

Briefing paper for Audit Committee 17 February 2026

Community Safety Audit – Limited Assurance

1. Introduction

In June 2025 work commenced with the audit team by setting out an agreed Terms of Reference of the Audit.

The stated objective of the Audit being:

is to provide assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's governance, policies, and operational arrangements in delivering its statutory and strategic responsibilities for community safety, with a focus on inter-agency coordination, internal compliance, and equitable service delivery to vulnerable communities.

The Community Safety and Neighbourhood Nuisance Team (CSNN) engaged fully in the audit, providing all information as requested and had some open and honest discussions in response to the detailed questions and various interviews.

The first step was to define what is meant by Community Safety in general, specifically for the Council and what areas under the Community Safety remit the CSNN and Community Safety manager are responsible for.

To define Community Safety is not straightforward as it is not a specific function, in the same way as for example, delivering the enforcement requirements of the Food Safety Act and associate Regulations, as it covers a wide range of issues, regulatory enforcement agencies and engagement with the community.

Each public body and police authority have varying definitions of Community Safety, in the forward to the Safer Norfolk Plan 2025-28 it states that; *We recognise the multifaceted nature of community safety, encompassing crime prevention, targeting offenders, providing advice, guidance, and services to the public, ensuring our partnership's organisations are equipped to respond and the importance of having an up-to-date assessment of issues. Community Safety is an ever-changing topic, affected by external economic and social pressures like the cost of living, job security and housing.*

In BCKLWN Community Safety overlaps with Safeguarding which is overseen by the Governance team, and as the wider determinants of health impact on Community Safety, so too links in with the Marmot Place workstreams.

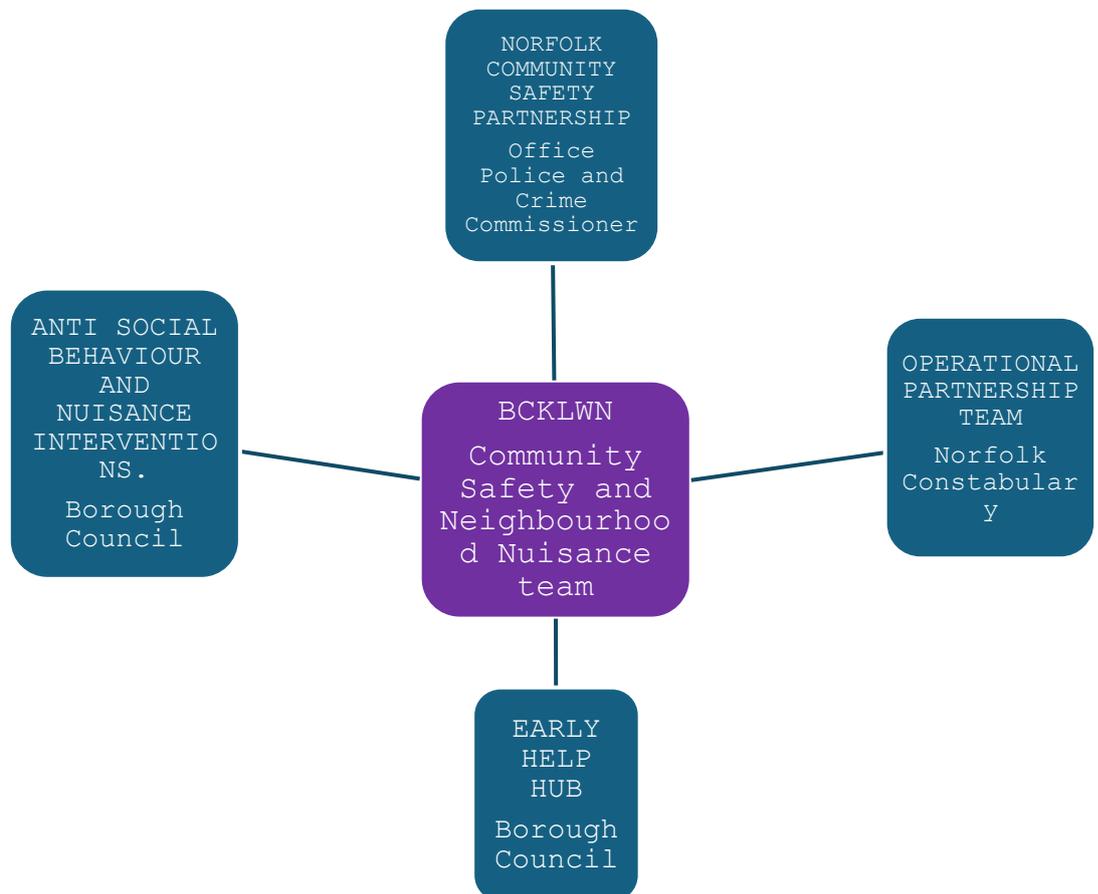
Therefore, initial discussions focussed on clarification and confirmation of the relevant legal duties on the Council and how the requirements of a Community Safety Partnership are delivered in the Borough of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

The legal duty for a CSP is met by the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership (NCSP) delivered by the Office and Police Crime Commissioner (OPCC). The role of the NCSP is to draft strategic plans, carry out any statutory returns, co ordinate ASB case reviews and provide training and awareness sessions. The NCSP has its own governance, Policy and delivery arrangements through a hierarchy of working and strategic groups.

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February 2026

2. Background

How is Community Safety delivered by the Borough Council of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk?



Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) were introduced by Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and bring together local partners to formulate and implement strategies to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour in their communities.

The responsible authorities that make up a Community Safety Partnership are the:

- police
- fire and rescue authorities
- local authorities
- health partners
- Probation Service

CSPs work on the principle that no single agency can address all drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour, and that effective partnership working is vital to ensuring safer communities.

In Norfolk, the Community Safety Partnership is uniquely hosted and managed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCCN).

The defined governance plan, [FINAL-Safer-Norfolk-Plan-25-28.pdf](#) which sets out the strategic and operational mechanisms of the CSP and its Priorities,

The Role of BCKLWN in Norfolk CSP:

- Attend the CSP meetings
- Implement the action plan where appropriate
- Attend and deliver the work of the sub groups
- Signatory to the ISA
- Ensure the ISA is followed

The Operational Partnership Team -Neighbourhood Policing (Part of the CSP as the locality response) - Norfolk is divided into seven policing areas, aligned to district council boundaries. Within this model are seventeen Local Policing Commands, each overseen by a district command structure.

Each district has an Operational Partnership Team (OPT). In these teams, police and partners work together to problem solve longer term issues in order to try to reduce the demand caused by specific individuals and locations. OPTs have close links with Early Help Hubs that are housed within district council offices. The hubs ensure there is a strong partnership focus on addressing emerging needs through early intervention.

Role of BCKLWN in the OPT.

- Staff and Deliver the Early Help Hub
- Share data
- Share intelligence and information
- Work with partners on specific cases
- Attend weekly meetings
- Provide a workstation for the OPT co Ordinator

At a locality level the BCKLWN plays its part in delivering community safety by:

At a tactical level

Implementing safeguarding duties through the internal Safeguarding Group

Counter terrorism – PREVENT – awareness

Acting as the independent chair for ASB case reviews

A member of the Community Alcohol Partnership

At an operational level - Investigate and intervene:

- Noise and nuisance complaints
- ASB complaints
- Fly tipping and littering.
- Dog fouling
- Unauthorised encampments
- Consultation comments for Premises licences and TENs
- Work with other agencies on problem hot spots

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February 2026

3. Current Position

As a new manager, starting in late 2024, I had identified both gaps in provision and opportunities for delivery, and these were shared with the Audit team as part of their research.

Therefore, work had already commenced on some of the items identified in the Audit recommendations including:

- Starting a draft ASB policy
- Drafting the Community Safety Policy statement for West Norfolk
- Raising the issue of the gap between delivering the priorities and high-level strategic aims of the NCSP at a local operational level and the high level strategic with the NCSP community safety manager.
- Seeking support from the NCSP Director and partners at the NCSP through the locality updates, which was fully endorsed.
- Liaising with Governance services to work jointly with the Safeguarding lead and agreement to establish a shared statement of intent.
- Linking in with the other Norfolk district authorities to establish working relationships.
- Establishing links with Norfolk Fire and Rescue protection team.
- Establishing an initial link with the new Police Superintendent who is responsible for the locality CSP joint working.

4. Response to recommendations

We welcome the audit and its recommendations because it endorses what we already knew. The in-depth scrutiny and examination of what we deliver and what we should deliver, in a complicated arena, has given a structure and hierarchy to a scheme of improvements and changes.

Although the conclusion of the audit is a Limited Assurance rating, and could be construed as a negative outcome, it in fact has highlighted key weaknesses, and gives us a clear roadmap for strengthening the service. The areas for improvement are largely based around governance, process and digital inclusion rather than meeting the core demands of responding to ASB complaints, ASB case reviews, raising awareness of safeguarding issues and joint working with the neighbourhood police team which are being delivered successfully.

However, I particularly welcome the findings which concur with my own, in that there is an obvious gap in the link between strategic plans and the operational delivery of the NCSP priorities and workplan at a locality level. Setting up a locality-based problem solving group combining regulators, healthcare and social services is an essential part of an effective CSP and a personal aim. Links with Marmot Place aspirations will assist in identifying areas of deprivation linked to ASB and crime hence informing appropriate holistic responses. It is about working with communities to resolve issues in addition to seeking sanctions against offenders.

Initial high level conversations have taken place with the Strategic lead of the Fire and Rescue service, including Trading Standards and the local Police Inspector and there is Jeannette Hollingsworth- Environmental Health Manager (Housing Standards and CSNN)

February 2026

positive appetite to partnership working. This is a good starting point, engagement with our key stakeholders is already in place.

We will use the audit recommendations to form the basis of organisational change with the team and a change in approach using proactive initiatives based on evidence, local knowledge and intelligence rather than solely relying on reactive work.

It will support clarifying the overlap between Safeguarding and Community Safety

Ongoing communication with internal Audit is in place to ensure we are reporting progress and meeting the agreed milestones.

An action plan and tracker is in use and will be reported to the quarterly meeting with Audit which will assure members that a plan is in place to complete the recommendations.

Key points to note

- Recommendation 1) The Council should develop and implement a formal Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan.

A Community Safety Policy Statement will be developed that reflects the overarching NCSP strategy. KPIs will be identified and reported in conjunction with the Senior Corporate Governance officer and Business Systems manager.

The action plan will set out the actions required to establish a locality CSP as well specific campaigns or projects based on local data.

- Recommendation 2) Team Structure and Role Clarity

The team structure and roles will be realigned to provide effective delivery of the CSP and regulatory duties related to ASB, nuisance and Housing Standards. This will remove the current single point of failure with the existing structure whereby all responsibility lies with the CSP manager. A competency framework will be completed. Governance, review cycle of policies and linking with internal teams will be established.

- Recommendation 3) Formalise ISA Compliance Framework and enhance communication.

This will be met by the reviewed team structure and roles to ensure that processes are in place to ensure business continuity and not relying on one person. The ISA will be part of the processes rather than a named officer to reduce single point of failure.

These key objectives will meet the 31 March 2026 deadline, but the processes and delivery of each action will be ongoing throughout the life of the CSP Policy Statement and action plan.

5. Successes

I would like to note that the Audit report does equally describe the achievements of the CSNN team:

- The Community Safety Manager demonstrates a strong working knowledge of relevant legislation (e.g. ASB powers, Serious Violence Duty, safeguarding laws), also referencing

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February 2026

parliamentary readings, Home Office guidance, and NCSP meetings. This evidences personal diligence and proactive legislative monitoring.

- The Council participates in the Norfolk Community Safety Partnership (NCSP), which supports policy development and legislative awareness through collaborative meetings and shared resources.
- The Community Safety & Neighbourhood Nuisance Team has robust partnerships with schools, housing providers, health services, and voluntary organisations, which are essential for identifying individuals at risk and delivering safeguarding and Prevent duties.

6. In summary;

The audit process was a positive experience and provides ratification to changes in service delivery and a review of working practices. It has raised the profile of the work and its value to the community and the Council. An action tracker that lists each recommendation will provide assurance to members that we are committed to meeting the targets. This workstream will work in conjunction with LGR and transformation.