

POLICE, FIRE AND CRIME PANEL REPORT

Meeting Date	9th March 2023
Report Title	Acquisitive Crime and NYP Performance

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Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Police, Fire and Crime Panel to enable it to determine if the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) is sufficiently holding the Chief Constable to account for the delivery of an effective police service, specifically in relation to acquisitive crime¹ and any increase in this because of the cost-of-living crisis.

This report will:

- Give a brief background into how the cost-of-living might be impacting on crime, specifically, acquisitive crime
- Explore the national context and recorded crime.
- Provide local data which identifies any changes in recorded crimes
- Demonstrate how the Commissioner holds to account and monitors performance.

Summary of key content

The Chief Constable is responsible for the performance of North Yorkshire Police (NYP). The person who holds the Chief Constable account for this, is the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC).

There is no data available, at present, which supports the notion that acquisitive crime has increased in North Yorkshire and York due to the cost-of-living crisis.

The Commissioner holds NYP to account regularly and robustly in several ways and is committed to ensuring that the people of North Yorkshire and York are safe and feel safe.

The Commissioner works closely with NYP, and monitor's progress of prevention work as this is a substantial part of the Police and Crime Plan. The OPFCC has commissioned a number of outstanding initiatives which have supported people to be safe and feel safe (examples of this are referred to later in this document).

¹ Acquisitive crime, for the purpose of this report includes burglary, robbery, and vehicle crime.

¹ <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainer/cost-living-crisis> ² [Cost of living: Shoplifting to rise, north Wales councillors told - BBC News](#) ³ [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#)

Background

It is widely acknowledged that the cost-of-living crisis started at the end of 2021, as stated by the Institute for Government¹ but it is difficult to attribute any rises in acquisitive crimes to this at this moment in time, not only due to the disruption of the pandemic, but also due to the availability of comparative data.

National Context

Police recorded crime figures reflect the number of people who have made formal reports of offences, all figures gathered by the Office National Statistics (ONS) via the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) ask people if they have been a victim of a crime. The results are recorded regardless of whether that crime was reported to the police, so comparing these data resources is unreliable.

The latest figures from the CSEW, updated January 2023, showed that compared with the pre-coronavirus pandemic year ending March 2020, total crime decreased by 10%. Focusing on individual crime types:

- For the year ending September 2022, the latest figures estimates showed that overall theft decreased by 20% compared with year ending March 2020
- Fraud has now returned to pre-coronavirus pandemic levels (no significant change compared with the year ending March 2020); this suggests increases may have been specific to the coronavirus pandemic period, rather than a sustained change in trends³

The ONS suggests that the CSEW figures are a better indicator of long-term trends for crime types than police recorded crime because it is unaffected by changes in levels of reporting to the police or police recording practices.

Local Context

Both the nature of crime and the collection of crime statistics was so disrupted by the pandemic, the ONS compares the latest data for the year to June 2022 against the year to March 2020, the last undisrupted by the pandemic. Below the table shows quarterly figures of NYP's data including the 'disrupted figures' of 2021 for the pandemic, following how the ONS compare.

Acquisitive crimes for the purpose of this report have been defined as robbery, burglary, theft, and vehicle crime to correspond to how the HMICFRS defined it in its August 2022 - "The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime - Finding time for crime" report.

Fraud and computer misuse crimes have nationally increased, whilst many other types of crime have decreased, so these have also been included also below.

NYP Acquisitive Crimes Comparative 2020-2023

Month/Year	Burglary	Robbery	Theft	Vehicle Crime	Fraud
01/20	271	17	748	217	323
03/20	208	16	642	180	303
06/20	191	15	529	121	391
09/20	235	24	667	155	443
12/20	211	9	556	105	403

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01/21	131	15	410	107		472
03/21	133	18	518	113		660
06/21	176	35	597	106		307
09/21	190	16	639	137		228
12/21	143	23	595	123		201
01/22	179	26	613	119		300
03/22	155	22	698	121		226
06/22	190	15	828	144		227
09/22	194	15	681	148		243
12/22	172	8	625	123		153
01/23	211	12	748	152		204

Source: NYP Reporting Dashboard, Monthly Data, Feb 2023

The figures show that in 2020 the total acquisitive crimes were 5,117 and in 2022 were 5,076 which is an 8% decrease. Please note these are not *total* figures for the year, these are total figures just for the months shown to represent any notable differences. However, it is noted that in January 2023 the numbers were higher than January 2022 (but lower than January 2020) and the Commissioner will continue to monitor this.

PFCC Scrutiny and Accountability Activity

It is too soon to identify any significant increases in acquisitive crimes due to the cost-of-living crisis. The Commissioner has a full programme of scrutiny which includes (but not limited to); weekly one to ones with the chief constable, the Executive Board to monitor performance against the Police and Crime Plan (prevention) and the Public Accountability Meetings (PAM). At the PAM in February 2022 the Commissioner noted an increase in burglary and asked if NYP thought this might be related to the cost of living, but it was stated at this time there was no way to connect any rises in these crimes to the cost-of-living crisis.

The Commissioner is confident that the scrutiny work of the OPFCC and the implementation of a new assurance framework will ensure that performance in this area, amongst others, is effectively monitored and acted upon.

Safer Streets Funding

Prevent work is essential for in reducing acquisitive crime and the OPFCC have been successful in obtaining funding through the Government's Safer Streets Fund and launched the protect your home scheme, as part of this to help prevent burglaries of residential homes and farms.

The Commissioner has been active in the local community with local councillors to encourage more people to sign up to the Protect Your Home scheme currently running in areas of Craven and Harrogate

The scheme, with £719,000 being provided by the Home Office, aims to prevent burglary and protect individuals, families and businesses in over 1,000 homes and 90 farms along the borders of Craven District and Harrogate Borough with West Yorkshire.²

² £719,950 – the total budget for improving security on homes and farms, Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras and upgrade of Rural Watch Signage in specific locations to detect and deter potential burglars

Scheme Started in Sept 2022 and ends in September 2023, last chance to sign up, August 2023.

422 homes have received a security upgrade

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Following a security survey, homeowners can receive; new locks for vulnerable doors, windows, garages and sheds, and alarm systems for farms and small holdings. For homes with suitable WiFi coverage the scheme also includes a RING video doorbell.

Free security surveys and upgrades are available to homes in the parishes of Clapham cum Newby, Cononley, Lawkland, and Lothersdale areas of Craven and Allerton Mauleverer with Hopperton, Kirk Deighton, Kirk Hammerton, Leathley, Long Marston, North Deighton, Sicklinghall and Spofforth with Stockeld areas of Harrogate.

Just before Christmas, video doorbells, installed as part of the scheme, captured a burglar in Cononley. The video evidence enabled the police to identify the person and make an arrest.

Very positive reports have been received from people who have accessed the protect your home scheme and many say that they feel safer because of this. The Commissioner is very proud, and this demonstrates progress to achieving the outcomes in the Police and Crime Plan.

330 video door bells have been installed
651 homes have already signed up to the scheme
Security upgrades on farms start in February.

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