

Musselburgh accounts for one third of all antisocial behaviour complaints in East Lothian

More than a third of all antisocial behaviour complaints received by East Lothian Council over six months came from Musselburgh, a new report has revealed.

The county's biggest town has seen a spate of youth-related problems from shoplifting and fire-raising in recent weeks and police and community protection teams have been sent in to patrol over the summer.

A report to the council's police, fire and community safety committee today revealed complaints from residents about trouble in the town stretched back to October last year with more than one report on average a day generated between then and the end of March.

The report said the number of complaints was up across the county with 876 123 youth-related, 96 to drug misuse and the remaining reports covering a range of things from neighbours disputes to swearing, harassment and abuse.

It said 35 per cent of the complaints were from Musselburgh and its surrounding area, with 20 per cent from Tranent, 17 per cent from Prestonpans, 13 per cent from Haddington, eight per cent from Dunbar and seven per cent from North Berwick.

It also reported that during the six months 65 letters were issued to parents whose children had been identified as being involved in incidents.

Last week the council announced it was working with Police Scotland to tackle a rise in youth-related problems in Musselburgh.

Chief Inspector Ben Leathes, Local Area Commander said there had been an increase in incidents involving young people saying: "One recent example saw three male youths, two aged 13 and one aged 14, reported for youth offending following an incident of fire raising and shoplifting at a local supermarket."

The chief inspector said: "Musselburgh sees a proportionate number of these types of incidents, and we are acutely aware of the concern this causes to our local communities.

"Positive engagement with young people is key to reducing incidents. We work closely with our partners to assist with intervention to deter this type of behaviour.

"I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to parents or guardians to take an interest into where their children have been and who they have been with."

The council said it would be patrolling the town over the summer as well as using its mobile CCTV cameras at hotspots.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter