

# People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Dorset County Council**



Date of Meeting	11 October 2016
Officer	Patrick Myers, Head of Design and Development, Children's Services
<b>Subject of Report</b>	<b>Dorset County Council response to Hate Crime</b>
Executive Summary	<p>This report is intended to update and inform the People and Communities Overview and Scrutiny committee about the county councils response to hate crime and <a href="#">Xenophobia</a> in Dorset.</p> <p>The report focuses on the following areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Background</li><li>2. Hate Crime in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole</li><li>3. Hate Crime in Dorset county area</li><li>4. Current areas of work</li><li>5. Recommendations</li></ol>
Impact Assessment:  <i>Please refer to the <a href="#">protocol</a> for writing reports.</i>	Equalities Impact Assessment:  The purpose of this report is to inform the committee of current position, no Equality Impact Assessment necessary at this stage.
	Use of Evidence:  This report draws on evidence from the Pan Dorset Community Safety Partnership Quarterly Performance Update
	Budget:  None to consider.

	<p>Risk Assessment:</p> <p>Having considered the risks associated with this decision using the County Council’s approved risk management methodology, the level of risk has been identified as:                  Current Risk: MEDIUM                  Residual Risk MEDIUM</p>
Recommendation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That officers continue to progress proactively the partnership work around tackling hate crime.</li> <li>2. That officers continue to monitor the level of reported incidents in the light of the Brexit referendum and the Syrian Resettlement Programme</li> </ol>
Reason for Recommendation	<p>Under the Equality Act (2010) the county council have a legal duty to work positively and proactively to tackle all forms of prejudice, discrimination and harassment.</p>
Appendices	
Background Papers	
Officer Contact	<p>Name: Kelly Haggett                  Tel: 01305 224355                  Email: <a href="mailto:k.haggett@dorsetcc.gov.uk">k.haggett@dorsetcc.gov.uk</a></p>

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Hate crime can take many forms, including verbal abuse, physical assault, domestic abuse, harassment and damage to property. Such crime is targeted at a person because of prejudice towards a person's race, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation or transgender identity. All forms of hate crime are unacceptable in any circumstances. Hatred not only has the potential to cause serious physical and emotional harm, it damages communities and undermines the diversity and cohesion we should instead be celebrating in Dorset.
- 1.2 Under the Public Sector Equality Duties of the Equality Act (2010) Sec 149 states:  
*A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to—*
- (a) *Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
  - (b) *Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
  - (c) *Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*
- 1.3 Local Authorities, like all public bodies, have a legal duty to take measures to understand and address prejudice and discrimination as service providers, employers and community leaders. Tackling prejudice and making sure Dorset is a welcoming place for everyone is something the county council is strongly committed to.

- 1.4 Recent National trends have seen a rise in the number of reports of hate crime. In the light of the Brexit referendum and the Syrian Refugee crisis this was discussed at a recent County Council meeting (21 July 2016). The Council considered a motion submitted by Councillor Andy Canning asking that:
- the Council affirm that the Council are proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in the country;
  - the Council affirm that Dorset County Council condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. The Council would not allow hate to become acceptable;
  - the Council affirms its commitment to ensure that local bodies and programmes had the support and resources they needed to tackle racism and xenophobia; and
  - the Council reassure all people living in Dorset, regardless of their nationality, that they are valued members of the community.
- The motion was seconded by Councillor Janet Dover.

- 1.5 Following this a clear statement was made to the press by the County Council that hate crime would not be tolerated in Dorset. The article received positive community feedback on social media.

<https://news.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/2016/07/19/dorset-sets-out-help-for-refugees-and-condemns-hate-crime/>

## **2. Hate Crime in Dorset, Bournemouth and Poole:**

- 2.1 Following the vote to the leave EU in June, there have been several cases of hate crime reported in the press nationwide. Nevertheless, Dorset Police have not reported an increase of hate crime since the referendum. For the purposes of recording and reporting, Hate crime is divided into three categories:

1. Racially or religiously aggravated crime
  - Assault
  - Harassment
  - Public Fear
2. Hate flagged crime
  - Disability
  - Racial
  - Sexual Orientation
3. Hate incidents
  - Prejudice
  - Racial

- 2.2 Whilst figures show a slight increase of hate incidents generally, it does not appear that quarter 1 had a particularly sharp rise. Hate crimes do not show an overall trend across the three local authority areas. However, quarter one ran until the end of June and as the referendum was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> June, it could be that quarter 2, will show an increase.

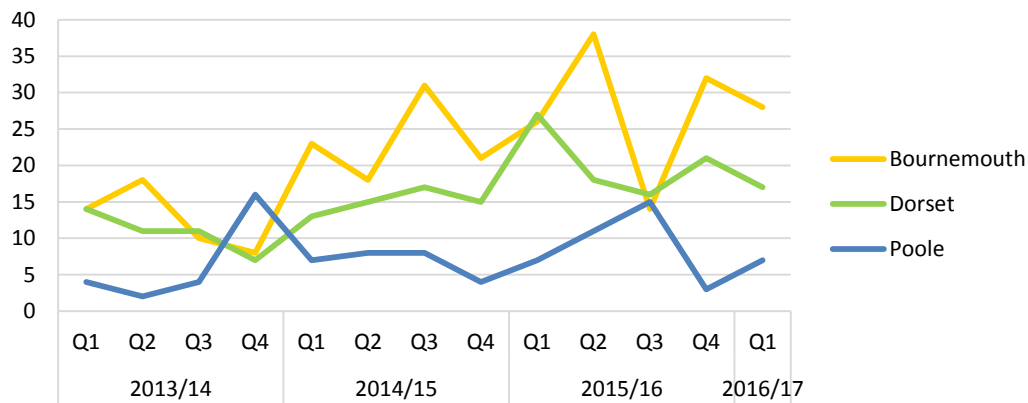
Dorset County Council response to Hate Crime

2.3 Racially or religiously aggravated crime

Racially/Religiously Aggravated	Apr - June 2015	Apr - June 2016
Bournemouth	26	28 (7.7%)
Dorset	27	17 (-37.0%)
Poole	7	7 (0.0%)
Pan-Dorset	61	52 (-14.8%)

Trend 2013-16

**Racially/Religiously Aggravated Crime Reported to Dorset Police**

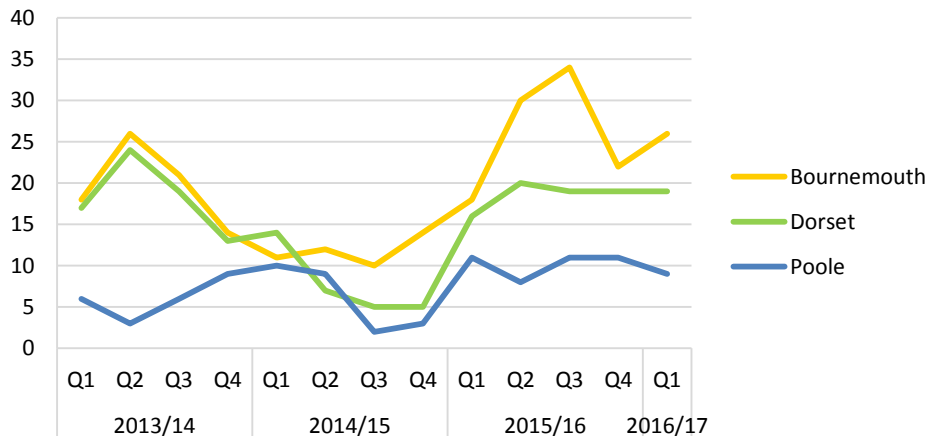


2.4 Hate flagged crime

Hate Crime	Apr - June 2015	Apr - June 2016
Bournemouth	18	26 (44.4%)
Dorset	16	19 (18.8%)
Poole	11	9 (-18.2%)
Pan-Dorset	45	54 (20.0%)

Trend 2013-16

**Hate Flagged Crime Reported to Dorset Police**

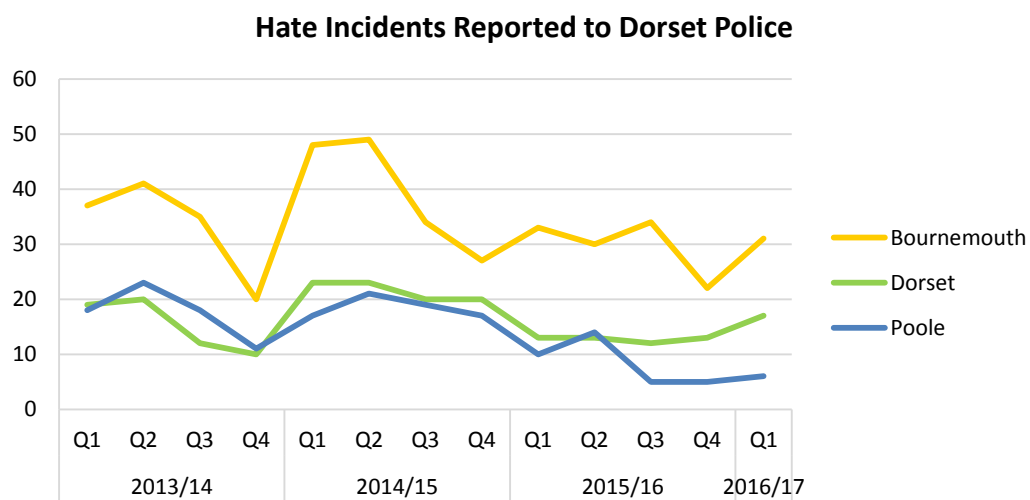


## Dorset County Council response to Hate Crime

### 2.5 Hate incidents

Hate Incidents	Apr - June 2015	Apr - June 2016
Bournemouth	33	31 (-6.1%)
Dorset	13	17 (30.8%)
Poole	10	6 (-40.0%)
Pan-Dorset	63	58 (-7.9%)

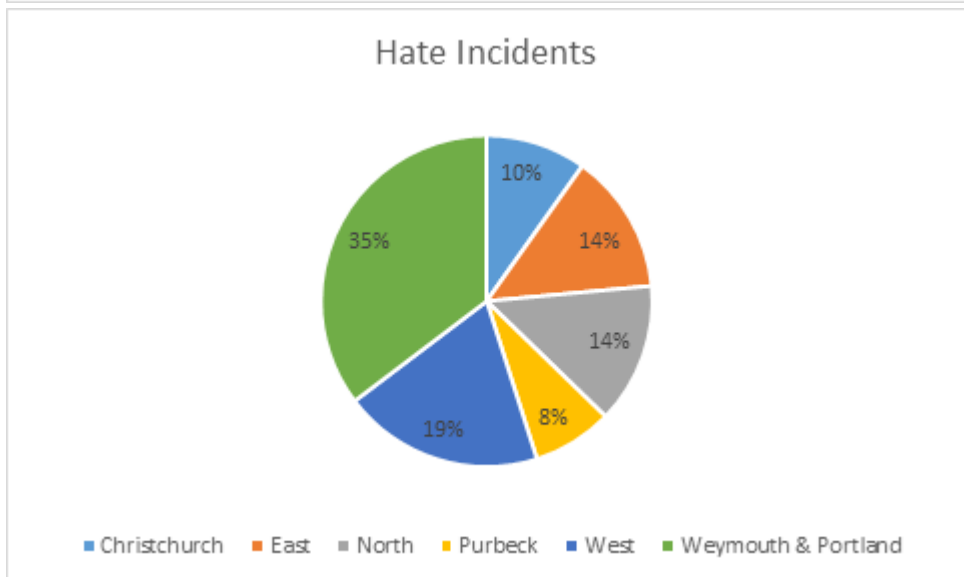
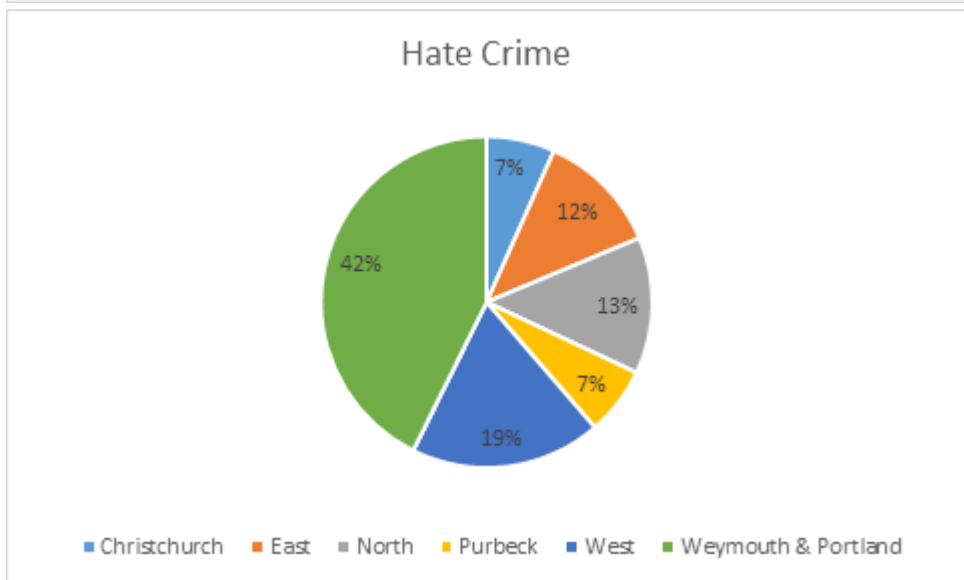
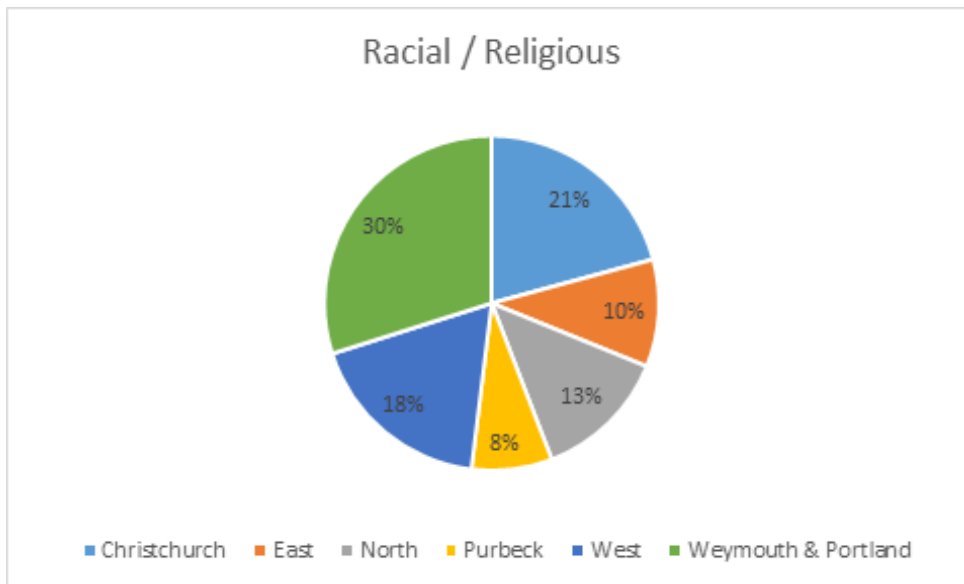
### Trend 2013-16



### 3. Hate Crime in Dorset county area:

#### 3.1 Break down by district for last year 2015-16;

	Racial / Religious	Hate Crime	Hate Incidents
Christchurch	16	5	5
East	8	9	7
North	10	10	7
Purbeck	6	5	4
West	14	14	10
Weymouth & Portland	23	32	18



- 3.2 As the data indicates, Weymouth and Portland had the most incidents across all three groups but this is not surprising as it has the most crimes of any district regardless for most crime types.
- 3.3 With regards to Crown Prosecution Service, the Community Safety Partnerships' annual needs assessments has highlighted hate crime as an area where incidents are very likely to be under reported so partners continue to monitor trends and sustain initiatives they have put in place to tackle the issue, which is detailed in the next section.

**4. Current areas of work:**

- 4.1 Prejudice Free Dorset is a multi-agency group led Dorset Police aimed at tackling Hate crime and promoting inclusive communities across Dorset. Tackling Hate Crime is a Police priority and Prejudice Free seeks to work with both public organisations and voluntary and community sector groups to provide a victim focussed response to any incidents reported. Representatives from the Community Safety Partnership are part of Prejudice Free and are involved in collaborative work.
- 4.2 The county council have a contract with Dorset Race Equality Council to provide a third party reporting centre for incidents of hate crime (as well as other functions like strategic challenge on equality and diversity issues, and increase participation of Black and Minority Ethnic groups in public life). Dorset REC report incidents to the Police, this is taken up by the Prejudice Free Group.
- 4.3 Specifically in relation to the Syrian Resettlement Programme, the county council is working with Dorset Race Equality Council to provide community engagement events. The events will promote the benefits and positives of immigration in general. The events are likely to include an element of 'myth busting' around migrants and provide a safe area for people to ask questions and learn without rebuke.
- 4.4 The Police are also involved in the Dorset Syrian Resettlement Programme (SRP) and will be feeding into the decision making process on location in terms of community tensions. There has also been a discussion about educating children about refugees in schools so they are more likely to challenge adult perceptions. This will be developed as the SRP develops.
- 4.5 There is also work ongoing internally within the county council around hate crime, following on from the successful relaunch of the Staff Support Groups in November 2015, a decision was made to have a more co-ordinated and collective approach to the groups to ensure consistency. An action emanating from this is closer liaison with other public bodies across Dorset including the Police.
- 4.6 As part of this Dorset County Council has committed to assisting with the forthcoming Dorset Prejudice Free, Hate Crime Conference in October 2016, where we have financially contributed and will be assisting on the day. This also involves promoting and supporting Prejudice Free and ensuring that events such as hate crime week and hate crime reporting are widely publicised

**5. Recommendations**

5.1 That officers continue to progress proactively the partnership work around tackling hate crime.

5.2 That officers continue to monitor the level of reported incidents in the light of the Brexit referendum and the Syrian Resettlement Programme.

**Patrick Myers**

Head of Design and Development, Children's Services

September 2016