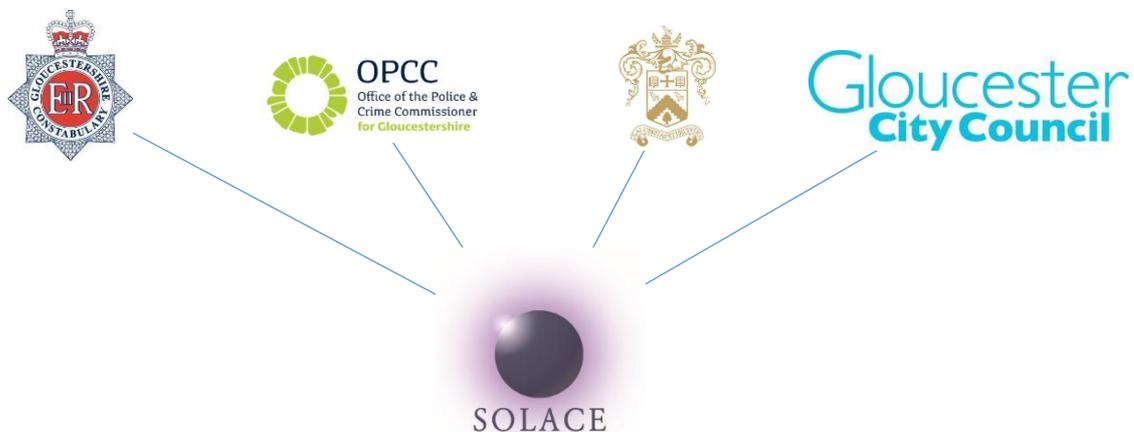


Information / Discussion Paper

Cheltenham Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 4th July 2022

Solace



This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed.

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

This information paper:

- Explains the structure and objectives of Solace.
- Gives an overview of performance over the past year.
- Identifies opportunities for improvement.

2. Summary of the issue and evidence/information

Background (for existing and new Members):

Solace is a multi-agency team operating across Cheltenham and Gloucester. The aim of Solace is to reduce repeat incidents and victims of anti-social behaviour by providing a consistent partnership approach. Cheltenham Borough Council signed up to the Partnership in 2018 as a 3-year commitment.

This agreement was extended during Covid and on 3rd February 2022, an extraordinary Governance Board was convened to establish the future of Solace in light of the end of the original agreement. Each Partner agreed to a permanent arrangement and pledged their ongoing commitment to reducing ASB. The current Solace structure and accountabilities are shown below:

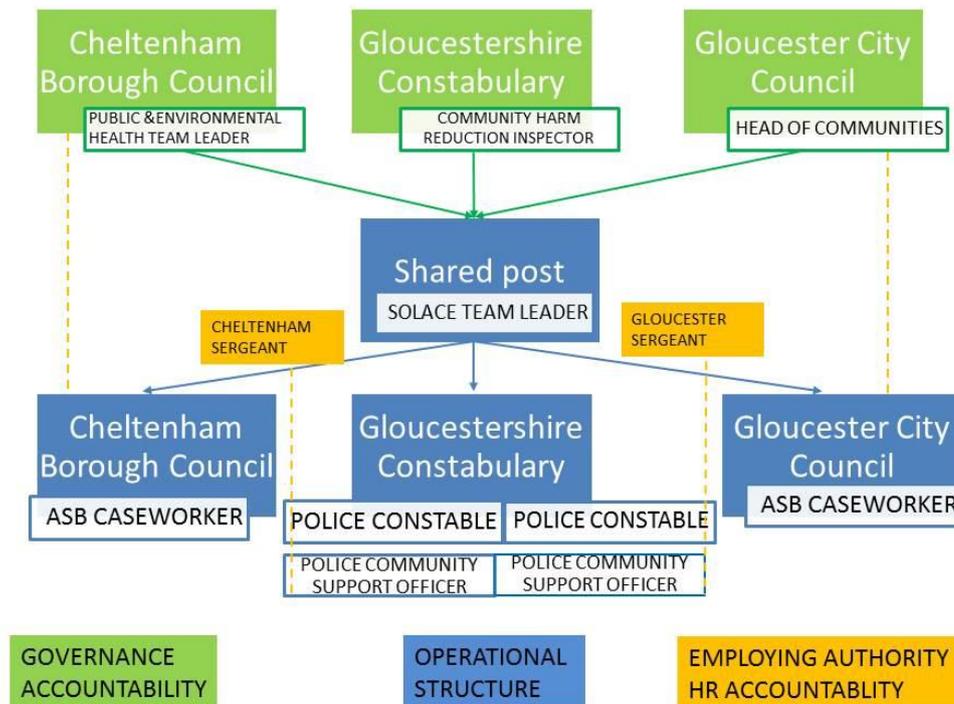


Fig. 1 Solace Structure and Accountabilities 2022

In each Council, there is a Case Officer (employed by the respective District Council), a Police Constable (PC) and a Police Community Support Officer, (PCSO). The PC and the PCSO are seconded into Solace from Gloucestershire Constabulary.

There is an overarching Team Leader, (employed by Gloucester City Council) who oversees both teams and links in with management at each agency. The Team Leader post is jointly funded by Gloucestershire Constabulary, The Office for the Police and Crime Commission, Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council. This Team Leader post is vacant at the time of writing this briefing but it is expected that this role will be filled imminently as the recruitment process is in progress.

Within Cheltenham Borough Council Solace is embedded within the Public Protection Team, closely aligned to the Neighbourhood Team and the Environmental Protection Team, thus giving close working relationships with other Council Officers who deal with lower level ASB and statutory nuisance.

The work of Solace:

Solace accepts cases of Anti-social behaviour based on the following 5 priorities:

1. Anti-social behaviour assessed as high risk to the victim and/or having a high impact upon the community risk assessment ASB

2. Partnership priorities as agreed between Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gloucester City Council and Cheltenham Borough Council, which require a multi-agency response as identified
3. Support for cases where urgent civil action is required (e.g. closure orders)
4. Anti-social behaviour assessed as medium risk that would;
 - Benefit from a multi-agency response, and/or
 - Has a significant potential to escalate
5. Support for all other cases where civil enforcement action is being considered (e.g. criminal behaviour orders and civil injunction)

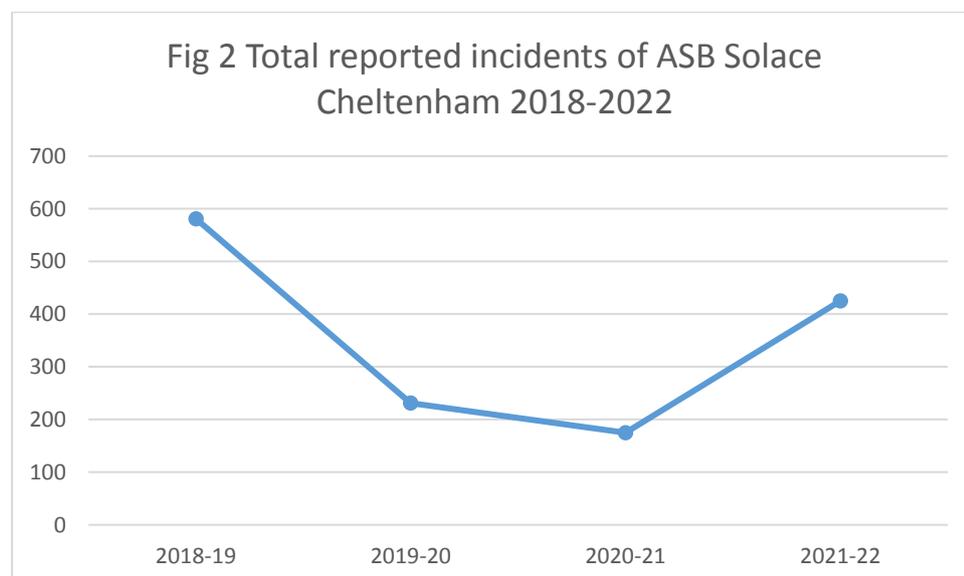
Where complaints of ASB do not meet the priorities for Solace, as set above, one of the following is undertaken as appropriate:

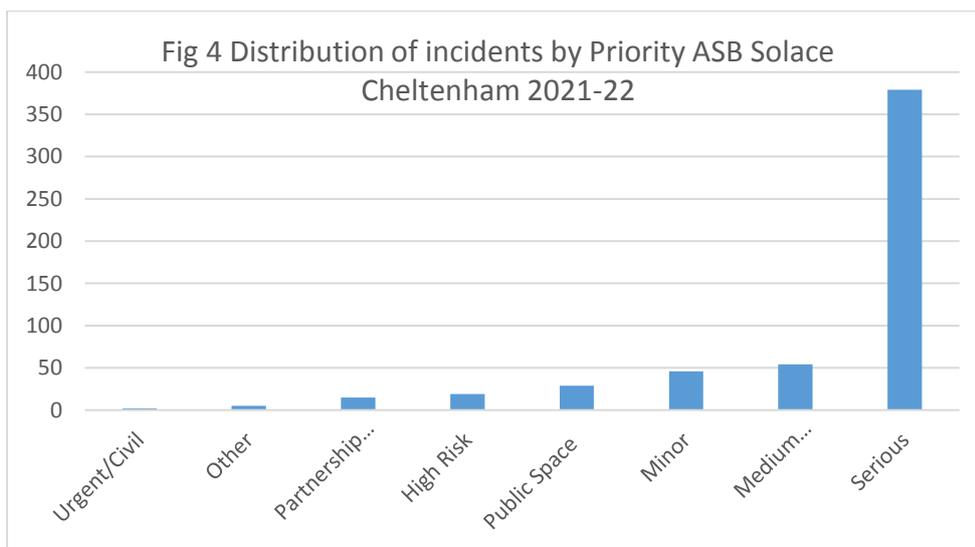
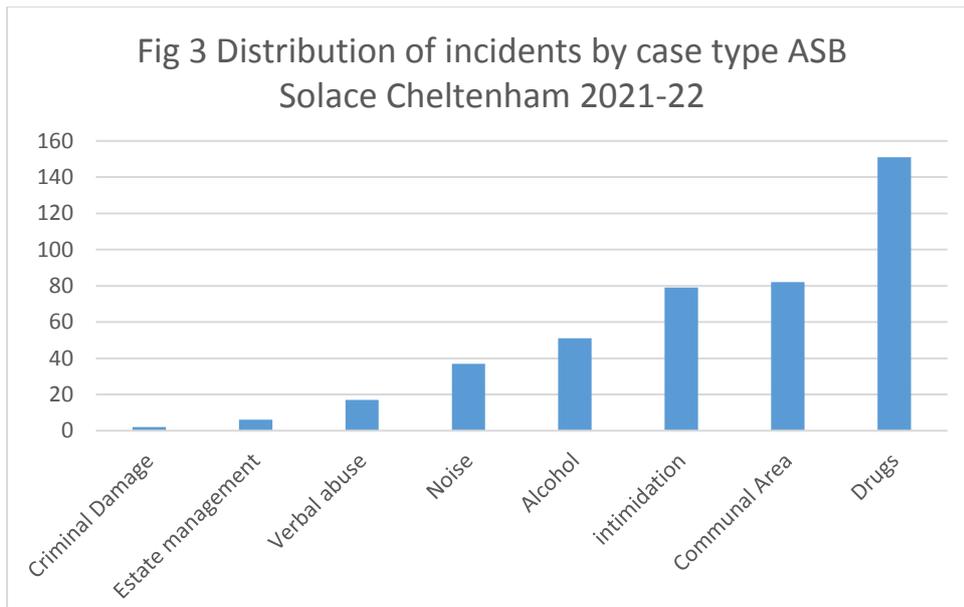
1. Provision of advice from a member of Solace and the complaint recorded for information only.
2. Complaint passed to another team to investigate e.g. other council teams e.g. a Neighbourhood Officer, Environmental Health Officer, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Housing Provider, Police

Key figures:

Solace use their own information management system the 'Hub' where cases, incidents and actions are logged. One case may be associated with more than 1 incidence. All Solace and nominated administrative staff have access to this system.

The number of incidents dealt with by Cheltenham Solace are shown below.





Use of powers:

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 gives a range of flexible powers to Officers to tackle different forms of ASB. This ensures the best outcome for victims. All powers are subject to specific legal tests and safeguards. Solace Officers follow the 'engage, support, enforce' process. Enforcement is only carried out where there is persistent and continuing ASB and where a person has refused to engage with all offers of support to address the root cause of their behaviour. Those used by Solace in 2021-22 are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Outcomes by type ASB Solace Cheltenham 2021-22	
Advice/Engagement	314
Civil Injunction	21
Breach of Order	11
Closure Order	4
Community Protection Notice/Warning	2
ASB case review (community trigger)	1

Civil Injunctions:

The injunction can offer fast and effective protection for victims and communities and set a clear standard of behaviour for perpetrators, stopping the person's behaviour from escalating. They have been used successfully in Cheltenham to prevent individuals engaging in conduct which causes harm, alarm, or distress to members of the public and prohibiting them from entering certain areas.

Closure Order:

This allows the police or council to quickly close premises which are being used, or likely to be used, to commit nuisance or disorder and have been used successfully in Cheltenham.

Community Protection Notice/Warning Notice:

The Notice aims to stop a person aged 16 or over, business or organisation committing anti-social behaviour which spoils the community's quality of life.

ASB case Review:

This gives victims and communities the right to request a review of their case where a local threshold is met, and to bring agencies together to take a joined up, problem-solving approach to find a solution for the victim.

Key Solace Partnership Meetings:

Street People Meeting - Monthly
Day Safe Meeting – weekly
Cheltenham Supervisors Connectivity Meeting – Bi-weekly
Community Partnership Meeting - quarterly
Complex Cell Meeting Bi-weekly

Development Opportunities:

There are a number of successful case studies available and positive feedback about the work of the Team from partner organisations. It is the work of Solace and their willingness to tackle high profile ASB that has improved the lives of individuals and communities in Cheltenham.

Due to success of Solace in Cheltenham and Gloucester, other Gloucestershire Districts have expressed an interest in joining the partnership. Initial meetings and presentations have taken place and this is being taken to Governance Board for consideration.

Data:

Members are invited to suggest any additional reporting data they would like to be updated on.

Background Papers	N/A
Contact Officer	Bernadette Reed, Interim Public and Environmental Health Team Leader bernadette.reed@cheltenham.gov.uk
Accountability	Councillor Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member Safety and Communities