

7 October 2021		ITEM: 10
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Off Road Motorbike Nuisance Report		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Non-Key	
Report of: Michelle Cunningham - Community Safety Partnership Manager		
Accountable Strategic Lead: Cheryl Wells – Strategic Lead for Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Resilience		
Accountable Director: Julie Rogers – Director of Public Realm and Chair of Community Safety Partnership		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report has been requested by the Chair of the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to provide the Committee with the opportunity to review the actions being taken by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in response to the ongoing anti-social behaviour (ASB) being caused by off road vehicles which is causing harassment, alarm and distress to residents across the Borough.

For this reason it is a key priority for Cllr Gledhill as both the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and ASB, and Leader of the Council, as well as for Essex Police and the District Commander for Thurrock.

Our residents raise this as a matter of concern at all our public engagement events, with members across the Borough and through reporting to both Police and Council.

Although quad bikes, three-wheeled bikes, trail bikes and some other two-wheeled vehicles are built for off-road use, it is against the law to ride them in public parks or on publicly-owned land without permission from the local authority. As with unlicensed powered vehicles, these can only be used on private roads or land, with the road or land-owner's permission.

Whilst some people regard this kind of vehicle use as harmless fun we recognise that the regular antisocial use of vehicles in some parts of our borough is having a much wider impact on our communities than simply nuisance noise.

In addition, the effect of dangerous or reckless use of vehicles in Thurrock has led to criminal damage of other vehicles, land and surrounding property and as has seen drivers and riders also risk injuring themselves, other road users, cyclists, pedestrians – particularly children, as well as their pets as they do not have full control of their vehicle and their full attention on their surroundings.

Driving or riding in this way can also be used as a form of intimidation, either to other road users or the community. Loud noise from engines and music, and deliberately creating large amounts of exhaust or tyre smoke can also be seen as an aggressive act.

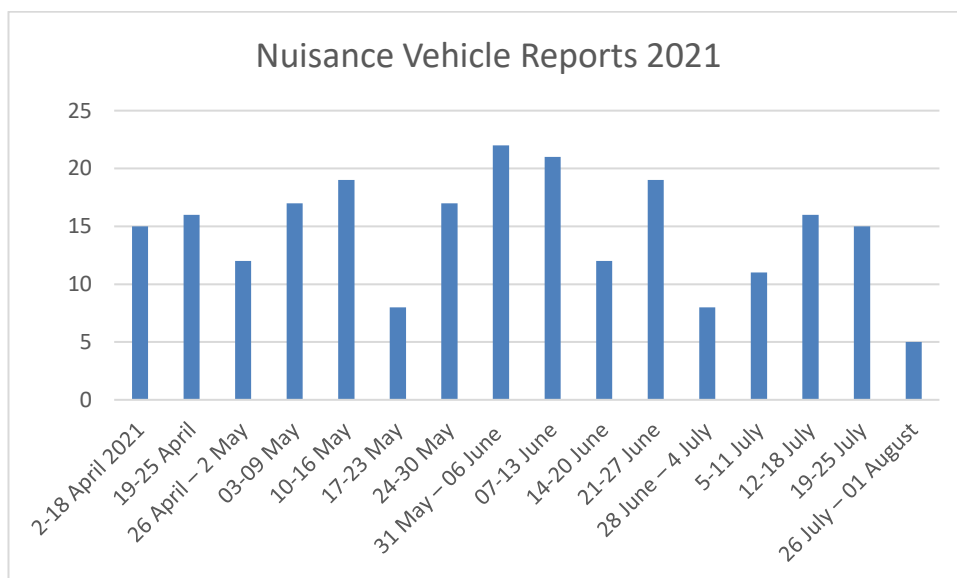
1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 That members of the Committee scrutinise and satisfy themselves that the Council and Police are working together effectively to combat the issue of Anti-social Behaviour in relation to motorbike nuisance.

1.2 That members of the Committee recognise that we cannot address this issue without the support of our communities and that reporting is key.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 In the 4 months from 2nd April 2021 to 2nd August Essex Police received 233 reports of Nuisance Vehicles. (Note this includes reports in relation to cruisers in West Thurrock as well as off road nuisance vehicles).



2.2 Op Caesar is the police response to off road vehicles used for anti-social behaviour in the borough. The strategy for the current deployment of this operation is as follows:

- Essex Police will plan to have Op Caesar running at least once a week. However, where shift patterns permit they will endeavour to run the

operation on both Saturday and Sunday, deployments will focus on the top 5 areas of concern which is directed by calls made to the police over the course of the rolling month.

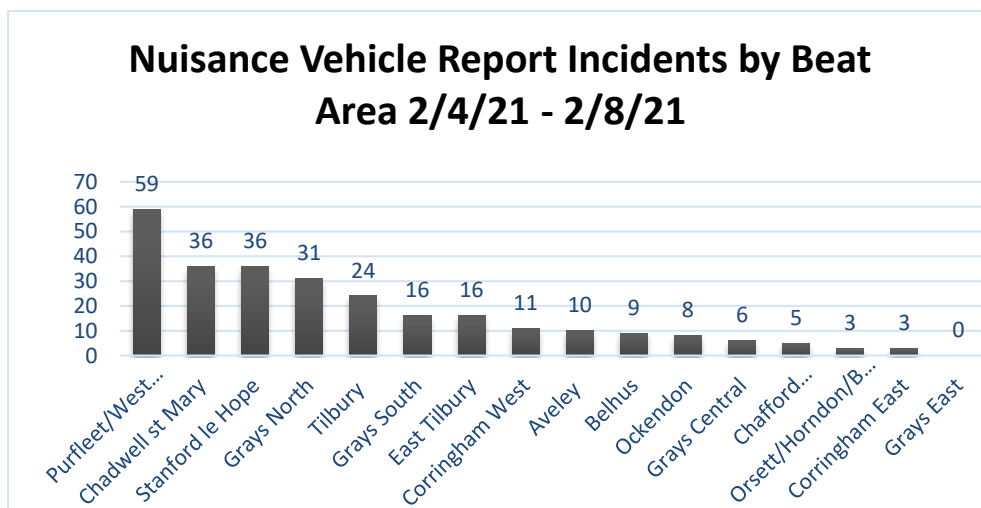
- As a minimum there will be a double crewed resource on the operation ready to proactively and reactively target the focus areas.
- On key dates they will look to deploy in larger numbers using a variety of tactics with support from the Special Constabulary, and the Operational Support Group Community Safety and Engagement Officers will plan to publicise the activity and actions taken weekly through social media.
- A return of each weekend activity is generated and made available to the CSP and discussed at the weekly Monday meeting.

2.3 The current top 5 areas, as of September, which OP Caesar is currently focused on, are:

- Chadwell St Mary – Orsett Heath
- Billet Lane, Stanford Le Hope
- Butts Lane, Stanford le Hope
- Blackshots Lane, Grays
- Country Park, South Ockendon.

2.4 These areas are determined by the reports made to Essex Police and we continue to encourage residents to report in a timely manner via either 101 or chat online.

2.5 The Police reported hot spot areas correspond to the complaints received by members which currently are mainly in the Orsett Heath, Woodside and Blackshot areas.



N.B. These figures are for incidents recorded as nuisance vehicle incidents only at the location therefore this will include all types of vehicles and not just off-road vehicles, i.e. West Thurrock area includes reports of cruisers.

- 2.6 Positive actions taken are routinely shared by Essex Police through social media and examples are shared at appendix 1 (Facebook posts) and appendix 2 (newsletter).
- 2.7 Operation Que took place on the 27th July 2021 with the Housing Garages Team, Environment Enforcement Team and Essex Police to tackle the ASB arising from nuisance bikes using un-let garages to store their quad and motorbikes. This was an intelligence led operation to search a number of garages across the borough and which led to a total of 10 vehicles being identified and taken into safe possession. Essex Police seized 4 motor bikes and 2 quad bikes and Environment Enforcement seized 2 cars and 2 motor bikes.
- 2.8 We have allocated in excess of £55,000 and worked with the Public Rights of Way Team, Housing and our Clean and Green Services to target harden and restrict access in the following areas:
- Installation of fencing in Dilkes Park reduced the access to the park for motorbikes
 - The Public Rights of Way team installed a gate at Greyhound Lane to reduce an access point to Orsett Heath.
 - Housing neighbourhood teams have repaired, replaced and maintained the knee rail along Thames View Road to prevent motorbike access, as well as repairs to the gate to restrict access to open field in Hobart Road.
 - Historically there has been issues of motorbikes being driven on Koala Park. Estate Services arranged for fencing to be placed around the Park and restrictions placed on paths where access was possible for these bikes. We have had several incidents since these measures were put in place with holes being made in the fencing, or removing some of the fencing, which were promptly repaired and we are not aware of any further issues with motorbikes on Koala Park.
 - In addition our Clean and Green Teams routinely repair damaged fencing and bollards and will, subject to a criteria met assessment, install new target hardening when requested. We also use fencing contractors for larger installations of fences, this has included Dilkes Park, and various other areas included lengths of knee rail fencing throughout the borough.
- 2.9 The Section 59 warning signs have been refreshed across the hot spot areas in the Borough.
- 2.10 Our Parking Enforcement Teams targeted vehicles parking in Oliver Close whilst they went riding on their bikes.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 Through the monthly tactical coordination group, Chaired by the District Commander and attended by The Leader, Cllr Gledhill, and key services within Public Realm Directorate, the next steps are to:
- Host Park meets in the top 5 areas with Council departments, local councillors and residents to look at further areas to target harden, gather local intelligence in relation to perpetrators and encourage timely reporting. An action plan will be put in place for all areas identified.
 - Continue to promote positive action taken through newsletters in hot spot areas.
 - Share advice on motorbikes and the law in problematic areas, included at appendix 3
 - Op Que will continue across the borough to tackle the issues of ASB and motorcycles being stored in un-let garages.
 - Engage with landowners.
 - Encourage residents to share video footage/ photographs with Essex Police via Thurrock.Operation.Caesar@essex.police.uk.
- 3.2 A business case has been put forward and is currently going through the approval processes within Essex Police regarding a pilot for Thurrock to tackle quad bikes. Thurrock Council have agreed to commit £20k of capital and the CSP £10.5k of revenue to support this pilot. Police will resource and provide ongoing revenue costs, showing a true partnership approach to addressing this issue.
- 3.3 A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) has been considered to address this issue, and is another tool that the Council is exploring as an option, at specific locations, to target key areas .

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 This is not an issue that can be resolved by enforcement alone and needs the resources and support of a number of Council departments as well as that of the public.
- 4.2 That members understand that the reporting by communities drives the activity and priority areas of OP Caesar.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- 5.1 This report has been requested by the Chair of this Committee to enable scrutiny of this issue due to the number of concerns raised by residents in relation to this matter. The focused street meets will provide an opportunity to consult with members and communities on tackling this issue.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership is central to delivering Thurrock Council's priority of:

People – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay.

This means:

- High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
- Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
- Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together

6.2 This approach supports deliver of Priority 3 for the CSP in 21/22, namely:

- **Local Community and Visibility**
 - Identify and Tackle Anti-social Behaviour
 - Community Engagement and Increase Visibility

6.3 This links to priority 2 of the current Police and Crime plan for 2021 of “Cracking down on ASB”

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Senior Management Accountant

£31,500 has been committed in 2021/22 by the Council and Community Safety Partnership to support a pilot project in Thurrock to respond to this issue.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Simon Scowther**
Legal Services

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Rebecca Lee**
Team Manager, Community Development and Equalities

Working alongside the Public Rights of Way Team we are mindful of the need to be DDA compliant and this means that in areas where access required any barriers would also enable footpaths to be accessible to motorbikes as well.

Whilst this is a Borough wide operation it will always be intelligence led and focus on the most affected wards.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder or Impact on Looked After Children

This report will support members in ensuring that they are delivering on Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

[Vehicle nuisance involving cars, bikes and mopeds | Essex Police](#)

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1: Positive social media on actions taken
- Appendix 2: Op Caesar newsletter issue 1
- Appendix 3: Motorcycling and the Law Leaflet

Report Author:

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Public Realm