

**BLYTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Special Full Council**

**Tuesday 18 February 2025**

**Decision Report**

**Project Shield**

**Recommendation**

**Council resolve to:**

- **Support in principle this valuable work, to tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour using a data and intelligence led approach to target hot spot areas, and if so**
- **To consider any funding once the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) has been notified of any finance to assist this project.**

Ward

All

Risk Management

There may be financial impacts to this report, depending upon the funding received from the OPCC. Any finance required could be met from the Community Funding Budget or from Balances in the first instance. This report has not been discussed previously with the Community Funding Subcommittee.

Objective

To promote the environmental, social and economic wellbeing of the town and its community by being part of a project to reduce serious violence and anti-social behaviour.

Report

Officers have met with representatives from Northumberland County Council (NCC) (Safe & Resilient Communities) and the Blyth Neighbourhood Police Inspector, who outlined the work involved with Project Shield.

The details covered in the meeting are given below.

## AGENDA ITEM 10

NCC in partnership with Northumbria Police, Northumberland Fire & Rescue Service, local partners such as the Town Councils, Youth Providers, local businesses and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner have established Project Shield as a way of working together in local communities, build relationships, provide a visible presence and use engagement to reduce levels of anti-social behaviour in communities.

Through funding secured to date from the OPCC, NCC has employed a team of 4 Community Safety Officers who, have used a data and intelligence led approach to target hot spot areas, in Cramlington.

The team at NCC are very experienced at working with partners, securing complimentary resources for e.g., detached working and engaging positively within local communities, particularly with young people, and have delegated tools and powers to support any action they are required to use to address and change behaviour whilst creating positive opportunities for diversionary activity.

The project started in November 2023, primarily working in Cramlington and over the past 12 months, have helped deliver a reduction of 46% in anti-social behaviour and a 27% decrease in serious violence, resulting in the lowest levels of reported incidents in the last 4 years. The project is very much about, building relationships and using the local assets in the community to help change behaviour.

As a result of the success, the team are now deploying a presence into other areas, notably, Ashington, Blyth and Morpeth and through the funding, which is from the Home Office Safe Streets programme.

The team are beginning to spend more time in Blyth and through 2025 will continue to provide an increased presence in key locations across the town, in an attempt to deliver similar results that have been seen in Cramlington. Statistics show that current levels of anti-social behaviour for Blyth are similar to those for Cramlington prior to the Project starting there.

The team is very much data led, which means they can provide regular updates and reports on the levels of ASB, the locations where it is most prevalent as well as the impact the team are having and how they are operating to achieve positive outcomes, a regular tasking group operates to ensure the team and partnerships resources are deployed appropriately.

For this work to be carried out as in Cramlington, additional funding may be required and this is very much dependant on how much is allocated to the various OPCC's, and we have been informed that the maximum it could be, without Government and external funding would be £20k pa.

## **AGENDA ITEM 10**

The Blyth Neighbourhood Inspector is fully behind the Project, and being part of it also ensures additional Police patrol time in the town.

Other than Cramlington, Ashington is also part of this new initiative.

**Malcolm Wilkinson**  
**Town Clerk**  
**10 February 2025**

## **Project Shield -Appendix**

The following information has been provided by Project Shield.

Blyth experiences levels of ASB comparable to Ashington with both towns experiencing significantly higher levels of ASB than the surrounding Towns. Areas of Blyth are some of the most deprived in the UK which is likely a contributory factor in the levels of Crime and ASB.

There is significant investment in Blyth through the Re-Energising Blyth project which will see development of the Market place, Keel Row Shopping Centre and Port of Blyth which will benefit Blyth, however anecdotal evidence suggests that the communities from the more deprived areas struggle to see how this project will improve their lives.

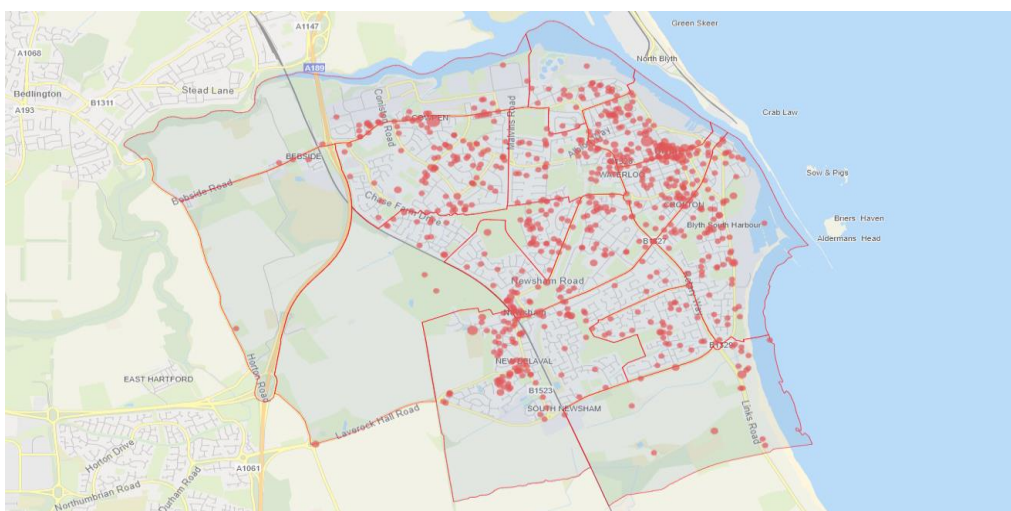
As regards Youth ASB there are some really proactive partners in the town such as Silx, The Buffalo centre and Newsham Youth club to name a few. All of which have excellent knowledge of the Youth ASB issue within the Town.

Non Youth ASB has a number of contributory factors. Issues with vagrancy and begging have been experienced and the Town has a number of people who are homeless and 'sofa surfing' due to difficulties in obtaining or maintaining a tenancy.

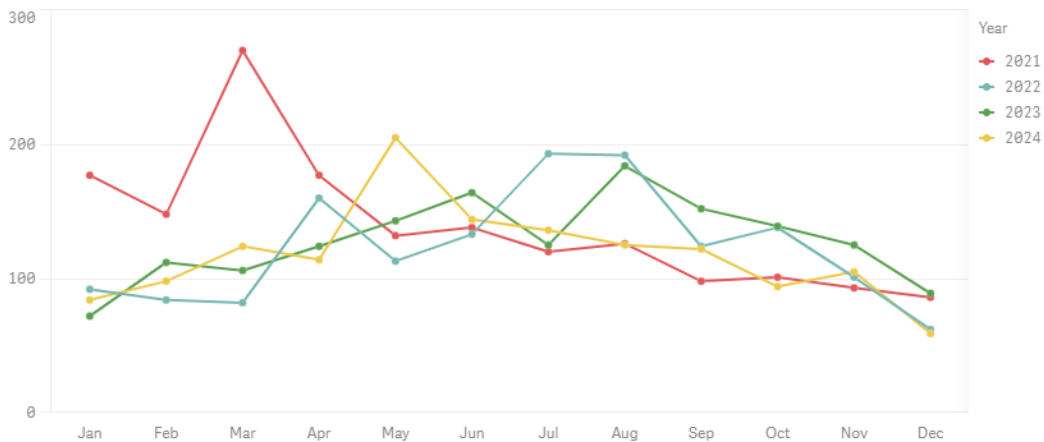
Blyth Better Together is a multi agency problem solving initiative within the town which has been operational for 3 years. The scheme is made up of 4 subgroups made up of SME's in Housing, Substance misuse, ASB and Retail Crime which report to the Blyth Better Together panel. Each subgroup is responsible for its own problem solving using the Asset Based Community Development model, promoting what is good in the town and strengthening areas that require it.

Last year there have been 1413 ASB incidents recorded in the Blyth F3 area of which 337 have the youth marker.

This compares to the same period in 2023 where there was 1537 ASB incidents in the F3 area 392 have youth markers



2024 had a larger than usual spike of ASB in May compared to other years and has followed the same pattern, with incidents decreasing into the colder months.



The incidents peaked with ASB over the school holidays, specifically: spring half term, summer holidays and Autumn half term with the largest peak in the summer holidays. There has been an increase in reporting from security due to increased community engagement from police. Groups of youths s will often loiter and shout at security.

The incidents are mostly occurring between 17.00h-21.00h

**No statistics were provided relating to Serious Crime**

The Northumbria Police website highlights 159 serious crimes occurred in Blyth in December 2024.