

**POLICE AND CRIME  
COMMISSIONER FOR  
LEICESTERSHIRE**

**POLICE AND CRIME PANEL**

Report of	<b>CHIEF CONSTABLE</b>
Subject	<b>KNIFE CRIME AND STOP SEARCH</b>
Date	<b>FRIDAY 8 JUNE 2018 – 1:00 p.m.</b>
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**Purpose of Report**

1. In March 2017 Leicestershire Police adopted Knife Crime as force threat following a sustained increase in reported serious incidents involving bladed weapons.
2. An overview of the governance structures and focus for last year was presented in June 2017 to the Police and Crime Panel.
3. This provides a summary of the activity since that date and the focus in the next year and its relation to stop search usage.

**Recommendations**

4. The Police and Crime Panel acknowledge the continuing multi-agency approach taken locally to tackle the increase in knife crime in LLR, which reflects the increase nationally.
5. Support the targeted use of coercive powers in areas of significant threat from knife crime, drugs supply and serious violence which show positive outcomes and build confidence that the police are tackling the issue.
6. To support the multiagency approach being taken by the partnership in dealing with those at risk of carrying a knife or being exploited into doing so.
7. Continue to share and promote the knife campaigns released by Leicestershire Police and partners to reassure and promote the prevention and deterrence activity within our communities.

**Executive Summary**

8. Recorded Knife Crime has continued to rise across Leicestershire, mirroring the national trend.
9. Within Leicestershire there was an increase in recorded offences of 33% in 2016/17 but that increase appears to have plateaued in 2017/18.

10. Recent increases are attributable to an increased reporting of possession offences and from increased use of stop search powers as a result of intelligence led targeted police operations targeting areas and individuals at risk of knife crime.
11. The strategic aims for knife crime remain as:
  - Preserve life and reduce knife crime
  - Safeguard and protect people at risk of becoming a victim of knife violence
  - Deter People away from carrying knives and becoming an offender
  - Enhance public and partners confidence
12. Analysis of the issue continues to show that there is not one crime type that is being committed but that the areas of focus remain as East Leicester, West Leicester, Loughborough (Charnwood) and Leicester City Centre.
13. The Knife Crime Prevention Group has overseen the development of a recognised and well supported campaign #livesnotknives that now has a strong library of material to draw upon as a partnership.
14. A multiagency review of Habitual Knife Carriers has been developed, with support of members that explores the causes and potential solutions to those most at risk of carrying knives and seeks to engage, divert or prosecute.
15. There are clear links for Habitual Knife Carriers to educational matters, social care, experiences of abuse in the family home, street gangs, organised criminality and anti-social behaviour.
16. The focus for police operations in the next year will be around the use of coercive powers, including stop search, to safeguard those most likely to carry a knife and deter others from carrying weapons.
17. The use of stop search by Leicestershire Police continues to increase. Scrutiny of these is overseen by Chief Superintendent Adam Streets, internally, through the 'PILOT' (Police Intervention, Legitimacy and Organisational Transparency) meeting and externally via the 'coercive powers scrutiny group' to ensure legitimacy is at its core.
18. Public scrutiny of the knife crime approaches has been positive with clear indication that it remains a concern for the communities within Leicestershire.

### **Introduction**

19. Serious Violent Crime has been acknowledged by the government as a growing issue supported by the release of the home office strategy focusing on:
  - Early Intervention and Diversion
  - Partnerships and communities interventions
  - Drugs Supply through County Lines and Organised Crime
  - Knife Crime
  - Offender Management

20. Nationally knife crime has continued to increase with significant focus by the national media on London and the rates of offences seen in the early part of 2018. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported 22% increase for 2017 compared to 2016 in England and Wales.
21. Recorded Knife Crime within Leicestershire has continued to increase in the last year with a 33% increase on the previous year for all offences where a knife is seen, used or threatened.
22. The change in offences for Leicestershire has been most marked in the possession offences where there has been a marked increase from the average of 38 a month to in excess of 50 a month for March and April.
23. This represents individuals arrested following the use of stop search powers or with a weapon on them when arrested for another offence.
24. The areas of focus for knife crime remain as East Leicester, West Leicester, Loughborough (Charnwood) and Leicester City Centre.
25. The Knife Crime Prevention plan for 2017/18 focused on the establishment and effective working between partners in developing and delivering a message to prevent and protect people from becoming involved with Knife Crime.
26. The partnership has worked collectively to generate, promote and disseminate the many high quality and well branded materials that all utilise the #livesnotknives hook for social media.
27. This has shown over 100,000 views on the videos alone which have also been a significant feature of the education interventions across schools in Leicestershire where the staff have been able to select the level of details provided based on their assessment of the student group receiving it.
28. The development of innovative delivery methods has continued with an example being the City Youth Services commissioning and delivering a series of short videos, designed and delivered by young people, called "A Slice of Reality". This had exceptional feedback, from the key areas of focus, and is being delivered across a wider audience in the next few months.
29. Warning Zone has introduced a section on the dangers of knives, which will reach over 10,000 year 6 pupils a year, showing long term commitment to this issue.
30. Habitual Knife Carriers have been identified as those individuals most likely to be in possession of a weapon based on the intelligence surrounding them in the last 2 years.
31. There are just over 100 individuals that meet this criteria and are being managed through clear intervention or disruption plans by Neighbourhood Teams and local partners.
32. Those with other indicators, such as links to drugs use, ASB, exploitation, educational welfare, urban street gangs and organised criminality are managed through the partnership knife crime group.

33. This is to ensure full information sharing and assessment of risks to minimise the impact of them on others and, where possible divert them away from carrying weapons.
34. This group is developing its capability and relies on the exceptional engagement from some partners who have been involved since the group's inception in 2017.
35. Engagement and intervention at treatment centres is a development that is being explored with University Hospitals Leicester (UHL). National scanning indicates that intervention prior to influence from peer groups or family in hospitals is an effective diversion point.
36. The opportunity at the teachable moment by someone not in law enforcement then directs or signposts the individual to the correct support they need based on the disclosed cause of the trauma be that gang violence, drug dealing or domestic violence.
37. The operational focus in response to knife crime has acknowledged the clear overlap with organised criminality, county lines drugs supply and street gangs and is called Operation Viceroy.
38. The police operation will seek to arrest those carrying knives to safeguard them and others from becoming victims while increasing outcomes and criminal justice interventions for those involved.
39. A number of deployments have been planned for the next five months with one operation already completed on the West Leicester Neighbourhood Policing Area.
40. Operation Viceroy provides clear intelligence about four geographic areas that have high counts of recorded knife crime, organised criminality and drugs supply that provide a basis for any officers deployed to or working in that area to consider the use of coercive powers including stop search.

### **Stop Search**

41. The use of stop search by Leicestershire police is overseen by the PILOT group chaired by Chief Superintendent Adam Streets.
42. The use of stop search is acknowledged as a powerful tool in the prevention of crime and the outcome and arrest rates of this power have a robust and responsive mechanisms introduced since 2015 to feedback internally and more importantly to the public.
43. This external scrutiny is important and Analysis of stop search and use of force is shared with the bi-monthly external Coercive Powers Scrutiny Group (formally stop search reference group). It is attended by members of the community with a particular interest in stop and search and the use of police powers. It is chaired by a member of the local community with invited attendees from PAGRE (Police Advisory Group for Race and Equality), representatives of young people's groups.
44. At each meeting, the group are supplied with data about the use of stop and search and use of force powers across the force and the records completed by officers relating to 20 randomly selected stop and searches. In addition, the group are asked to review randomly selected Body Worn Video footage.

45. Leicestershire Police have been conducting between 150 and 200 stop searches a month for the last year with very consistent positive outcome rates of 30%. The arrest rate from searches has also been consistent at around 16%.
46. Patrol and Resolution teams have been receiving training and coaching regarding key principles of proactive policing and included is the utilisation of coercive powers. "Streetcraft" training being driven by Superintendent Potter is being delivered to all front line officers.
47. Operation Viceroy was developed in conjunction with the legitimacy group as it was recognised that stop and search needs to be used in an intelligence led way to disrupt serious violent and organised crime.
48. April 2018 has shown an increase in the use of Stop Search to the highest level since 2015 with 224 being carried out. The category showing the largest significant increase is for offensive weapons with 49 searches completed. During April the arrest rate increased markedly to 26% with 58 people being arrested as a result of a stop search being carried out.
49. This change is in response to highlighting good proactive work, empowering officers to use coercive powers and providing clear supportive messages on its application.

### **Ongoing Governance**

50. Monthly updates of the reported knife will continue to be provided allowing for oversight against the strategic objectives of reducing offences chaired by ACC Jason Masters. **Appendix A** shows the current situation until April 2018.
51. The focus will be on improved intelligence led police operations utilising coercive powers to deter and divert people from carrying weapons while publicising criminal justice outcomes to discourage individuals.
52. Stop Search will continue to be monitored as part of the PILOT group and external scrutiny by the public with monthly reporting and assessments.

### **Implications**

53. The impact on community confidence is clear from the previous incidents and the necessity for a joint agency approach is necessary to educate and prevent people carrying knives in the first place. A single agency approach is not recognised

### **List of Appendices**

Appendix A – Current Knife crime and Stop Search trends to April 2018

### **Background Papers**

None

### **Person to Contact**

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