarly they were now receiving information from housing providers on Anti-Social Behaviour so overall they were not seeing a big difference in the numbers although work was continuing around the data analysis. She commented that there was also a significant underreporting of Anti-Social Behaviour, but it gave an idea of where they need to put resources. The more interventions the increased likelihood that incidents were reported.

Councillor Charlton then referred to noise nuisance that appeared to be increasing across the board and asked if there was a pattern such as people more aware of noise due to home working.

The Head of Community Protection Services responded that they did see a spike during COVID lockdown but generally there appeared to be less tolerance in some areas.

Councillor Boyes asked how co-ordinated they were between the police, council and PCC and sought clarification if the 50,000 calls were just for the council or if it was all agencies. He then asked how much weight was attached to these figures and indicated that coming out of lockdown there would be a lot more rubbish so an increase in fly-tipping. He stated that they had a massive increase in deliberate fires over in East Durham. He commented that there were a number of empty properties in his ward and other wards that become targets and there was a number of cars been set a light and asked how much cross over there was between deliberate fires and crime as a fire was a crime, not anti-social behaviour.

The Head of Community Protection Services responded that partnership working was good, in terms of operations they had problem solving groups with a joined-up approach around multi-agency. She commented that the partnership working was healthy and strong in Durham. She continued that the impact of COVID may have impacted on some of the reductions, but she was aware that the fly-tipping group had been proactive over the last twelve months that would impact on the reductions although the trend had to be a continued reduction for it to be meaningful.

Councillor Nicholls referred to the 40% increase in deliberate fires in Durham and asked for the reasons for this and asked if Bowburn Primary School had impacted on these figures as it was set on fire most days and there was no national funding framework to deal with empty properties like Bowburn Primary School or was it more fires occurring across the city.

The Director Community Risk Management indicated that if there was a spike in a particular area the team would look into it and referred to a problem with fires in some woods and discussions held around woodland management as well as generic education.

Councillor Nicholls reiterated his concern around the absence of a national framework to deal with empty buildings and associated ASB/Crime.

The Director Community Risk Management responded that in terms of empty buildings they had a partnership approach where they were identifying all the empty buildings that potentially could cause problems and looking at security. 200 premises were identified and less than 10 were owned by the council.

Resolved: That the information contained in the report and presentation be noted.

Councillor D Boyes left the meeting at 11.51 am

9 Quarter Four Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Chief Executive which provided an overview of progress towards achieving the key outcomes of the council's corporate performance framework and highlighted key messages to inform strategic priorities and work programmes. The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager delivered the report which covered performance in and to the end of quarter four, 2022/23 January to March 2023 (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Charlton referred to page 85 of the report and sought clarification why data was from 2018 for alcohol seizures, 2021 for first-time entrants to the youth justice system aged 10 to 17, 2019/20 for proven re-offending by young people (who offend) in a 12-month period.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that there was some natural lag with the data, but he would look into the data with regard to alcohol seizures.

Councillor Quinn asked if they were on track for achieving 100% selective licensing by 2027 and sought clarification when selective licensing ran out.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the current selective licensing scheme expired after 5 years and that the Council would have to re-apply for its continuance and justify the reasons.

Councillor Currah commented that he was a landlord and had to pay £500 per year and had not changed anything in the way he dealt with his tenants and had taken the financial impact himself. Some landlords had passed this fee on to tenants.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager responded that the nature of the scheme could change and in 2027 they could still be eligible for a selective licensing scheme, but the area covered by the scheme may change.

Councillor Quinn asked if there had been any convictions or court appearances in relation to selective licensing.

The Corporate Scrutiny and Strategy Manager indicated that a briefing note would be provided to Members on selective licensing.

The Chair indicated his view that the selective licensing scheme was failing, and good landlords were targeted to finance the scheme for those for which it was intended.

Resolved: That the overall position and direction of travel in relation to quarter four performance, the impact of COVID-19 and the rising cost of living on performance,

and the actions being taken to address areas of underperformance including the significant economic and well-being challenges because of the pandemic be noted.

10 Refresh of Work Programme 2023-24 for the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Resources which provided the work programme for 2023/2024 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer delivered the report.

Councillor Nicholls asked that consideration of the work programme be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee to allow a full discussion on the work programme.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer responded that the next meeting was scheduled to be held on 7 September 2023 and commented that the work programme was draft and was designed to be flexible. Some of the areas proposed had specific timelines identified that had been agreed in conjunction with the services and partners. To defer consideration of the work programme could potentially delay formal adoption of the work programme but adoption of the draft programme does not preclude Members from raising other areas or issues that they may wish to include or re-prioritise the programme moving forward.

Councillor Miller asked if empty properties and anti-social behaviour could be included onto the work programme rather than an informal briefing session.

The Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer indicated that this issue had been raised in the Environment and Sustainable Communities OSC and Economy and Enterprise OSC and advised members that they were working with the service groupings and had plans for an informal Microsoft Teams session to allow as many members as possible to attend and have a discussion.

Resolved: That the Safer and Stronger OSC work programme for 2023/2024 and the flexibility it offers to respond to emerging issues be agreed.

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**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

7 September 2023

Storm Arwen improvement plan update



**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress with the Storm Arwen improvement plan.

Executive summary

- 2 On 20 May 2022, the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a report and presentation on civil contingency and emergency planning arrangements and a review of the response to Storm Arwen. The Committee was consulted on the draft Storm Arwen improvement plan and its comments were provided to Cabinet when it considered the plan at its meeting of 13 July 2022.
- 3 As part of its feedback, the Committee asked that a progress report be brought back to the Committee so that it could have oversight of progress with implementation.
- 4 Since the improvement plan was approved by Cabinet on 13 July 2022, significant progress has been made implementing the 27 improvements highlighted in the plan, many of which have required multi-agency working via the County Durham and Darlington Local Resilience Forum (LRF).
- 5 Appendix 2 to the report provides a progress report on implementation. Twenty improvement actions have been completed; six have commenced and are still in progress; and one has yet to start, in the main because it is contingent on other work.

- 6 Local communities and town and parish councils are also playing their part with over 40 communities responding to the council's offer to work with them to develop their own local community resilience plans.

Recommendation

- 7 Members of the Committee are asked to note the contents of the report.

Background

- 8 Storm Arwen hit the north of the United Kingdom on the afternoon of Friday 26 November 2021 and that night caused extensive damage across northern England.
- 9 Nationally, more than one million homes lost power as falling trees and poles brought down power lines, with over 100,000 homes experiencing several days without power. The strong winds also caused structural damage to buildings and transport was disrupted with rail services cancelled, roads blocked by fallen trees and overturned vehicles and snow accumulations across the Pennines.
- 10 In County Durham, 14,891 utility customers were affected by a loss of power. The outages affected all parts of the county and many residents were without power for several days before power was restored to all properties on Thursday 9 December.
- 11 The storm was one of the most disruptive weather events County Durham has experienced in recent times. The county, its communities and residents were impacted significantly and for many, the prolonged duration of power outages was unprecedented.

De-briefs and improvement plan

- 12 A number of de-briefs and reviews of the response to the storm were commissioned including a national review by the Department for Business, Energy, Innovation and Science (BEIS).
- 13 The council undertook its own review, which was considered by Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 22 May 2022 as part of the consultation on a draft improvement plan, which was subsequently considered and approved by Cabinet on 13 July 2022.
- 14 The plan set out 27 improvement actions against six themes:
 - (a) Review and expand the community resilience offering across the county.
 - (b) Improve incident planning and preparedness through emergency planning, training and exercising processes.
 - (c) Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents,
 - (d) Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

- (e) Develop a protocol for the activation and use of council staff during an incident.
 - (f) Review strategic, tactical and operational decision making and governance.
- 15 Appendix 2 to the report provides a progress report on implementation. Twenty improvement actions have been completed; six have commenced and are still in progress; and one has yet to start, in the main because it is contingent on other work.

Community resilience

- 16 One of the six improvement themes is community resilience. Members will be pleased to note that local communities and town and parish councils are playing their part with over 40 communities responding to the council's offer to work with them to develop their own local community resilience plans. As of now, 25 communities/groups are at the initial stages of planning; 13 are in the process of developing plans; five have draft plans; and eight have completed plans, five of which have been fully tested and exercised.
- 17 To support local communities, the council has introduced a community resilience and response support fund to operate alongside other funding sources. So far four applications have been received, with three approved.
- 18 We are also working with Durham Community Action to support the management committees of community buildings to plan to act as local community hubs during incidents. We will be delivering a workshop with DCA in November where we will provide management committees with advice and stocks of basic emergency equipment.
- 19 The council has also supported the development of a new funding scheme introduced by Northern Powergrid and managed by the Northern Powergrid Foundation. The council worked with Northern Powergrid to generate applications during the 'soft launch' testing of the scheme at the end of last year. Eighteen groups were supported during the soft launch, being awarded a total of £193,000.

Related planning

- 20 While the county did not experience severe storms and power outages in winter 2022/23, Members may wish to note that some of the reviewed procedures and actions were implemented when the county contended with extreme temperature 'heatwave' events last summer and also when we dealt with minor storms and power outages last winter.

- 21 Members may also wish to note that during the course of 2022 and 2023, there has been national emergency planning around the possibility of widescale power outages and utilities failure. A national emergency planning exercise, called Exercise Mighty Oak was held earlier this year and the council and its partners in the LRF participated.
- 22 National, regional and local planning is ongoing following the exercise and some of the improvement actions identified in our Storm Arwen improvement plan have been included in these wider work programmes.

Conclusion

- 23 Storm Arwen was one of the most disruptive weather events the county has experienced in recent times, with communities and residents affected significantly and many experiencing prolonged and unprecedented power outages.
- 24 Following reviews, the council and its partners identified areas for improvement and significant progress has been made over the course of 2022 to implement the improvements, with some work still ongoing.
- 25 Local communities and town and parish councils are participating in the planning with over 40 communities responding to the council's offer to work with them to develop their own local community resilience plans.

Background papers

- [Cabinet, 13 July 2022, Storm Arwen review – report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change](#)

Other useful documents

- None

Contact: Kevin Edworthy

Tel: 03000 268045

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Civil Contingencies Act 2004 places a duty on local authorities to cooperate with other agencies including the emergency services and utility companies, to assess risk and maintain plans to prevent emergencies and reduce, control and mitigate their effects. Agencies are required to work together through a local resilience forum (LRF). The Act also requires electricity distribution network operators to liaise with local authorities, Strategic Coordinating Groups (SCGs), and third parties to share information about vulnerable customers and work together to provide welfare support. The Electricity (Standards of Performance) Regulations 2015 made by the Gas and Electricity Markets Authority under the Electricity Act 1989(b) set out the Quality of Service Guaranteed Standards which electricity distribution network operators are required to provide to customers.

Finance

None.

Consultation

Stronger and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee was consulted on the draft improvement plan on 20 May 2022.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

It is predicted that we can expect more severe and volatile weather patterns due to long term climate change which may mean that severe storms become a more frequent occurrence.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

'Breach of duty under Civil Contingencies Act by failing to prepare for, respond to and recover from a major incident, leading to a civil emergency' is included as a risk within the council's corporate risk register. An update on controls and planned improvements in relation to this risk, post- Storm Arwen was provided to the meeting of Audit Committee on 28 February 2022 as part of the quarter three Strategic Risk Management Progress Report.

Procurement

None.

Appendix 2: Storm Arwen improvement plan progress as at 3 August 2023

Improvement areas agreed by Cabinet:

1. Review and expand the community resilience offering across the county.
2. Improve incident planning and preparedness through emergency planning, training and exercising processes.
3. Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents,
4. Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).
5. Develop a protocol for the activation and use of council staff during an incident.
6. Review strategic, tactical and operational decision making and governance.

Theme 1: Review and expand the community resilience offering across County Durham

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be completed	Status	Notes
1	(a) Promote the development of new and review existing community resilience plans, as necessary, through town and parish councils and community groups.	CCU, N&CC	31/03/2024	Completed	Commenced Dec 2021. As at 23/05/23 undertaken meetings with 25 groups and two sessions with CDALC. Five plans have been completed, trained and exercised. Three have been completed and are waiting for training/exercising. 13 areas have draft plans awaiting to be finalised. See below.
	(b) Provide training and exercising opportunities for town and parish councils and community groups to improve knowledge and skills for emergency response, including information on the LRF, emergency planning and Category 1 and 2 responders.	CCU, N&CC	31/03/2024	Completed	Two sessions with CDALC attended by 32 town and parish councils.

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be completed	Status	Notes
	(c) Work with local communities to identify through energy efficiency audits, where community resilience hubs could benefit from being sustainably-powered in order to provide emergency support to residents impacted by future incidents.	Partnerships, N&CC	31/03/2025	Completed	The offer of energy efficiency audits has commenced. Northern Powergrid Foundation has funded solar panels and battery installations based on DCC advice; DCA also funding energy efficiency work.
	(d) Consider the creation of a council community resilience and response support fund to operate alongside other partner/external sources of funding, to support community preparedness and to support those assisting community responses to future incidents.	CCU, N&CC	30/09/2022	Completed	Cabinet approval 13/07/22. Grant criteria, eligibility and application forms developed alongside Northern Powergrid Foundation grant scheme. Scheme introduced October 2022. As of 23/05/2023 four applications received; three approved.
	(e) Review public advice and guidance on ways to improve personal and property resilience.	CCU, N&CC	30/09/2022	Completed	Review undertaken and updated advice and guidance published on DCC and LRF websites; public information on preparing for emergencies published in Winter 2022 issue of Durham County News.

Theme 2: Improve incident planning and preparedness through the emergency planning, training and exercising processes

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
2	(a) Review existing emergency plans and arrangements including on-call rotas ensuring they are updated as necessary, with lessons learned from Storm Arwen.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022	Completed	Corporate Emergency Plan (CEP) reviewed. Revised CEP signed-off by Corporate Management Team 28/09/22.
	(b) Develop procedures and contingency plans for internal use and in partnership with the LRF for the response to similar incidents scenarios (e.g. power outages, communication failures etc.).	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022	Completed	Local planning commenced as part of national emergency planning for national power outages and utilities failure . CDDLRF National Power Outage plan produced March 2023. Electricity industry guidance on working with LRFs received January 2023. NPg published its Local Resilience Partner Guidance August 2023. Clarification sought from Northern Powergrid on reaching local agreement on roles and responsibilities and activation procedures.

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
	(c) Develop a surge resourcing plan and identify, recruit and train pools of staff who can be deployed to various support roles in emergency incidents.	CCU, N&CC with Public Health, AHS and HR, RES	31/10/2022	Commenced	Surge resourcing plan developed and agreed by Corporate Management Team 08/03/23. Role descriptions in development.
	(d) Develop an annual training and exercising schedule for senior council managers linked to PDRs, to ensure regular exposure and awareness in relation to emergency response.	CCU, N&CC with HR, RES	31/03/2023	Commenced	Training prospectus drafted. Dates TBC with HR and uploaded to DLD. Exercising programme to be developed. Multi-agency incident training places on regional training courses requested and booked. Senior council managers involved in training exercises as they arise (Ferris, Lynx, Mighty Oak, Peninsula).
	(e) Develop a training programme on the use of Resilience Direct (RD).	CCU, N&CC	31/03/2023 Revised to 31/12/2023	Not started	Currently, staff are briefed and supported on use of RD as required by CCU prior to exercises or during incidents. A training package to be rolled out from September 2023 to a core group of RD users (main responders and support staff who need to use RD). RD training to be included in training programme for senior managers (see 2d).

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
	(f) CCU to work with LRF partners to exercise the response to major incidents and scenarios, with a focus on supporting the public during a prolonged incident.	CCU, N&CC with LRF	31/10/2022	Completed	Exercises Ferris (October 2022), Lynx (March 2023) and Mighty Oak (March 2023).
	(g) Provide emergency planning awareness training to elected Members to improve their understanding and familiarity with emergency response process.	CCU, N&CC with HR, RES	31/10/2022	Completed	Two training sessions delivered (9 Members attended 3 November and 16 attended on 23 November 2023).
	(h) Review guidance for elected Members on Incident Response and distribute.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022	Completed	Guidance included in training sessions slides used on 3 and 23 November 2023.

Theme 3: Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
3	(a) Review the community welfare pack stocks and develop criteria for their activation, deployment and distribution, including a review of available options for storage and distribution, to ensure packs are readily available and can be distributed rapidly to those in need.	CCU, N&CC with Adults, AHS and Procurement, RES	30/09/2022	Completed	Central store established in council depot. Stocks replenished for winter 2022/23. Procedures for stock management, activation and distribution agreed.
	(b) Consider a centralised, county-wide vulnerable persons database/register so that vulnerable persons can be identified quickly, contacted and provided with support as necessary.	CCU, N&CC with Research & Intelligence, RES	31/12/2022	Commenced	Corporate Strategy service has developed a 'multiple social vulnerabilities' (MSV) dataset linked to Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRNs) to support targeted help for vulnerable people. Government has funded a pilot in Cumbria on joining-up vulnerable people data across organisations (Project Viper). CDDLRF and DCC discussing how Viper could be extended to CDDLRF area.

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
	(c) Review the availability of resources that will be required to support an Emergency Assistance Centre for a prolonged period, including managing staff, support staff, communications etc.	CCU, N&CC and HR, RES	30/10/2023	Commenced	Emergency Assistance Centre Management Plan reviewed and updated. Resourcing of rest centres in prolonged incident being addressed through Surge resourcing plan. See action 2c.
	(d) Work with utility companies and LRF to review the provision of assistance to vulnerable people, welfare support (food vans etc.), emergency equipment including support packs and generators, including the criteria for support and respective organisational responsibilities for provision (note that this needs to be informed by the outcome of the national review).	CCU, N&CC	TBC depending on national review	Completed	Drafted principles paper for Northern Powergrid (NPg) to consider August 2022. NPg not prepared to consider until electricity industry guidance published. NPg published its winter preparedness strategy October 2022 which included its approach to welfare provision. Electricity industry guidance issued January 2023. NPg published Local Resilience Partner Guidance August 2023 which sets out its role and responsibilities and approach to welfare response and cooperation with local resilience partners (see Action 2b).

Theme 4: Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the JESIP principles.

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
4	Review communications strategies to ensure that effective communications can be maintained internally within the council and externally with partner organisations and residents, including the consideration of alternative communication methods if residents with no power and limited battery time on mobile phones are unable to access internet/digital communications.	CCU, N&CC with Communications and Marketing, REG	31/03/2023	Commenced	Raised with LRF Warning & Informing Group via LRF Storm Arwen Task & Finish Group. Approach to communications in power outage scenario also being addressed through planning following Exercise Mighty Oak.
	(b) Review the SITREP process for those responding to an incident.	CCU, N&CC	31/08/2022	Completed	Situation report (SITREP) processes and templates updated as part of Corporate Emergency Plan (CEP) review.

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
	(c) Consider the future data requirements of an incident and what resources are required from the council.	CCU, N&CC with Research & Intelligence, RES	31/10/2022	Completed	Agreement reached with NPg on data it will provide in future power outages. Approach worked during minor storms/outages in winter 2022/23.
	(d) Review LRF and organisational telecommunications resilience, including the LRF Telecommunications Plan.	Digital Services, RES with LRF	31/03/2023	Completed	LRF resilient telecommunications guidance reviewed and updated March 2022. Guidance to be reviewed again as part of planning following Exercise Oak.
	(e) Review documentation and training to ensure that the Joint Emergency Services Inter-operability Principles (JESIP) are considered and included in incident actions.	CCU, N&CC	30/09/2022	Commenced	Proposing EMT session based on JESIP LRF training.

Theme 5: Develop a protocol for the activation and use of Council staff in during an incident

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
5	(a) Develop a surge out of hours activation protocol.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022	Completed	Included in surge resourcing plan signed off by CMT 08/03/2023.
	(b) Consider staff roles in an incident and ensure that suitable training and PPE is available (example door knocking and reception centres).	CCU, N&CC with HR, RES	31/10/2022	Completed	Addressed in surge resourcing plan signed off by CMT 08/03/2023.

Theme 6: Review Strategic, Tactical and Operational decision making and governance

No.	Suggested actions/considerations	Service Responsible	Date to be Completed	Status	Notes
6	(a) Review the process for declaring a major incident and update accordingly for widespread incidents and high impact incident.	CCU, N&CC with LRF	31/08/2022	Completed	Completed July 2022 and tested in subsequent exercises.
	(b) Consider a Strategic and Tactical Officers rota for chairing incident response groups.	CCU, N&CC	31/10/2022	Completed	Considered during review of Corporate Emergency Plan. Current approach is that the Strategic/tactical officer on call would initially chair incident response groups if out of hours. If during office hours, most appropriate Head of Service would chair. Approach retained in most recent review of CEP.
	(c) Consider the establishment, the criteria and staffing requirement for a multi-agency command centre.	CCU, N&CC with LRF	TBC	Completed	Considered during review of Corporate Emergency Plan and Multi-Agency Incident procedures.

Progress with community resilience plans

Initial meeting(s) held with 25 communities/groups:

- Durham City
- DERIC/Bearpark
- Pelton
- Urpeth
- Ouston
- Pelton Fell
- Bullion Hall, Chester-le-Street
- Cornsay Colliery, Cornsay Village
- Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill
- Newton Aycliffe
- Easington
- Shotton
- Peterlee
- Haswell
- Medomsley
- Healeyfield, Castleside, Moorside
- Stanhope Parish Council (overarching plan for Weardale once local plans are completed)
- Eastgate
- Ireshopeburn
- Wearhead
- Witton-le-Wear
- St John's Chapel

- Bowes
- Middleton/Newbiggin
- Eggleston

Active groups being supported to develop plans:

- West Rainton and Leamside
- Shincliffe
- East Hedleyhope
- Frosterley
- Cowshill
- Startforth
- Lartington
- Trimdon and Thornley Division
- Stanhope
- Wolsingham
- Romaldkirk

- Woodland
- Chester-le-Street

Completed plans ready for training date:

- Ingleton
- Dipton
- Gilesgate

Completed plans, trained and exercised:

- Westgate
- Evenwood and Barony
- Lands Village Hall
- Belmont
- Lanchester

Storm Arwen improvement plan update

Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

7 September 2023



Progress against improvement areas

- 1 Review and expand the community resilience offering across the county.
5/5 completed
- 2 Improve incident planning and preparedness through emergency planning, training and exercising processes.
5 completed; 2 commenced; 1 not started but other action taken
- 3 Review emergency response resources and establish qualifying criteria for future incidents.
2 completed; 2 commenced
- 4 Review of communication and information sharing during incident response following the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).
3 completed; 2 commenced
- 5 Develop a protocol for the activation and use of council staff during an incident.
2/2 completed
- 6 Review strategic, tactical and operational decision making and governance.
3/3 completed

Progress with community resilience plans

- Engaged with over 40 communities.
- Two sessions with County Durham Association of Local Councils attended by 32 town and parish councils.
- Launched DCC small grants scheme and made three awards.
- Supported soft launch of Northern Powergrid Foundation grants scheme and supported 18 groups to access £193,000 of funding.

Progress with community resilience plans

Initial meetings held with 25 communities/groups:

- Durham City
- DERIC/Bearpark
- Pelton
- Urpeth
- Ouston
- Pelton Fell
- Bullion Hall, Chester-le-Street
- Cornsay Colliery, Cornsay Village and Hamsteels
- Coxhoe and Quarrington Hill
- Newton Aycliffe
- Easington
- Shotton
- Peterlee
- Haswell
- Medomsley
- Healeyfield, Castleside, Moorside
- Stanhope Parish Council (overarching plan for Weardale once local plans are completed)
- Eastgate
- Ireshopeburn
- Wearhead
- Witton-le-Wear
- St John's Chapel
- Bowes
- Middleton/Newbiggin
- Eggleston

Progress with community resilience plans

Active groups being supported to develop plans:

- West Rainton and Leamside
- Shincliffe
- East Hedleyhope
- Frosterley
- Cowshill
- Startforth
- Lartington
- Trimdon and Thornley Division
- Stanhope
- Wolsingham
- Romaldkirk
- Woodland
- Chester-le-Street

Progress with community resilience plans

Completed plans ready for training date:

- Ingleton
- Dipton
- Gilesgate

Completed plans, trained and exercised:

- Westgate
- Evenwood and Barony
- Lands Village Hall
- Belmont
- Lanchester

**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

7 September 2023

Open Water Safety Update Report

Ordinary Decision



**Report of Amy Harhoff, Corporate Director of Regeneration,
Economy and Growth**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide.

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide members of the committee with information regarding the actions taken by Durham County Council (The Council) and its partners in relation to Open Water Safety.

Executive summary

- 2 The city safety group and county wide open water safety group continue to convene on a quarterly basis during the reporting period to review open water safety interventions.
- 3 A revised city centre action plan was delivered by the city safety group following an independent assessment of the river corridor within the city centre by RoSPA. Assessments and inspections of both the city centre and county wide open water locations continue to be undertaken.
- 4 A continuation of a proactive approach to open water safety education and awareness remains a crucial intervention and is being applied by both open water safety groups.
- 5 Statistically there has continued to be a positive trend in relation to the number of open water related incidents across the county. Of note there remains to be an increase in mental health related open water safety incidents.
- 6 There remains a positive approach to partnership working and collaboration amongst the safety groups, with new partners being identified and incorporated into activities.

Recommendation(s)

- 7 Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:
 - (a) note the reported progress made to date by CSG and OWSG.

Background

- 8 There are currently two multiagency water safety groups within County Durham. In terms of governance, both water safety groups report into the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) as required.
- 9 The City Safety Group (CSG) was formed in January 2015 and comprises of Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, Durham University, Durham Students Union, Durham Cathedral and County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service. The CSG is now chaired by Alan Patrickson, Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change. The CSG continues to meet on a quarterly basis.
- 10 From a County wide perspective, the open water safety group (OWSG) is chaired by the Council's Corporate Health & Safety Manager. It was established in February 2015, with a remit of reviewing the Council's internal open water safety policy and focusing on safety relating to areas of open water (e.g., lakes, rivers, reservoirs) other than in Durham city centre. The OWSG also meets on a quarterly basis.
- 11 National guidance such as [Managing Safety at Inland Waters](#) and best practice has been used to form open water safety policy and risk assessment methodology across the County. Visits to other areas which have high risk profiles such as York, Manchester and Bath have been undertaken to benchmark safety control measures, learn from incident causation and use best practice approaches within the County. Engagement with independent bodies such as RoSPA, RLSS and National Water Safety Forum remains a key element of the approach to open water safety related risks.
- 12 Table 1 below indicates the number of non-fatal and fatal water related incidents in County Durham since 2013. This data has been validated using the national water accident & incident database (WAID), regional emergency service and Council incident reporting data.

Table 1- Open Water Incident Statistics 2013/14- 2021/22

Year	Durham City Centre			County Durham (Exc. Durham City centre)		
	Near miss	Injury	Fatality	Near miss	Injury	Fatality
2013/14	13	1	1	3	1	2
2014/15	5	1	4	5	2	3
2015/16	3	1	0	8	5	2
2016/17	2	1	0	1	2	1
2017/18	2	3	0	3	5	0
2018/19	3	6	1	1	1	2
2019/20	2	4	0	6	3	1
2020/21	2	0	0	8	3	2
2021/22	9	4	0	7	1	1
2022/23	2	0	1	7	5	3

13 UK statistics indicate that there are on average 650 water related fatalities per year, of which an average of 200 are suicide related incidents. Other key national headlines for 2022 are:

- There were 226 accidental drowning fatalities and 212 suicide related fatalities involving open water
- 83% of accidental fatalities were male
- Males 20-29 and 50-59 were the highest group for accidental fatalities
- 60% of accidental fatalities happened at inland waters
- Recreational activities accounted for 58% of accidental fatalities
- 58 accidental fatality reports noted the presence of drugs or alcohol
- The rate of accidental drowning has increased slightly since 2018 (0.40 per 100,000) to 0.34 in 2022

14 Whilst walking and running close to open water remain the highest cause of accidental drowning in the UK, swimming (which includes open water swimming) accounts for 53 in the latest year compared to 61 in

the previous 3-year average in the UK. Given the widespread media and leisure industry reports regarding the psychological and physical benefits of open water swimming as a recreational activity, this is an area that requires monitoring in County Durham going forward.

- 15 Fatal incidents are, where appropriate, subject to scrutiny by HM Coroner for Durham and Darlington in terms of prevention of future deaths. Updates have been provided by CSG and OWSG, where required, to keep HM Coroner up to date with progress being made in relation to water safety within the County.
- 16 Similar to national statistics, it is apparent from analysis of an increase in mental health related incidents which continue to be a lead cause of water related incidents within the city centre and county wide. Work with public health mental health and suicide prevention colleagues has been undertaken to ensure that multiagency support and interventions are in place and continue to be reviewed for any specific locations or cohorts in the county.
- 17 Following confirmed suicide related deaths, HM Coroner issues information to the Council public health team and where appropriate multiagency assurance review groups are convened to investigate the causes and take further actions and interventions as appropriate. In relation to Newton CAP further infrastructure works have been agreed and works have started on site. There are other areas of interest where further interventions are undertaken, for example various bridges within the river corridor of Durham city. The suicide prevention alliance continues to meet quarterly, and the county's suicide prevention plan has been peer reviewed by the local government association. Further community development work is also ongoing in a number of targeted areas in County Durham.

City Safety Group

- 18 The CSG was chaired throughout 2022/23 by the Council's Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change and continues to have representation from the Council, emergency services and riparian landowners such as Durham University and Cathedral. Durham University student union is also a key member of the CSG.
- 19 Throughout 2022/23, the CSG has been continuing to monitor the riverside development projects to ensure that any public safety issues and impacts were identified with the developers. A monthly cycle of inspection and monitoring continues in relation to the completion of all physical safety infrastructure works in the city centre. This provides the CSG with assurance that the control measures identified in 2016/17

remain effectively in situ and proactively identifies any further actions required.

- 20 Additional works have been undertaken in relation to the independent assessment of the river corridor and new developments within the city that may have an impact on river related safety. The CSG has delivered, where appropriate, actions from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) assessment of river corridor related risks.
- 21 The CSG has once again reviewed arrangements for student induction weeks to ensure that appropriate arrangements had been put in place and partners were working in collaboration. A specific student induction task and finish group was established and work was undertaken to ensure that safety related controls were in place for freshers week. This involved collaborative work with the police, university, business and licensed premises. The work particularly focused on the high footfall night-time economy areas within the city and it was positive that the activities went safely and without incident.
- 22 Linked to the work of the CSG, water safety awareness training was delivered for a range of partners. Following a series of incidents in the city in and around the river and several bridges, a request was made by city hub team members for water safety awareness and rescue training to be provided along with the provision of throw line rescue equipment. As a result, two sessions were held at has been arranged during quarter one and attendees included hub staff, police, neighbourhood wardens and licensed premises management. The training was hosted by CDDFRS and incorporated general water safety awareness, rescue methods and deployment of throw lines for river rescue scenarios. Throw lines were then provided to attendees for use in emergency situations and first responder scenarios.
- 23 It is AGAIN positive to report that since the formation of the CSG, there has been a continued reduction in water related incidents within the city centre overall. Whilst the introduction of physical safety improvements cannot be attributed in isolation to the reduction in incidents, these have had a significant impact in conjunction with the broader range of educational and awareness initiatives.
- 24 Licensed premises in close proximity of the river corridor have also been approached as part of the revised action plan to review risk assessments of their public realm spaces in relation to water safety. Previous risk assessments have resulted in physical safety improvements to four licensed premises in a higher risk location of the river corridor within the city centre. Safety improvements introduced by

licensed premises include introduction of physical barriers, improved lighting, public rescue equipment and water safety signage.

Open Water Safety Group

- 25 The OWSG continues to manage and monitor County wide open water safety risks. A schedule of monitoring and reassessment of priority risk locations identified in the initial county wide assessment process continues to be applied in order to provide assurance. The OWSG has incorporated further partnership work with Northumbrian water in order to enhance and provide consistent water safety campaigns and messaging across the county.
- 26 From a county wide perspective, the reassessments of priority risk open water locations commenced with a view to completion before the summer holiday period when weather temperature increases and at risk groups such as young persons are likely to frequent locations during summer schools holidays.
- 27 Work was also completed to develop a new water safety awareness video which could be utilised by schools prior to the summer holiday period and used by the council and its partners to educate the general public via social media. Further interventions, particularly regarding education and awareness for young people in the Chester-le-Street riverside complex area. With the support of AAP coordinators, local councillors and residents, group leaders delivered plans to provide all schools in this area with the opportunity to have open water safety assemblies. These were delivered by Council officers, emergency services and featured the Council's dying to be cool campaign, supported by Fiona Gosling who assisted in the presentations.

Conclusions

- 28 Recent national statistics in June and July 2023 have indicated that open water safety related risks very much remain and there is a requirement on responsible organisations to impart risk-based education and awareness into their communities and settings. It is apparent from city centre and county wide incidents that mental health and suicide related incidents are increasing, in line with the national statistics also.
- 29 Statistics indicate that the formation of CSG and OWSG continue to play an important role in terms of reducing risks and subsequent non-fatal and fatal incidents involving open water. However, it remains the view of both groups that even one fatality is always one too many in terms of the devastating impact on families, friends and the community.

It places a significant burden on society both in terms of direct costs and the years of life that are lost.

- 30 The characteristics and factors regarding drowning risks remain complex and multi-factorial. It is unequivocal that drowning prevention cannot be achieved by the introduction of physical safety controls in isolation. Focus must remain on a long term strategy of education and awareness, particularly at high risk groups, to ensure that fatalities and life changing injuries are minimised as much as possible.
- 31 The CSG and OWSG will continue to meet on a quarterly basis and monitor and review the physical and cultural safety improvements introduced. In terms of the OWSG, collaborative working with partner organisations will continue in 2023/24 and beyond, with particular emphasis being placed on preventative and educational initiatives for local schools and to ensure key water risks are appropriately managed and communicated to stakeholders. The development of a calendar of water safety initiatives and events for 2023/24 will be effective in coordinating approaches and avoidance of duplication of campaigns and activities.

Background papers

- None.

Other useful documents

- None.

Author(s)

Kevin Lough

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Compliance with statutory legislative requirements reduce risks of enforcement action and/or prosecution against the Council or individuals. It will also assist in defending civil claims against the Council from employees and members of the public, including service users.

Finance

Compliance with legislative requirements will reduce increased service delivery costs, financial penalties associated with H&S sentencing guidelines 2016 and successful civil claims against the council. Financial costs may be insured to some degree and uninsured in some cases, with poor outcomes possibly leading to increased insurance premiums. Financial implications also include staff absence associated with physical and mental ill health, staff training, retention, recruitment and productivity.

Consultation

None.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Climate Change

None.

Human Rights

None.

Crime and Disorder

None.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

This report considers physical and psychological risks to member of the public, employees and service users. Risks also relate to the failure to comply with statutory legislative requirements, which may result in civil action being brought against the Council and enforcement action, including prosecution against the Council or individuals. These enforcement actions may result in financial penalties, loss of reputation and reduction in business continuity.

Procurement

Minimal procurement and supplier related issues which are associated with purchase and maintenance of safety related infrastructure in city centre and county wide locations.

Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Open Water safety Update
September 2023**

**Kevin Lough, Corporate Health, Safety and
Compliance Manager**



Open Water Safety Governance



Durham City Safety Group

County Durham Open Water Safety Group

The national picture

- There were 226 accidental drowning fatalities in UK for 2022 which is a reduction on 3 year average of 251.
- 212 fatal incidents were caused by suicide
- 83% of accidental fatalities were male
- Males 20-29 and 50-59 were the highest group for accidental fatalities
- 60% of accidental fatalities happened at inland waters
- Recreational activities accounted for 58% of accidental fatalities
58 accidental fatality reports noted the presence of drugs or alcohol
- The rate of accidental drowning has decreased slightly since 2018 (0.40 per 100,000) to 0.34 in 2022

County Durham

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2020/21	2	0	0	8	3	2
2021/22	9	4	0	7	1	1
2022/23	2	0	1	7	5	3

County Durham vs National Statistics

- Fatality rate of 0.75 per 100,000 compared to 0.34 per 100,000 at a UK level in 2022
- Reflecting an increasing trend of suspected suicide related incidents
- Zero fatalities in summer period 2023 despite July/August being statically highest months where fatalities occur
- Zero coastal fatalities despite nationally accounting for 39% of all accidental drowning deaths
- No known open water swimming related fatalities- given the widespread media and leisure industry reports regarding the psychological and physical benefits of open water swimming as a recreational activity, this is an area that requires monitoring in County Durham going forward.

Durham City

ROSPA
The Royal Society for the
Prevention of Accidents

- Continued emphasis on partnership working and collective responsibility
- RoSPA independent risk review action plan delivered
- New education and awareness initiatives for hub team and various partners/licensees
- Throw line rescue equipment training
- Continued investigations of incidents and near misses to ensure controls remain effective
- Regular monitoring and inspection of city centre river routes and control measures



County Wide

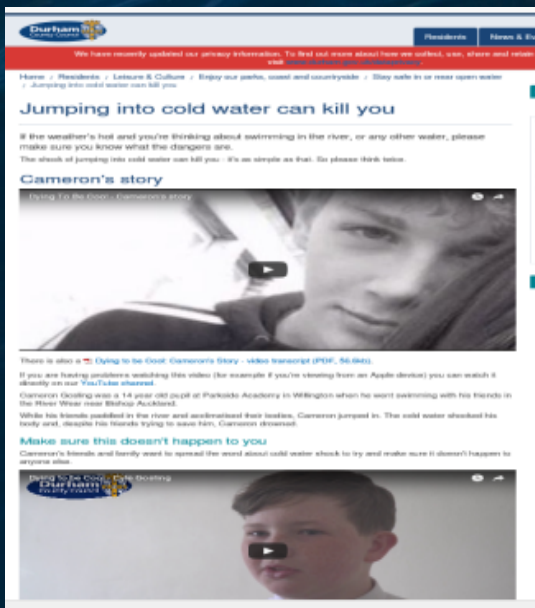
- ✓ Cold Water Shock 'Dying to be cool' Campaign delivery via new video in 2023
- ✓ Promotion of national campaigns
- ✓ Extensive social media at risk periods
- ✓ Plan for education and awareness again in 2023/24
- ✓ Re-assessment of priority locations across county
- ✓ Investigations and assessment of public rescue equipment
- ✓ Monitoring of high footfall locations in peak periods
- ✓ Throw line training
- ✓ Upgrading of public rescue equipment



2023 'Dying to be Cool' campaign



- New video produced for use for all schools who may not be able to accommodate assembly delivery
- Pre-summer period focus
- Work with local AAP coordinators
- Coincided with national drowning prevention week and world drowning prevention day
- Partner comms and promotion
- Fiona Gosling fronting campaigns along with police and fire and rescue officers



Looking Forward

- Working closely with public health around suicide prevention and mental health
- Continued partnership approach important
- Revision of action plans at city centre and county wide level
- Education, awareness and utilising national campaigns and initiatives
- Re-assessment of previous risk assessments
- Investigation of all incidents and near misses
- Identification of new and emerging trends and causation factors
- Working with developers and designers to ensure water safety related risks are managed
- Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of existing controls
- Review of public rescue equipment and provision of training for first responders, businesses and communities

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**Safer and Stronger Communities
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

7 September 2023

**Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) Strategic
Group Update**



**Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods
and Climate Change**

Electoral division(s) affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To provide the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on the ongoing work of the ASB Strategic Group.

Executive summary

- 2 It was requested by Committee that a report be brought to every meeting on the progress of the work of the ASB Strategic Group.
- 3 The report provides an opportunity for Members to receive an overview of the ASB Strategic Group priorities and work areas and the development of the ASB Strategy.

Recommendation

- 4 Members of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to:
 - (a) Note information contained within the report from the ASB Strategic Group and comment accordingly.

Background

- 5 The aims of the ASB Strategic Group are to:
- Provide strategic leadership and direction, co-ordination and oversight for the Safe Durham Partnership's response to anti-social behaviour across County Durham.
 - Deliver the strategic outcomes under the Safe Durham Partnership Plan that promote being safe and feeling safe in your community specifically focusing on the work area of anti-social behaviour.
 - Ensure the actions of the group positively impact on residents and the wider communities in:
 - (i) being and feeling safe and that those actions improve their emotional and physical wellbeing.
 - (ii) improving personal resilience and overall community's resilience, confidence and cohesion.

Key Issues

- 6 At the last meeting of the group on the 10 August 2023 further consideration was given to a number of key issues including:-

ASB Durham County Trailblazer Pilots

- 7 As part of the trailblazer pilot programme, the OPCC has established a steering group and appointed a Policy and Strategy Officer to develop and co-ordinate the ASB Trailblazer Action Plan.
- 8 It is proposed that two operational sub groups will also be established to focus on delivery of key interventions around 'Immediate Justice' and 'ASB Hotspot policing' so that all government expectations are being met.
- 9 The OPCC is required to provide feedback to the Home Office on a monthly basis with progress on the delivery of the trailblazer action plan and partners are being asked to provide updates on interventions by the 14th of every month.
- 10 It is envisaged that the trailblazer programme updates will also be reported through to the ASB Strategic Group and Safe Durham Partnership Board in due course.
- 11 Revised governance arrangements around the trailblazer pilot will be presented to the Safe Durham Partnership Board at their meeting next month and further details will be provided to this Committee once these arrangements have been considered and agreed.

Durham County ASB Delivery Plan

- 12 Work is ongoing to consolidate the existing action plans from the various thematic groups around Children & Young People, Arson Suppression / Flytipping as well as ongoing Area Action Plans that have been developed by the Local Multi Agency Problem Solving groups (LMAPS).
- 13 In addition, the emerging ASB Action Plan that is being developed as part of the trailblazer pilot will need to dovetail into our overarching ASB Delivery Plan and ensure that it addresses our local priorities.
- 14 A further gap analysis exercise will be undertaken in the coming weeks to ensure that our ASB Delivery Plan is consistent with the 8 key principles set out within the Durham County ASB Strategy and is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely (SMART).
- 15 Data dashboards will continue to be developed around the ASB delivery Plan and performance will be reported on regular basis through to the SDP Board and this Committee.
- 16 The latest performance update document for the 12 months ending on June 2023 is attached in Appendix 2.
- 17 Whilst overall the number of ASB incidents reported for the same period has significantly reduced (-17.9%), we are seeing significant increases in ASB incidents concerning noise (+31%) and criminal damage / graffiti (+37%) compared to the previous year.
- 18 The following issues remain key priorities for action during the coming year:-
 - Deliberate Fires
 - Criminal Damage
 - Flytipping
 - Noise
 - Intimidation / Harassment / Abuse

Case Review

- 19 Anti-Social Behaviour Case review (formerly known as the Community Trigger) was introduced in 2014 as part of the Anti-Social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act. New guidance published by Government in June 2022 – victim centred.
- 20 The process is a three-step ASB resolution process following initial reporting aimed at stopping the anti-social behaviour.

- 21 **Stage 1 – Complaint** – giving the agency the opportunity to stop the anti-social behaviour from happening (where there are one/two previous reports of ASB)
- 22 **Stage 2 – Requesting a Case Review (known as Community Trigger)** The local threshold for case review has been agreed by the local Community Safety Partnerships and the criteria is set where there have been three or more previous reports of Anti-Social Behaviour and the anti-social behaviour is continuing.
- 23 The case review process can be initiated through the PCC website <https://www.durham-pcc.gov.uk/asb-case-review>
- 24 Upon receipt of a case review request, the case will be reviewed within 5 working days to determine the number of qualifying complaints and if the threshold is met, victims will be offered support from the Victims Care and Advice Service, who will be able to guide them through the process.
- 25 An Independent Chair will be appointed to lead a multi-agency case review which will be held within 10 working days after confirmation of the threshold being met. The case review will bring together relevant agencies to take a joined up, problem-solving approach to find a solution.
- 26 During the process victims or their representative(s) will be given the opportunity to attend the opening section of the case review meeting to express your wishes as to what you would like to happen and to ensure all members of the panel understand the level of harm and impact. Alternatively, if they are unable or do not wish to attend the case review they can provide a written statement which will be read out.
- 27 Following the meeting an action plan will be produced (including timescales) and the victim will be provided with a written copy, within 5 working days.
- 28 **Stage 3 – Victims Right to Appeal.** If the victim remains dissatisfied, then they will be given the right of appeal of up to 14 days following the completion of the action plan.
- 29 If the local threshold is not met, consideration will be given to the persistency of the anti-social behaviour, the harm or potential harm caused, and the adequacy of the response from the agencies.
- 30 To support the case review process a campaign ‘Don’t Suffer In Silence’ was launched across County Durham and Darlington to coincide with the National ASB Awareness Week which ran from July 3-9.

- 31 Further information on the Case review process has also been included on partner's websites and supporting literature is also being produced to assist in signposting victims to assist them in reporting incidents to the most appropriate agency.

Safer Streets Fund Round 5 (SSFR5)

- 32 Round 5 of the Safer Streets funding worth £43m, will run for 18 months from 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2025. This round will maintain the same focus as Round 4, aiming to reduce levels of neighbourhood crime, violence against women and girls (VAWG) in public spaces and ASB significantly in disproportionately and persistently affected areas of England and Wales, as well as develop the evidence base to inform future investment and commissioning decisions.
- 33 For the first time, funding will be directly awarded to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) who will be required to submit funding proposals to confirm that they meet the requirements of the Fund.
- 34 Each PCC will be provisionally allocated £1M of funding and, therefore, can apply for up to this amount over the entire delivery period. PCCs may apply for up to £465,000 in financial year 2023/24 and up to £535,000 in financial year 2024/25.
- 35 There is a mandatory 50% matched-funding requirement.
- 36 Only PCCs are eligible to apply for SSFR5; however, as a condition for funding, PCCs should consult the relevant local authority and/or Community Safety Partnership and at least two local or national organisations.
- 37 Work is ongoing across the partnership to identify and consider a range of proposals to be funded through SSFR5 and a further update will be provided to this Committee once the programme has been finalised.

Main implications

Crime and Disorder

- 38 Information within this report aims to contribute to objectives within the existing Safe Durham Partnership Plan to reducing crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Conclusion

- 39 The report provides an opportunity for Members to receive an update on the work of the ASB Strategic Group and feed into the relevant processes.

Background papers

- [Anti-social Behaviour Action Plan \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- [Promote being safe and feeling safe in your community \(countydurhampartnership.co.uk\)](https://countydurhampartnership.co.uk).
- [Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2021-25](#)
- [County Durham Vision 2035](#)

Other useful documents

- None

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Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Duty to consider crime and disorder implications.

Finance

None.

Consultation

The ASB Strategic group will continue to engage in consultation on the development of any local strategies and action/delivery plans as well as government proposals around tackling anti social behaviour.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

None.

Human Rights

None.

Climate Change

None.

Crime and Disorder

Information with this report provides an overview of the newly re-established ASB Strategic Group, a sub group of the Safe Durham Partnership and the actions agreed from the discussion items within the agenda to help positively impact on Crime, Disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour within the County.

Staffing

None.

Accommodation

None.

Risk

None.

Procurement

None.

Appendix 2

Attached as a separate PDF document

ASB Strategic Group

Performance Update 12 months ending 30 June 2023



Better for everyone





Antisocial Behaviour Overview

Overview ASB

ASBMap

Change...

Pareto...

Databases

Select Year & Month

Multiple selections

Organisation

All

COVID related

All

MSOA

All

Reports

48,657

SPLY (Same period last year)

59,258

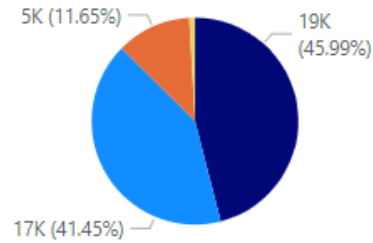
Change from SPLY

-10601

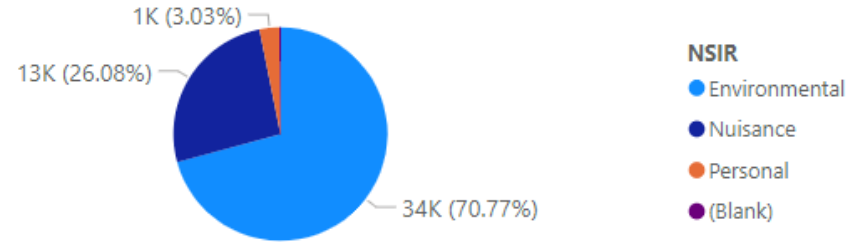
Change

-17.89%

Reports by Organisation



NSIR Categories



MAPS

- Select all
- City of Durham
- East
- North
- South

Personal

1,476

3%

SPLY

3,306

Change from SPLY

-1830

Change

-55.35%

Personal

Personal SPLY Personal



Personal

Nuisance

12,704

26%

SPLY

14,979

Change from SPLY

-2275

Change

-15.19%

Nuisance

Nuisance SPLY Nuisance



Nuisance

Environmental

34,477

71%

SPLY

40,973

Change from SPLY

-6496

Change

-15.85%

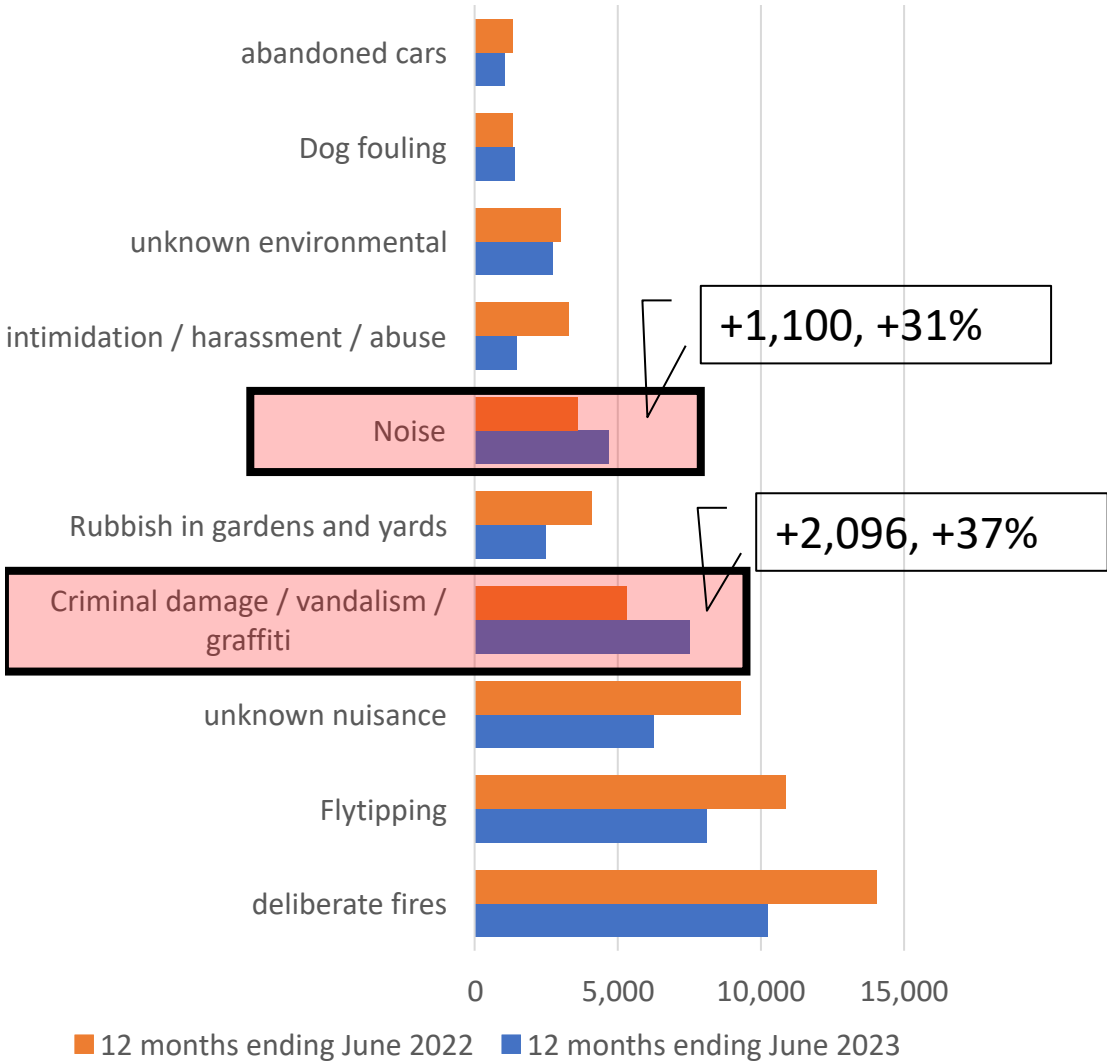
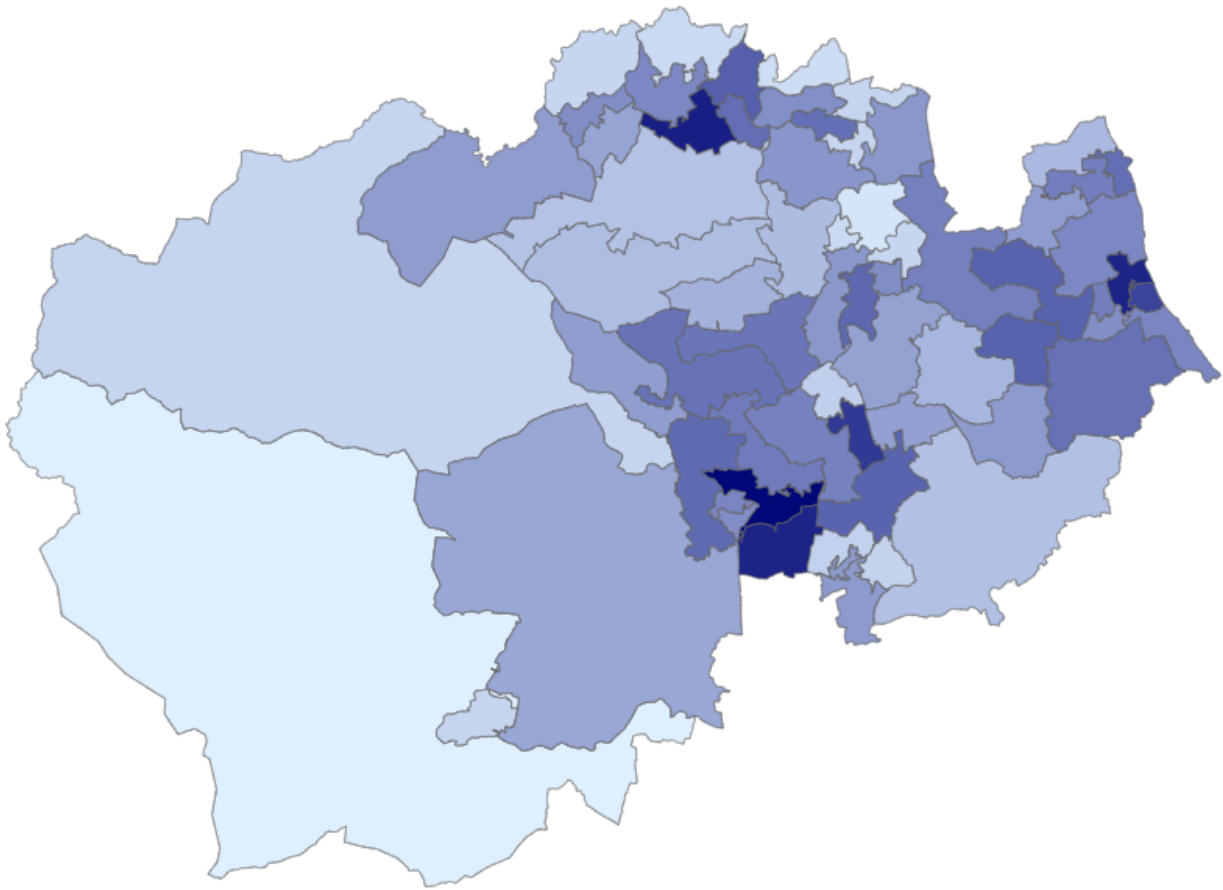
Environmental

Environmental SPLY Environmental

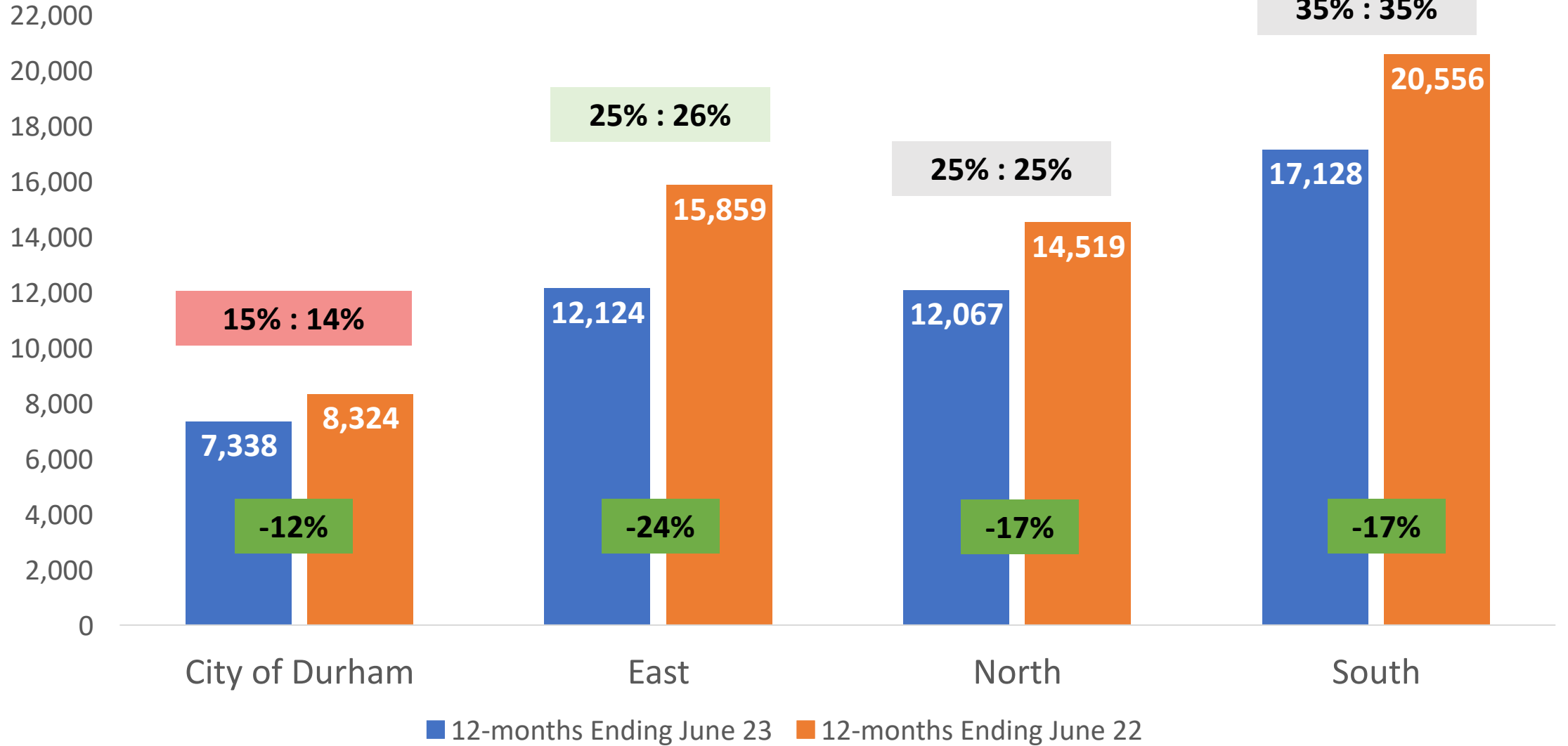


Enviro...

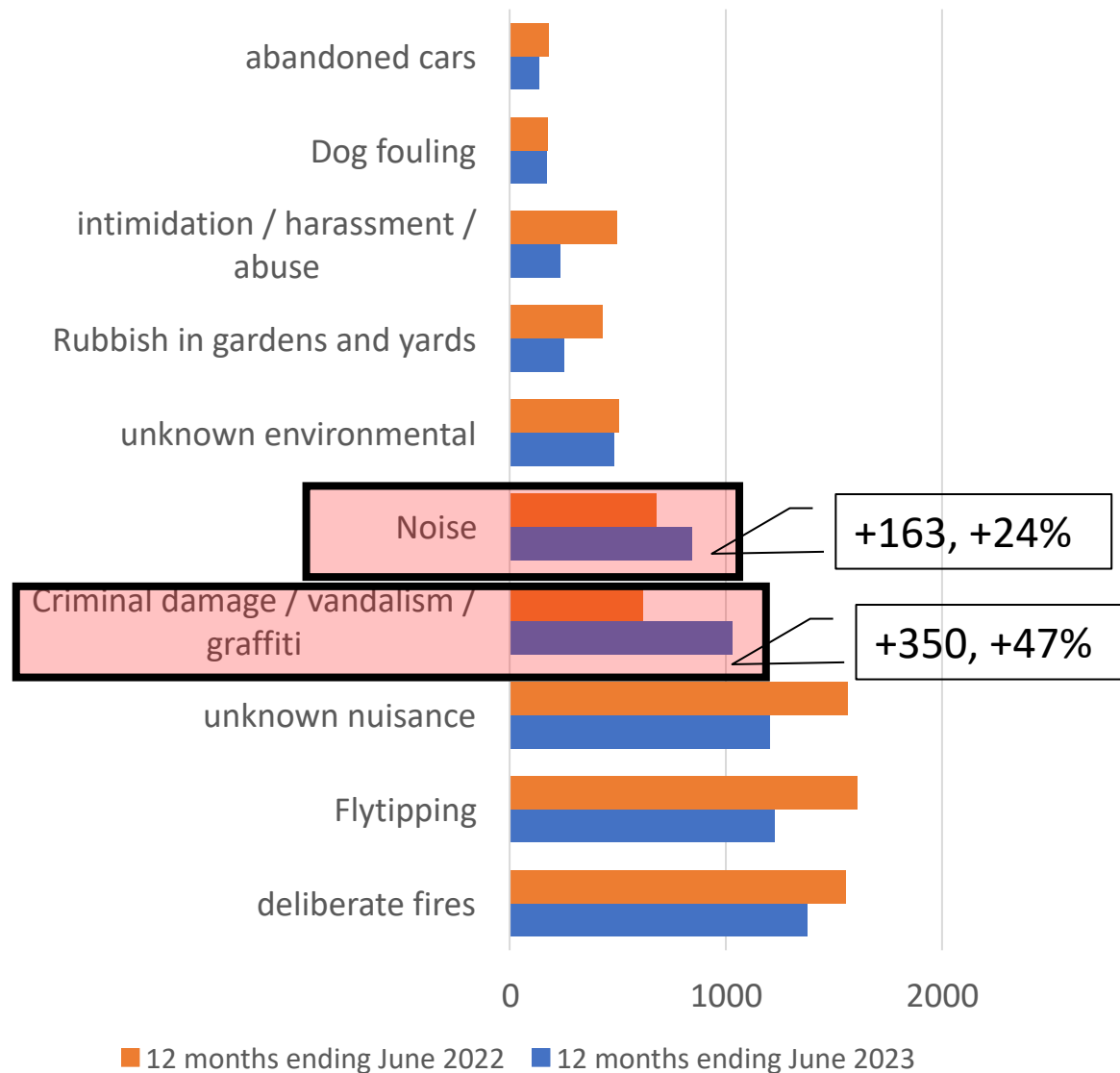
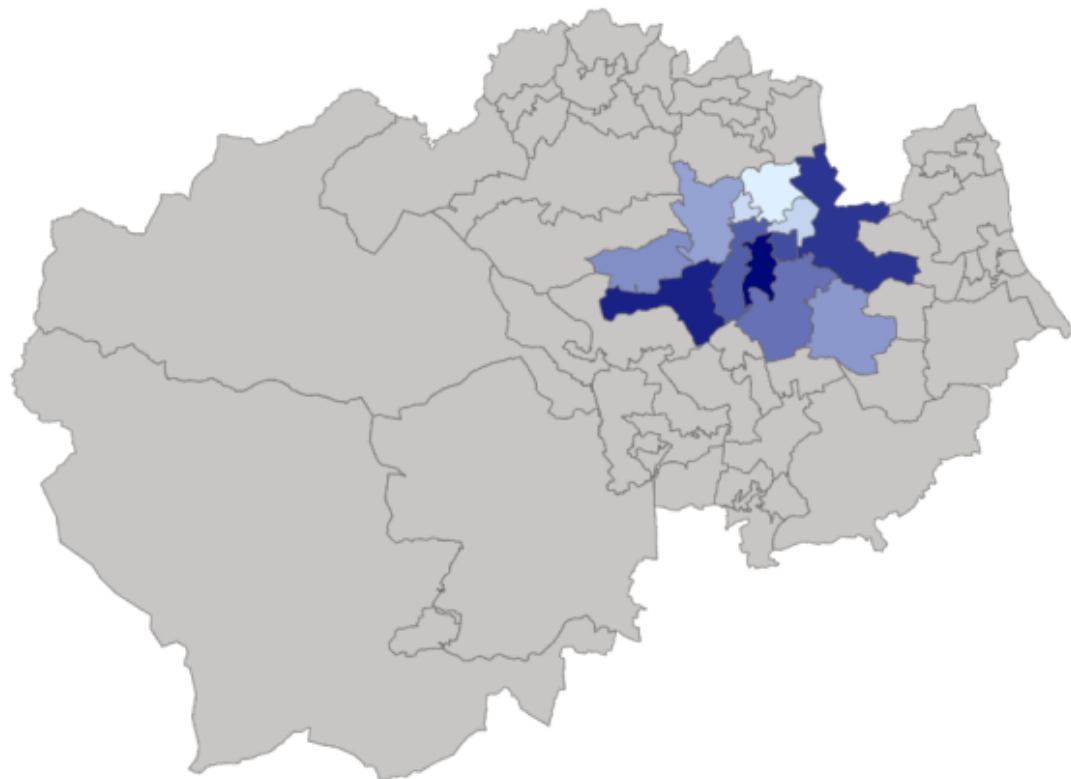
Across the County



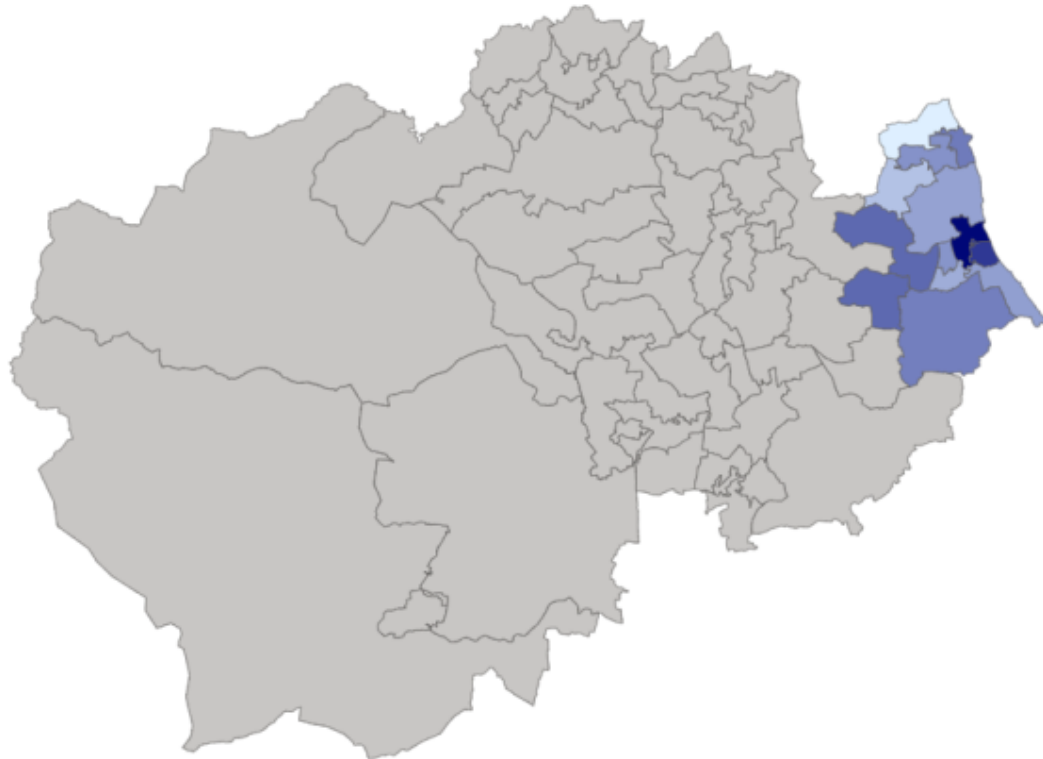
ASB Reports by MAP Area



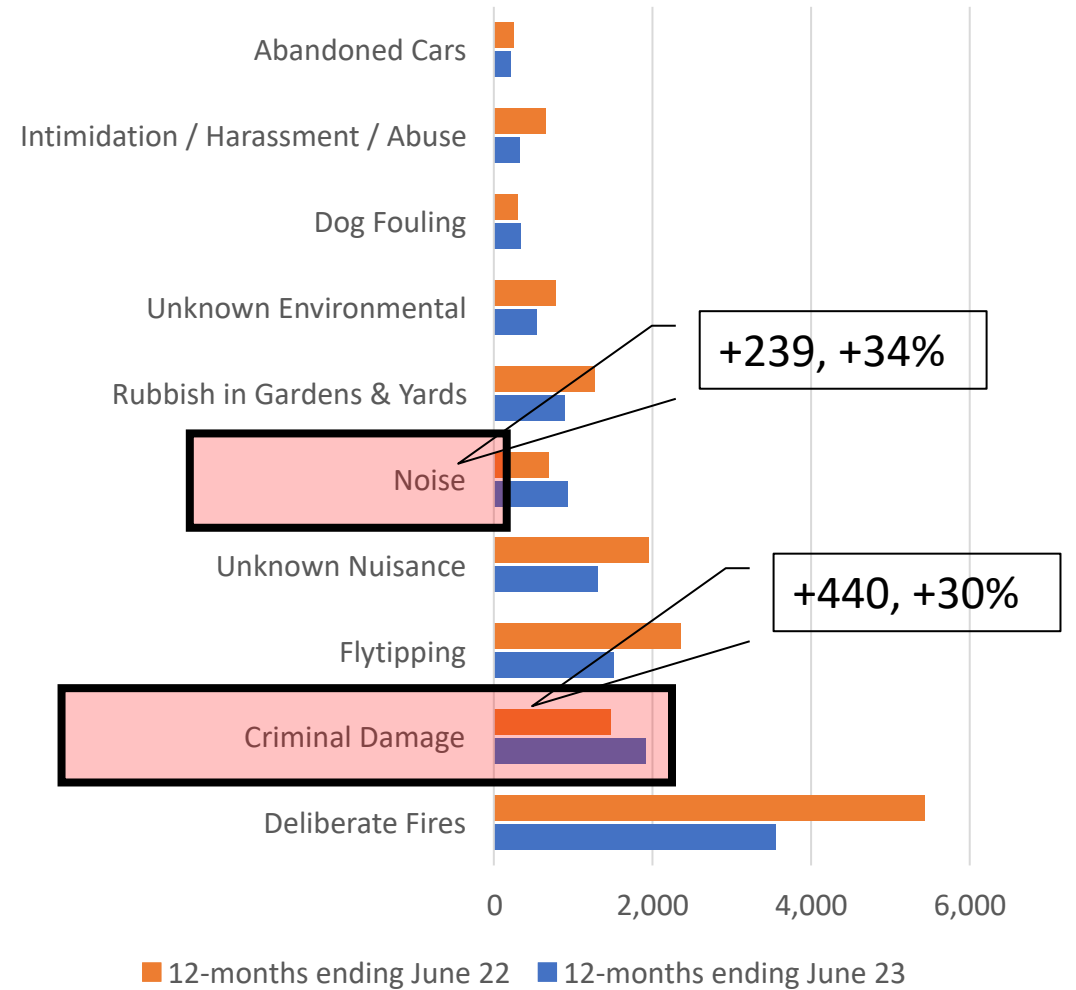
City of Durham MAP – 15% of reports



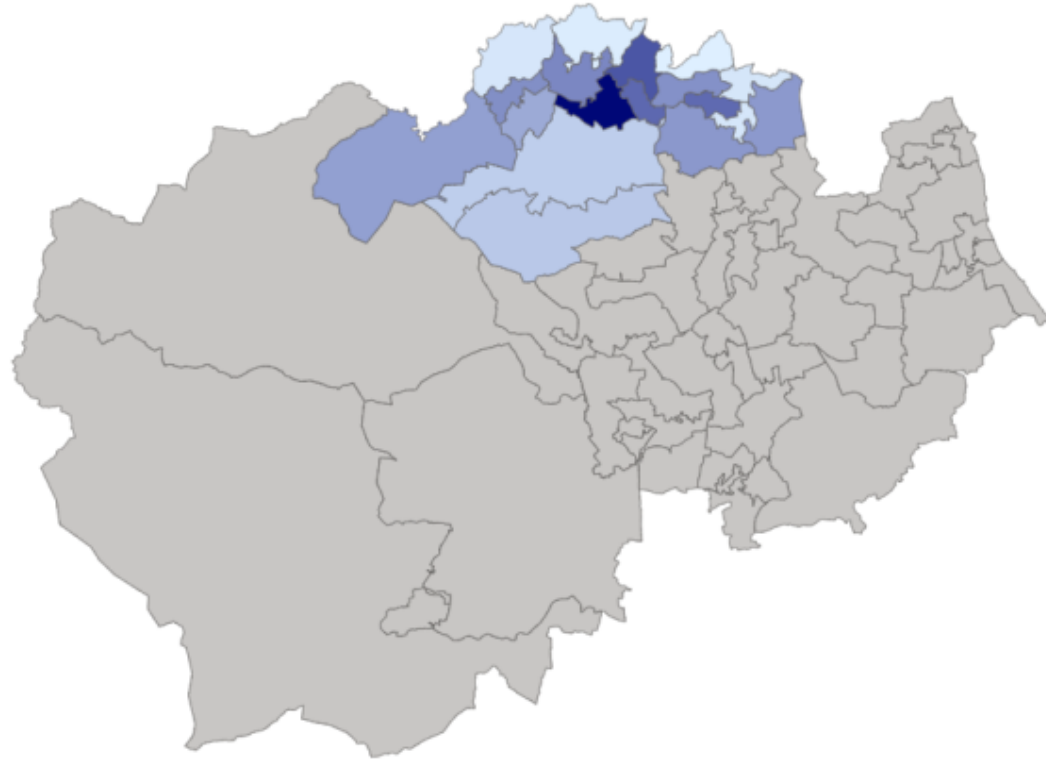
East MAP - 25% of reports



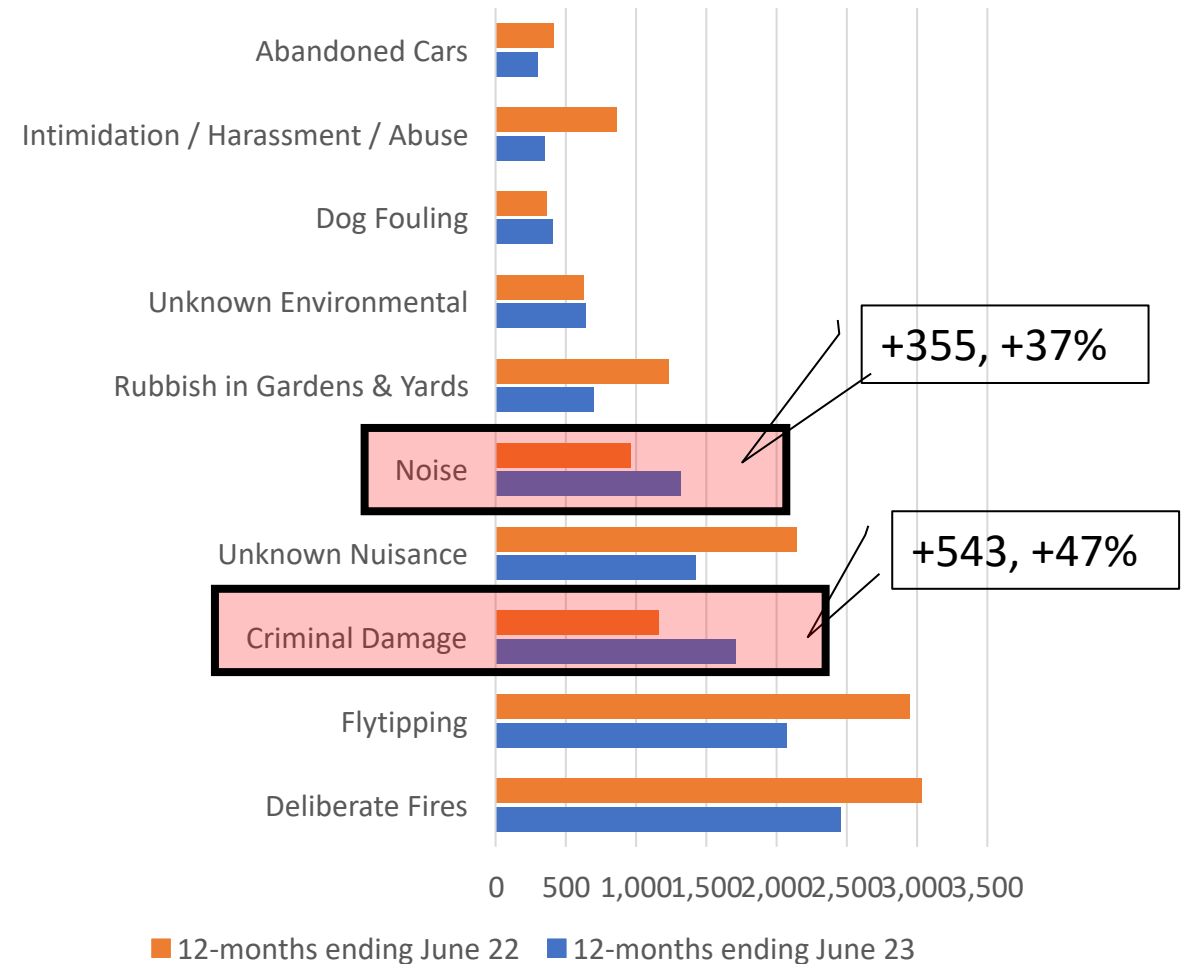
Top 10 ASB Categories



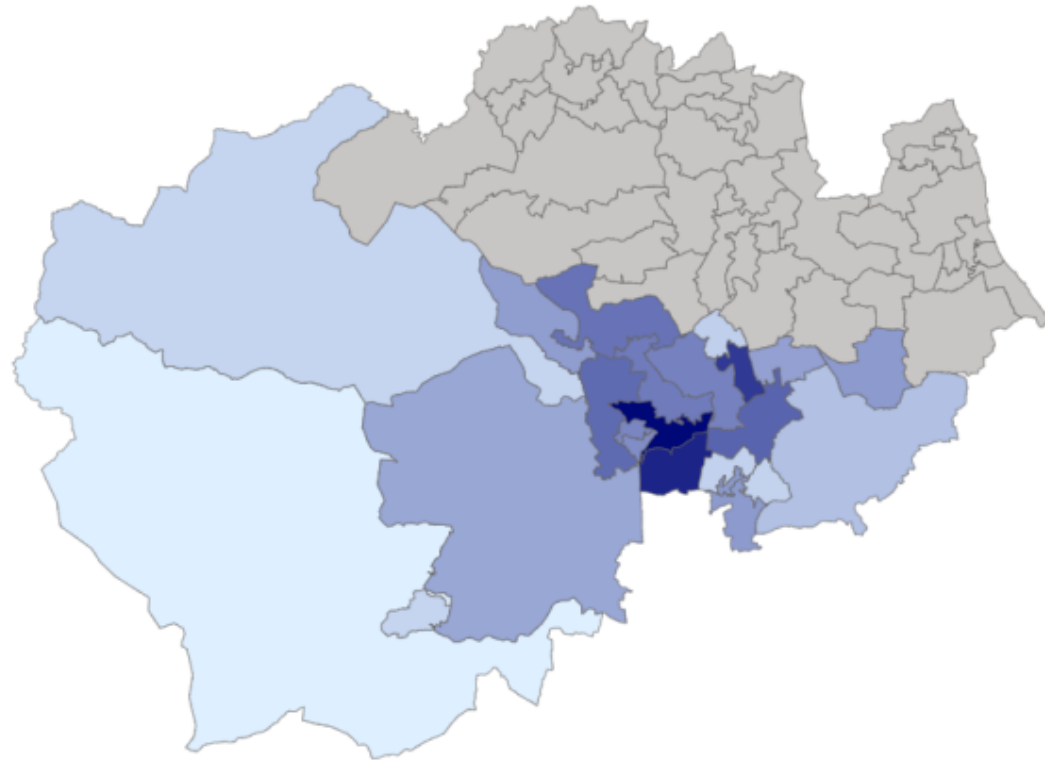
North MAP - 25% of reports



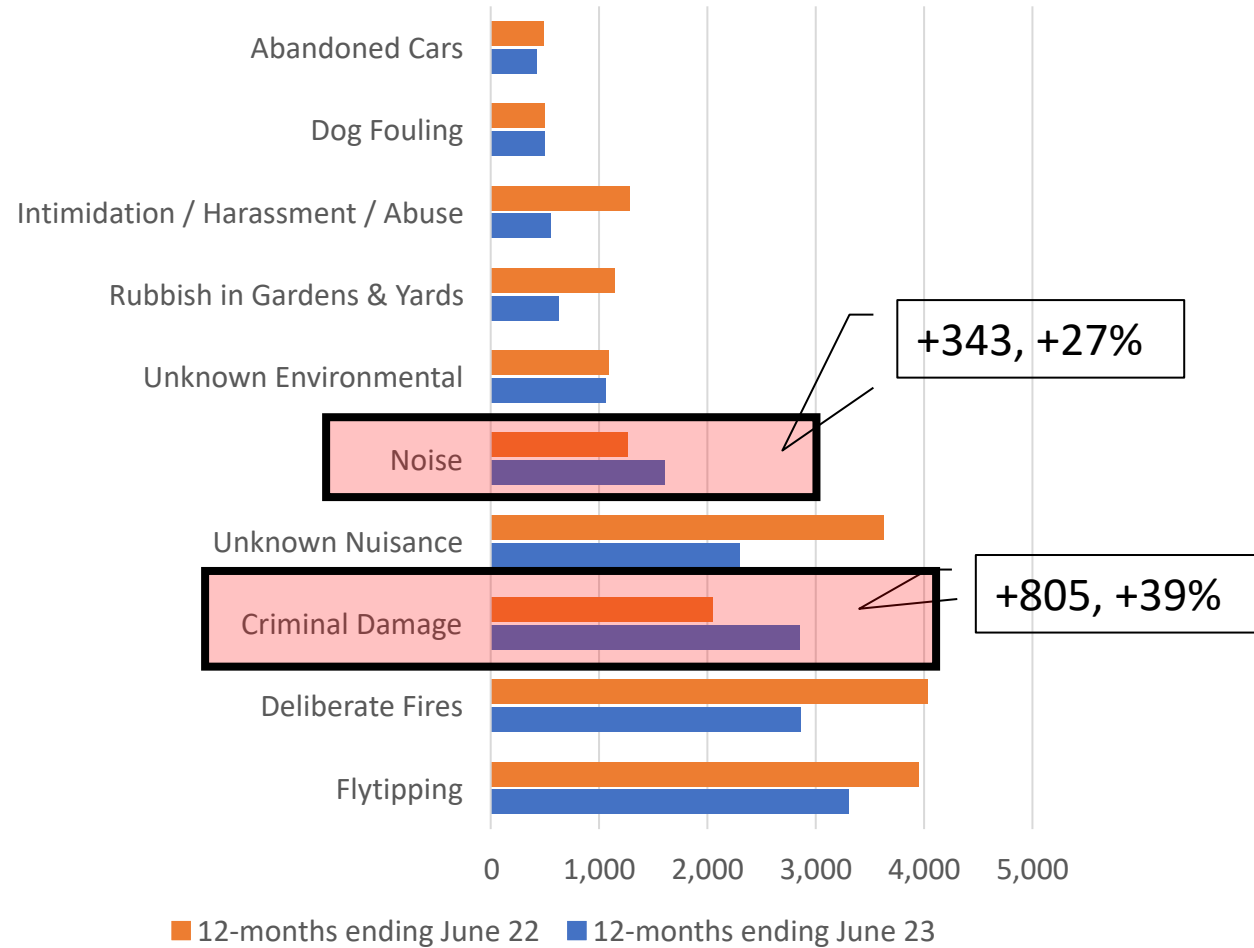
Top 10 ASB Categories



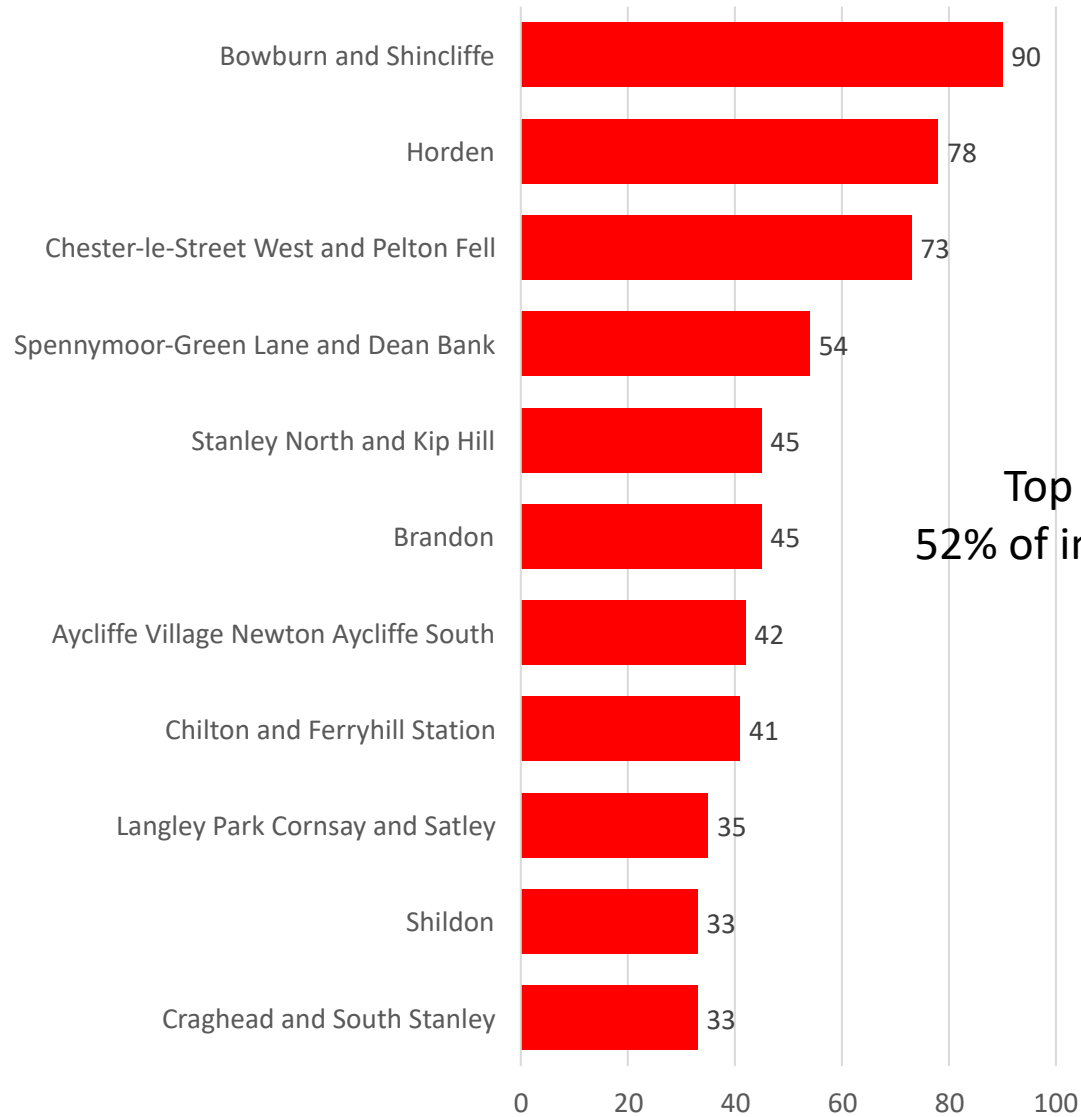
South MAP - 35% of reports



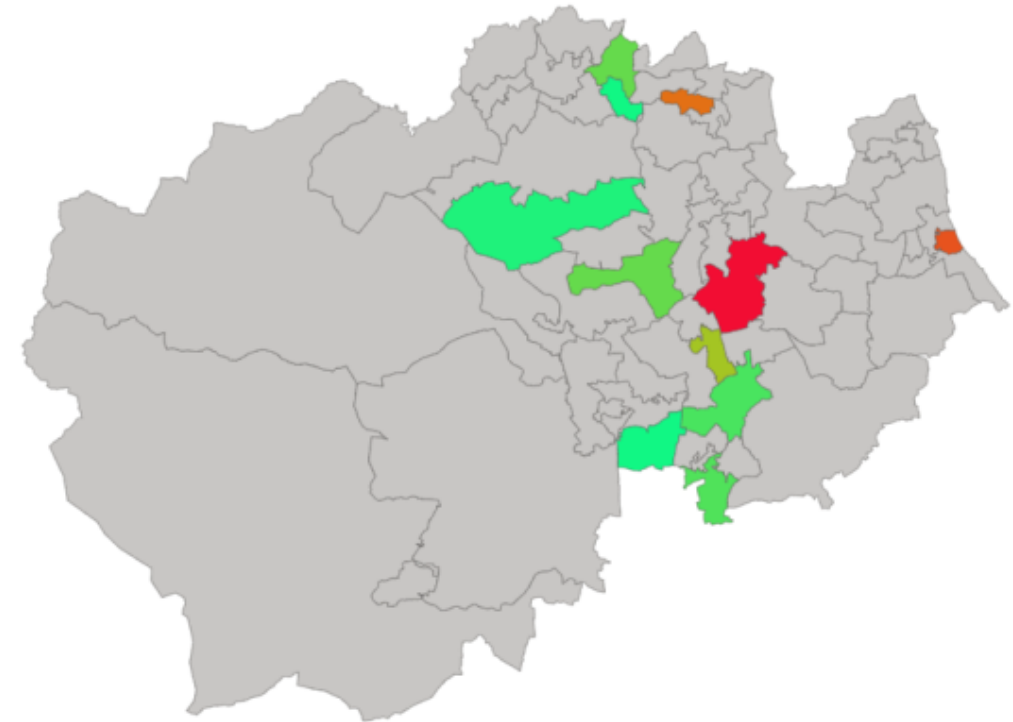
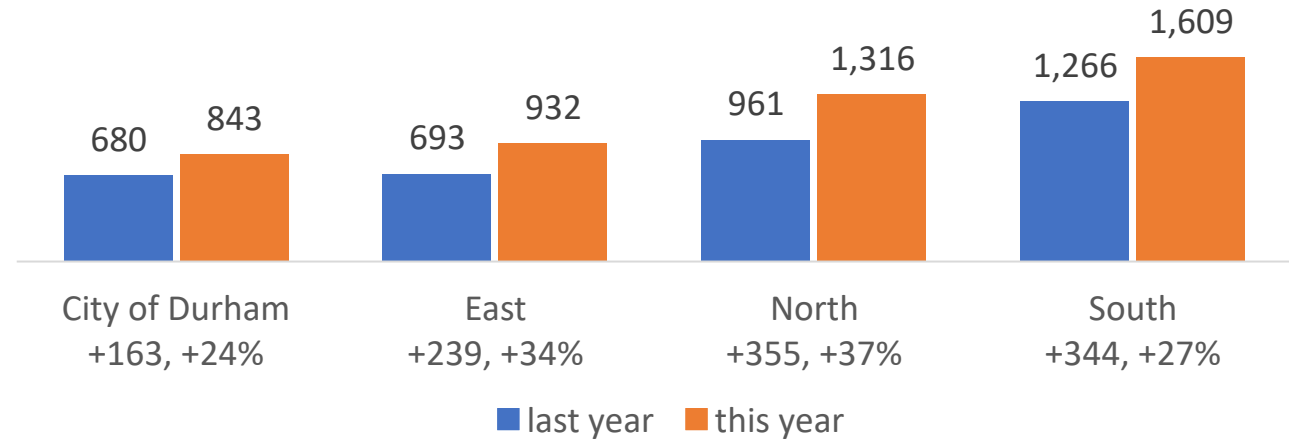
Top 10 ASB Categories



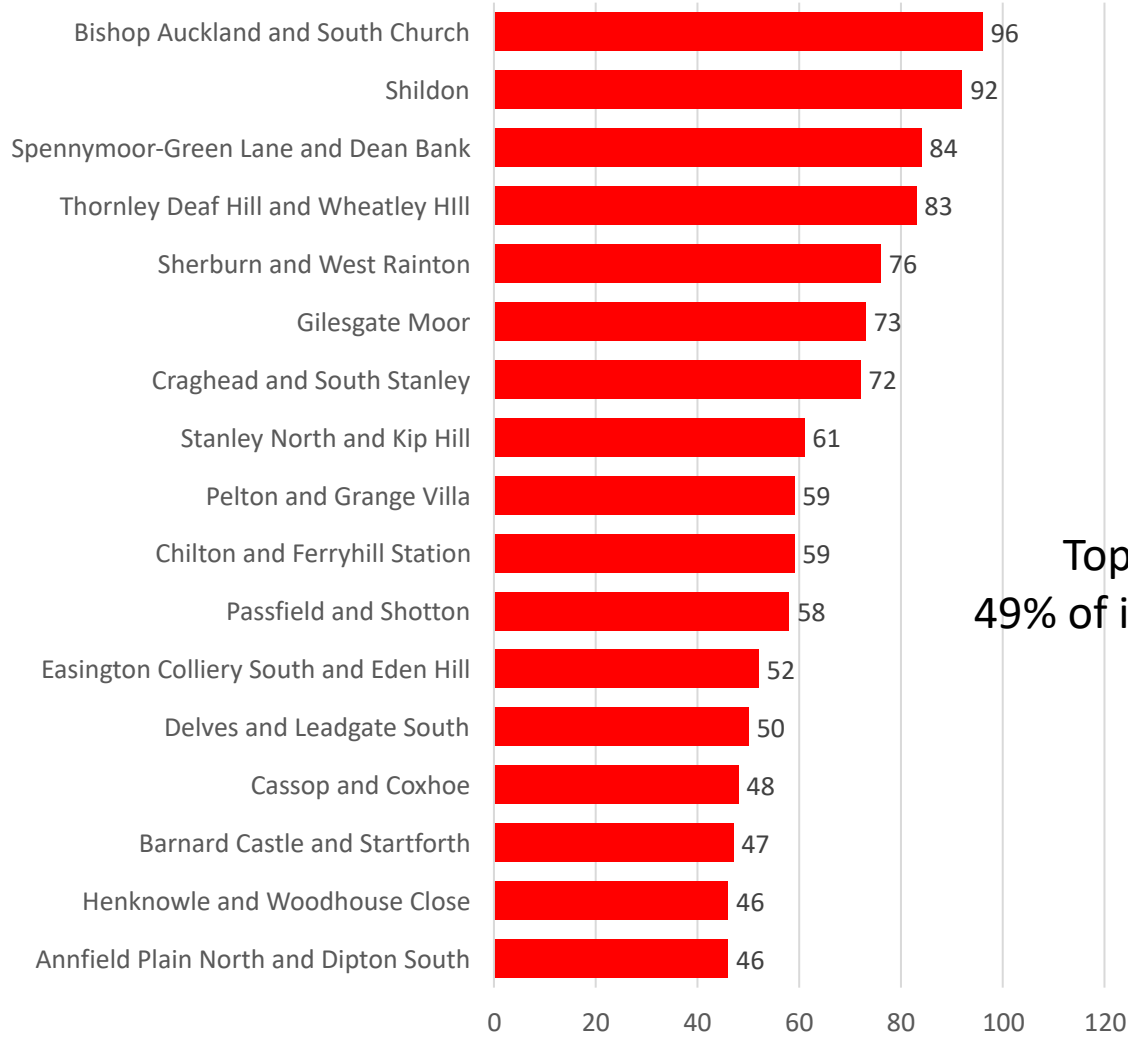
Noise: 3,600 to 4,700 (+31%)



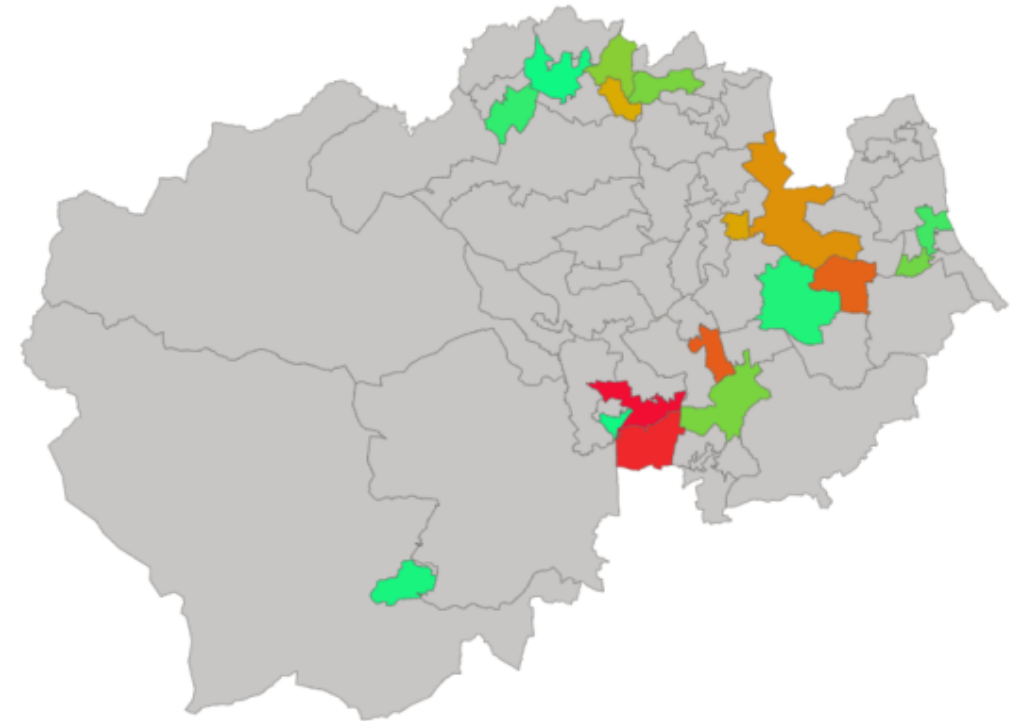
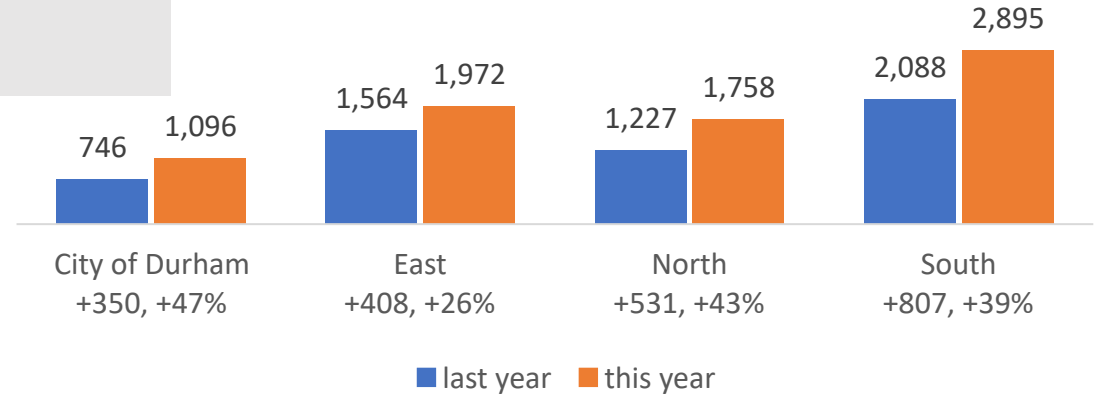
Top 11
52% of increase



Criminal Damage / vandalism / graffiti: 5,625 to 7,721 (+37%)

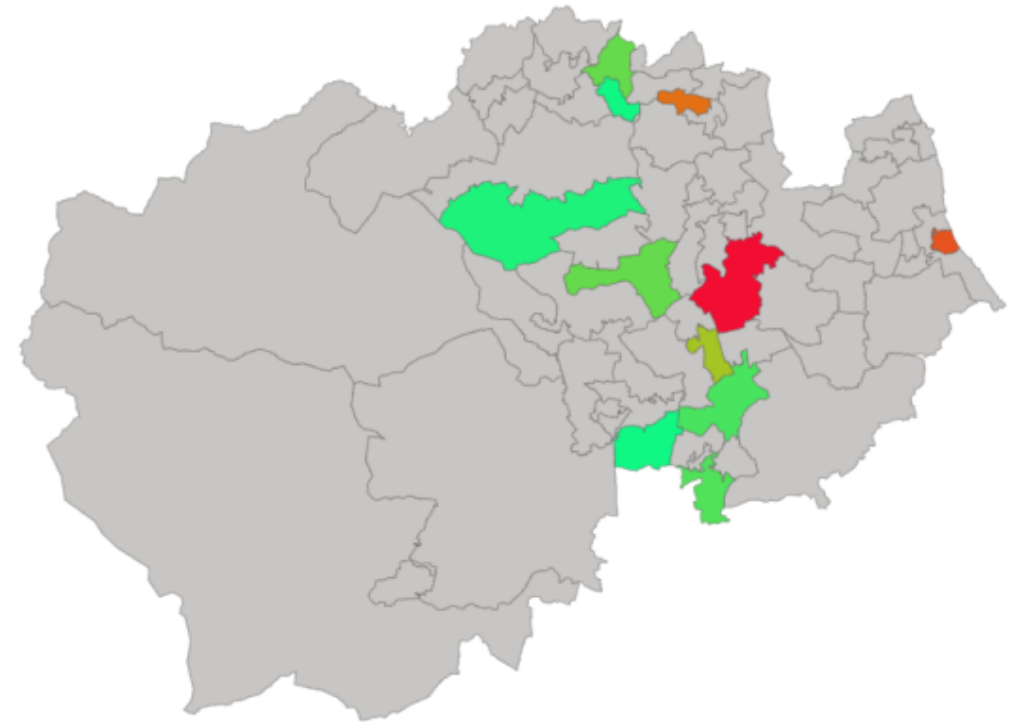
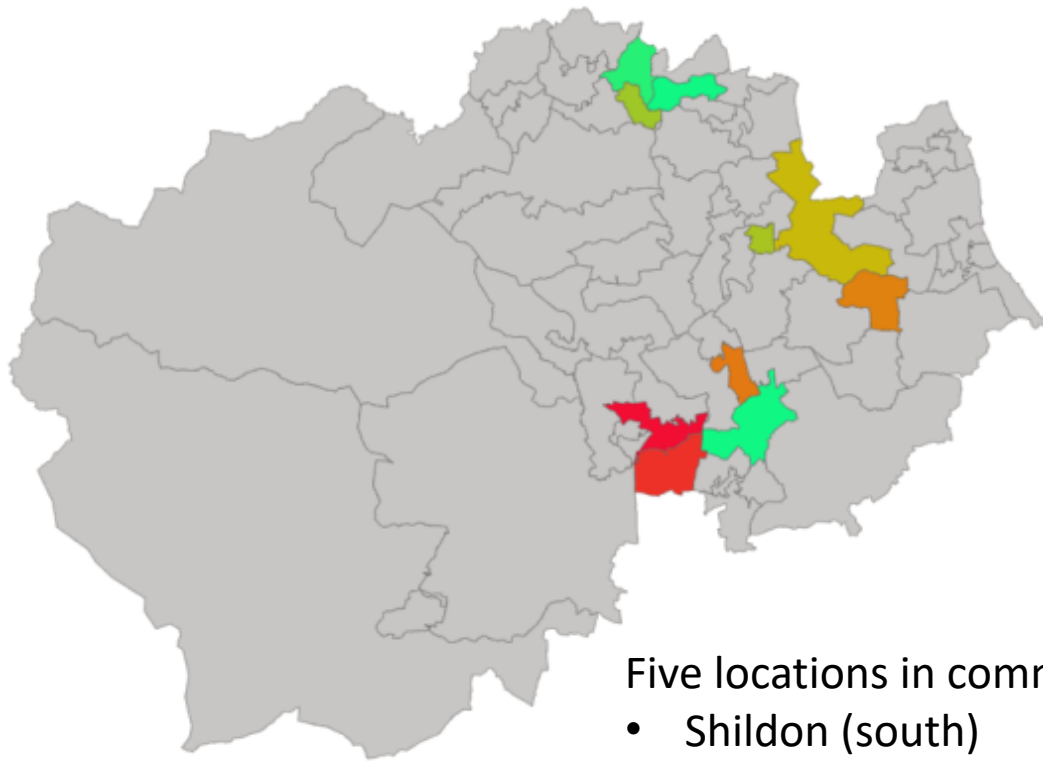


Top 17
49% of increase



Criminal Damage / vandalism / graffiti: Top 10 locations

Noise: Top 11 locations



Five locations in common

- Shildon (south)
- Chilton and Ferryhill Station (south)
- Spennymoor Green Lane and Dean Bank (south)
- Stanley North and Kip Hill (north)
- Annfield Plain South and South Moor (north)

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