



SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT

HIDDEN DEPRIVATION IN OUR TOWN CENTRE

APRIL 2014



1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report summarises the work of the Scrutiny Task Group (STG) set up to look at the issue of hidden deprivation in our town centre. The group met on 9 occasions and have brought back 12 recommendations for Scrutiny to consider covering four subject areas:
- Crime and disorder
 - Housing
 - environmental quality
 - community integration
- 2.1 The review came about due to elected members becoming increasingly aware of the issues of deprivation that affect those people living in the town centre. Although it is well known that there are areas of “multiple deprivation” in Cheltenham (with parts of St. Pauls, St. Marks and Hesters Way in the 10% most deprived areas nationally), as the numbers of people living in the town centre are much smaller, this does not get picked up in the maps of deprivation. Hence the title – “hidden deprivation.”
- 3.1 The group hoped to consider the degree to which living conditions in the town centre were characterised by the following issues:
- Crime and disorder associated with the night-time economy.
 - Transient communities which can impact on community resilience and cohesion.
 - Residents living in private rented accommodation in buildings that have been subdivided into houses in multiple-occupation or in flats above shops.
 - Higher than average unemployment rates
 - Poor physical and mental health.
- 4.1 By undertaking the review, the group hoped that by having a better understanding of the issues may assist the council and partners in considering how services are delivered to people living in the town centre; and make changes so we are not disadvantaging these residents.

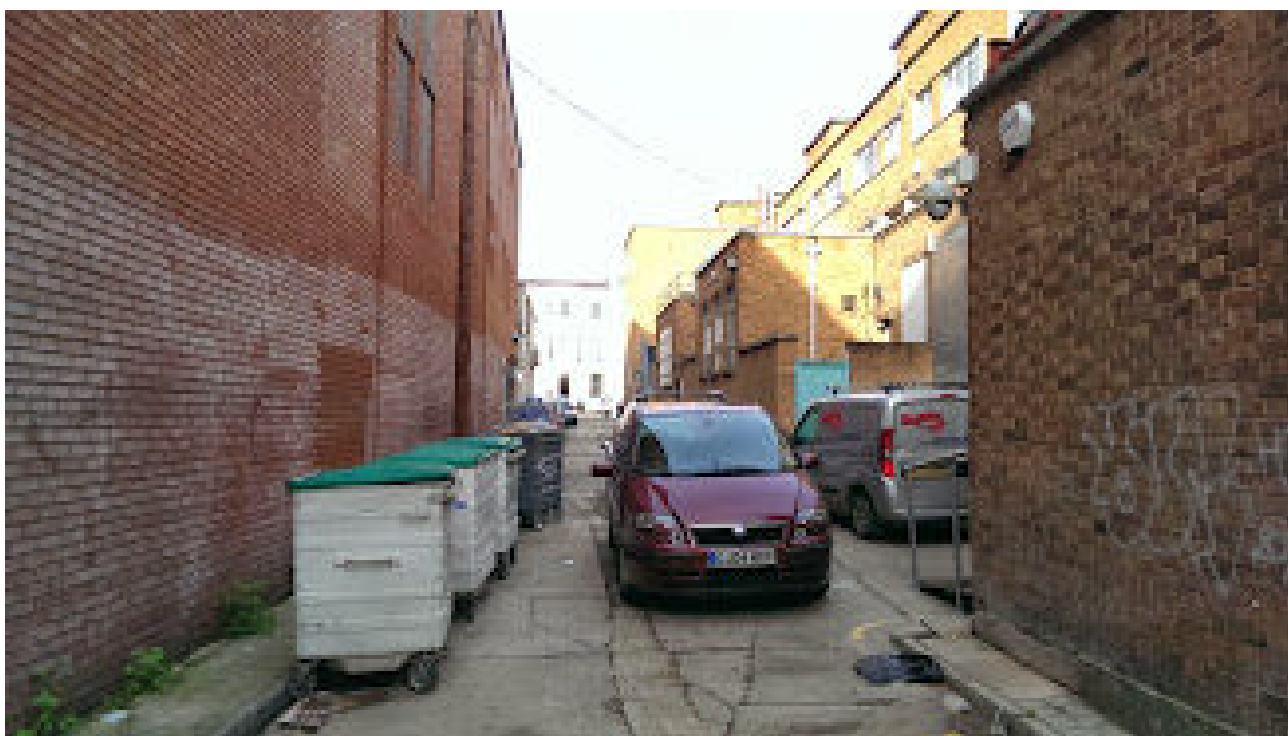


2. MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 Membership of the task group were as follows:

- Councillor Chris Coleman (Committee Member)
- Councillor Barbara Driver (Committee Member)
- Councillor Paul McLain (Committee Member)
- Councillor Jon Walklett (Guest)
- Richard Gibson (Officer)
- Bernice Thomson (Co-Optee)
- Caroline Walker (Co-optee)

2.2 The terms of reference were agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 18 February 2013



3. METHOD OF APPROACH

3.1 The scrutiny task group (STG) met on 9 occasions:

Date	Purpose	Invitees
May 2013	Agree terms and approach	None
June 2013	Crime and Disorder	C/Insp Steve Gillet (Police) Insp Tim Waterhouse (Police) Trevor Gladding (CBC)
September 2013	Private rented housing	Mark Nelson (CBC) Mike Redman (CBC)
October 2013	Walk-about	Khal Dhalech (CBC) Glyn Jones (CBC) Martin Levick (CBC)
November 2013	Review of progress and next steps	None
December 2013	Waste collection and environmental quality	Rob Bell (Ubico) Tammy Beach (Ubico) Scott Williams (Joint Waste Team) Yvonne Hope Public Protection (CBC)
January 2014	Attended Town Centre Neighbourhood Group (NCG) to discuss crime and disorder	None
February 2014	Review and draft submission for O+S	None
March 2014	Review and draft report for O+S	None



4. OUR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Issue	Crime and disorder
What we did	<p>The STG reviewed crime data in the town centre.</p> <p>The STG discussed crime and disorder with C/Insp Steve Gillett and Trevor Gladding and the Scrutiny Task Group (STG) and attended the Town Centre NCG.</p>
What we found out	<p>In terms of crimes, shoplifting accounts for 25% of crime in the town centre, violence accounts for 13% of crime. Therefore key issues for the police are Shop lifting and the night time economy. But also aware of anti-social behaviour such as begging, street drinking, and cycling on pavements.</p> <p>The Town Centre Neighbourhood Coordination Group (NCG) is concerned about an apparent increase in visible drug dealing in the town centre and also issues like noise disturbances, domestic abuse and under-age drinking.</p>
What can we do about it and recommendations for scrutiny	<p>The council continues to support the Town Centre NCG in order that it can act as a forum for local residents and businesses to address crime and disorder issues in partnership with the police and CBC.</p> <p>The relevant cabinet member keeps an overview of the work of the reducing alcohol related violence project to ensure that it is effectively addressing levels of crime in the area associated with the night-time economy.</p> <p>The emerging outcomes for the Late Night Levy and any funding allocations reflect the need to reduce the impact of night-time economy on local residents.</p> <p>The council develops a more collaborative approach to tackling drug dealing through joining up enforcement and support agencies working on identified hot-spots</p>



Issue	housing
What we did	<p>The STG reviewed housing data in the town centre and discussed the situation with CBC officers - Mark Nelson and Mike Redman.</p> <p>The STG had a walk about around the town centre to identify housing related challenges.</p>
What we found out	<p>The service deals with 9,500 private rented properties, up 50% from 2006.</p> <p>Out of the 1,000 households in the town centre area; 64% of them are living in private rented accommodation. From the housing condition stock survey, the council knows that 38% of the private rented stock is non-decent; with 60% of this stock situated in the inner urban area.</p> <p>The main concerns for tenants are safety, security of tenure and the state of repair of their accommodation – generally being worse than in public sector rented accommodation. There is a perception that landlords can get away with poorer maintenance and management regimes as demand is higher than supply.</p> <p>In terms of statutory licensing, the council has to license any property if it's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rented to 5 or more people who form more than 1 household • At least 3 storeys high <p>The council does not carry out additional licensing over the mandatory requirements; but consideration could be given to additional licensing. Other areas –such as the London Borough of Newham, have introduced selective licensing whereby all private rented sector property within a specified zone have to be licensed regardless of their occupation and size. Landlords without a licence may be prosecuted and may no longer be able to operate their business. The scheme was introduced to deal with problems of poor property management and anti-social behaviour (ASB).</p> <p>The move to licence all private rented property in Cheltenham was also identified by the Police as a positive step to help them reduce crime.</p> <p>The 50% increase in licensed premises outlined above has put significant pressures on the team to meet these statutory duties, the only discretionary work the team does is around taking action on vacant properties.</p>
What can we do about it and recommendations for scrutiny	<p>The council moves to licence all private rented sector accommodation in the borough accompanied with a pro-active approach to enforcement and brings forward plans to do this via the public protection and private sector housing commissioning review.</p> <p>The council ensures that residents are aware of and can access housing advice provided by CCP at Cheltenham First Stop.</p>

Issue	environmental quality
What we did	<p>The STG had a walk about around the town centre to identify environmental issues and any hot-spots.</p> <p>The STG also met with officers from Ubico, Joint Waste Team and Public Protection.</p>
What we found out	<p>There are a number of areas in the town centre where the quality and maintenance of the environment could be improved. The STG found graffiti in alleyways, fly-tipping, uncared for empty properties and flats where tenants have to keep rubbish indoors as there's no where to store rubbish outside.</p> <p>From discussions with officers the STG found out that certain roads now received a twice-weekly collection of food waste, general waste and recycling on a Tuesday and Friday.</p> <p>The group noted that communal waste and recycling collection points in Tescos had closed and that the one in North Place is likely to be shut whilst works take place in the New Year. The group felt that there should be more points in the town centre to help residents deal with rubbish more effectively and the corner of Grove Street, St. Pauls Street South and Henrietta Street could be possible locations – though the group would like to see waste points distributed across the whole town centre area.</p> <p>It was also noted that there are many people living in the area who might not have great English skills and who therefore might not understand the waste collection policy.</p>
What can we do about it and recommendations for scrutiny	<p>The council introduces a more pro-active enforcement regime to protect the environmental quality of the town centre – including planning enforcement, housing enforcement and street-scene - and brings forward plans to do this via the public protection and private sector housing commissioning review.</p> <p>The council and Ubico look into the possibility of installing more communal waste and recycling collection points across the town centre.</p> <p>The council, Ubico and the Joint Waste Team provide information on waste and recycling services in different languages and distribute these to houses and shops in the area.</p> <p>The council, Ubico and the Joint Waste Team explore how best to provide information to take-aways and shops in the area about trade waste collection arrangements.</p> <p>The Public Protection team work with the Town Centre NCG to support community-led action environmental action in the town centre such as community litter picks</p>

Issue	community integration
What we did	The STG reviewed census data on the different groups living in the town centre and attended a town centre NCG where integration issues were discussed.
What we found out	<p>Out of the 2,000 residents living in the area, 73% are white British, 15% are other white (European) – with around 9% of these coming from the Accession Countries. 3% are Asian.</p> <p>The Town Centre NCG have identified that BME communities in the town centre are socially isolated and have set up a social integration group.</p>
What can we do about it and recommendations for scrutiny	The Town Centre NCG continues to act as a forum for integration and cohesion for residents and businesses in the town centre and that a presentation is made to Overview and Scrutiny after the community event on 7 th June 2014.



5. DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1. The council continues to support the Town Centre NCG in order that it can act as a forum for local residents and businesses to address crime and disorder issues in partnership with the police and CBC.**
- 2. The relevant cabinet member keeps an overview of the work of the reducing alcohol related violence project to ensure that it is effectively addressing levels of crime in the area associated with the night-time economy.**
- 3. The emerging outcomes for the Late Night Levy and any funding allocations reflect the need to reduce the impact of night-time economy on local residents.**
- 4. The council develops a more collaborative approach to tackling drug dealing through joining up enforcement and support agencies working on identified hot-spots**
- 5. The council moves to licence all private rented sector accommodation in the borough accompanied with a pro-active approach to enforcement and brings forward plans to do this via the public protection and private sector housing commissioning review.**
- 6. The council ensures that residents are aware of and can access housing advice provided by CCP at Cheltenham First Stop.**
- 7. The council introduces a more pro-active enforcement regime to protect the environmental quality of the town centre – including planning enforcement, housing enforcement and street-scene - and brings forward plans to do this via the public protection and private sector housing commissioning review.**
- 8. The council and Ubico look into the possibility of installing more communal waste and recycling collection points across the town centre.**
- 9. The council, Ubico and the Joint Waste Team provide information on waste and recycling services in different languages and distribute these to houses and shops in the area.**
- 10. The council, Ubico and the Joint Waste Team explore how best to provide information to take-aways and shops in the area about trade waste collection arrangements.**
- 11. The Public Protection team work with the Town Centre NCG to support community-led action environmental action in the town centre such as community litter picks.**
- 12. The Town Centre NCG continues to act as a forum for integration and cohesion for residents and businesses in the town centre and that a presentation is made to Overview and Scrutiny after the community event on 7th June 2014.**

6. NEXT STEPS

- 6.1 The STG acknowledges that it has not yet had chance to consider education and health and whether there are particular issues facing town centre residents. The group seeks advice about from O+S about whether the group should continue to meet to look into these issues or whether a revised STG terms of reference should be brought forward.**

Report author	Richard Gibson, Strategy and Engagement Manager
Appendices	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Terms of reference2. Map of the area



SCRUTINY TOPIC REGISTRATION

Date:	18 February 2013
Name of person proposing topic:	Councillor Barbara Driver
Contact:	01242 243862
Suggested title of topic:	Hidden deprivation in our town centre
What is the issue that scrutiny needs to address?	
<p>As elected members of the council we are aware that there are areas of multiple deprivation in Cheltenham. Parts of St. Pauls, St. Marks and Hesters Way are in the 10% most deprived areas nationally and parts of Oakley are not far behind.</p> <p>I am becoming increasingly aware of the issues of deprivation that affect those people living in the town centre – though as the numbers are much smaller, this does not get picked up in the maps of deprivation. Hence the title – “hidden deprivation.”</p> <p>I feel that living conditions in the town centre might be characterised by the following issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crime and disorder associated with the night-time economy. Transient communities which can impact on community resilience and cohesion. Residents living in private rented accommodation in buildings that have been sub-divided into houses in multiple-occupation or in flats above shops. Higher than average unemployment rates Poor physical and mental health. <p>I would like to use the latest census data to understand more about living conditions in the town centre and also take time to interview local residents, businesses and work with other public sector partners (like the police) to build up our knowledge.</p>	
What do you feel could be achieved by a scrutiny review (outcomes)	
<p>At this stage, we would like to understand the issues facing people living in the town centre; we will bring our findings back to Scrutiny in July to get a steer on the next stage of the review.</p> <p>Having a better understanding of the issues may assist the council and partners in considering how services are delivered to people living in the town centre; and make changes so we are not disadvantaging these residents.</p>	
If there a strict time constraint?	No
Is the topic important to the people of Cheltenham?	Yes
Does the topic involve a poorly performing service or high public dissatisfaction with a service?	No
Is it related to the Council’s corporate objectives?	Yes
Any other comments:	

OFFICER IMPLICATIONS (for office use only)

Date:	1 Feb 2013
Officer name:	Richard Gibson
Officer title:	Strategy and Engagement Manager
Contact:	01242 235354
Please give your comments on this proposed topics, for example is there any other similar review planned or in progress, are there any potential resources constraints etc	
<p>Officers would support this review; and research carried out by the task group will help us with the planned commissioning review of private sector housing.</p> <p>Also, local partners have identified that there are large numbers of vulnerable people living in private rented sector accommodation and are willing to support the council take action to understand and do something to help.</p>	

