

Meeting: COUNCIL

Agenda Item: 13

Portfolio Area: Safer communities, older people & health

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SOSAFE COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2015/18

BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK

Author	Debbie Barker	Ext. 2835
Contributor	Karen Griffiths	Ext. 2976
Lead Officers	Matthew Partridge	Ext. 2456
Contact Officer	Richard Protheroe	Ext. 2938

1. PURPOSE

1.1 To seek approval for the final version of the Community Safety Strategy 2015/18 as recommended by the Executive.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

2.1 That the Community Safety Strategy 2015/18, as shown at Appendix A, which takes the consultation process into account be approved subject to amending the Foreword to become a joint statement from both the Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities, Older People & Health and the Chief Executive and for reference to made in the Strategy to the joint working with SBC housing staff, particularly on anti-social behaviour.

2.2 That the Budget & Policy Framework detailed in the Constitution be amended by the deletion of the Community Safety Strategy as this is no longer a statutory requirement (Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 SoSafe, the Stevenage CSP, published its last strategy in 2011¹. During that time there have been huge changes to the crime and rehabilitation landscape.

3.2 The 2011 strategy focussed on community engagement, events and a number of proposed projects requiring significant funding to deliver. The economic downturn experienced during the course of the strategy and subsequent reduction to the Council's and partners' budgets made it very difficult for SoSafe to deliver on all of the promises made.

¹ SoSafe Community Safety Strategy 2011/14: <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-stevenage/so-safe/53824/>

- 3.3 Other factors also impacted on implementation of the strategy, including the discharge of policing priorities to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) through the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*; sweeping changes to crime and disorder legislation through the *ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014*²; and the break-up of Probation services through the *Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014*.³
- 3.4 As a result of these considerable changes to the political and financial landscape, SoSafe has become more accountable to the PCC. The Home Office devolved responsibility for community safety funding to the PCC in 2011, with an expectation that local action plans reflect the PCC's strategy for Hertfordshire, *Everybody's Business*^[1] For 2014/15, the CSP received £19,900 from the PCC.
- 3.5 The current community safety strategy covers the period 2011/14. During this time, SoSafe's approach to community safety has changed and adapted considerably. A new strategy is required to reflect these changes, and in order to help the Council and its partners address our residents' priority to reduce crime and ASB.
- 3.6 The proposed strategy for 2015/18 has been developed and is owned by SoSafe, but the Council also has a priority within the Corporate Plan⁴ to 'help people feel safe.' Therefore the new strategy directly contributes to the achievement of that priority.
- 3.7 The draft strategy was put before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 24 November 2014, in accordance with the provisions of the Budget and Policy Framework rules of the Council's Constitution.
- 3.8 The Executive at its meeting on 10 February 2015 considered the final draft and the recommendations at section 2 above reflect the Executive's decisions.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 The statutory obligation for CSPs to produce a strategy document was removed through the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*. This is due to the formation of Police and Crime Commissioners, who became the publicly accountable bodies for policing and crime in England and Wales.
- 4.2 However, SoSafe still needs a medium term strategy to provide a vision and framework for partnership working. The strategy also provides a focus for the development of an annual action plan, refreshed every April to reflect current

² *ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014* found at:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/12/contents/enacted>

³ *Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014* found at: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/offenderrehabilitation.html>

^[1] *Everybody's Business, The Police and Crime Plan for Hertfordshire* found at:
http://www.hertscommissioner.org/my_plan/my_police_and_crime_plan.aspx

⁴ *SBC Corporate Plan 2013/18* found at: <http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/about-the-council/plans-and-performance/120764/>

and emerging issues. Partners support the publication of a document which sets out SoSafe's plans and encourages creative, innovative and sustainable solutions to community safety issues. The strategy should be refreshed to reflect current and future issues, in addition to fulfilling the annual Strategic Assessment requirement which informs the annual action planning process.

- 4.3 Residents place a high priority on crime and ASB reduction. This is evidenced in the Council's 2013 resident's survey, whereby 84% of respondents chose 'tackling crime and ASB' as one of their top priorities. This was the most predominantly chosen category in the survey.
- 4.4 There is a risk to the Council that work undertaken by the CSP would lack vision and focus without a new strategy. This may also result in negative implications for any future funding bids submitted by the partnership.
- 4.5 The proposed strategy has been developed through consideration of the following evidence and analysis:
- Strategic Assessment analysis 2014
 - quarterly data obtained by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) from all partners
 - Operational Delivery Group (ODG) bi weekly intelligence
 - 2013 residents' survey
 - needs of the community
 - views of SoSafe partners
 - consultation on the draft strategy between 19 November and 31 December 2014
 - current / historical crime and ASB data.
- 4.6 The proposed strategy will be in place from 1 April 2015, providing the framework for SoSafe's approach to community safety. It sets out aims and objectives, and examples of what SoSafe has done, currently does and will deliver in order to achieve them.
- 4.7 The strategy comprises of two overarching aims:
- to build safer, stronger, more confident communities
 - to increase community safety and reduce the fear of crime.
- 4.8 The aims relate to five objectives:
- help people keep safe
 - reduce crime
 - provide a coordinated response to domestic abuse
 - effectively tackle ASB together with the community
 - reduce the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse.
- 4.9 There are several themes which cut across the strategy:

- understanding local issues and acting or planning as required, targeting problematic people, locations and times
 - ensuring that vulnerable people are identified quickly and helped or protected accordingly
 - keeping our communities informed about crime in order to reduce fear
 - using our partnership strengths and powers to deal with all crime types
 - reducing offending and reoffending
 - intervening early to prevent issues from escalating.
- 4.10 Delivery of the strategy will be monitored and evaluated through SoSafe's current governance arrangements; by reporting achievements against the action plan to RAG each quarter, through a performance monitoring framework completed bi-weekly at ODG. Elements of the action plan are recorded in the Council's balanced scorecard each quarter. The PCC is also provided with a performance report every six months, and a representative attends RAG each quarter.
- 4.11 SMB approved the strategy in November 2014; and both the Strategic Director (Community) and RAG Chair agreed the final strategy for publication.
- 4.12 Consultation on the strategy's contents with different stakeholder groups has helped to ensure that a range of needs and priorities are reflected. Public consultation ran for a period of six weeks (from 19 November to 31 December 2014). It was advertised via the Council's website and through social media. The consultation was sent to the following organisations, and further dissemination was invited:
- RAG and ODG members
 - Interfaith Forum
 - World Forum
 - Housing Referral Group
 - local voluntary and charity sector groups
 - SBC Leader, staff and Members
 - The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 24 November 2014
 - older people's network
 - SoStevenage members
 - local businesses.
- 4.13 A link to the consultation was circulated electronically to stakeholders for comment. Views were captured on a specific question and answer form, to ensure a consistent method of data capture. Members of the public were also offered a paper alternative. One paper version was requested, but was not returned.
- 4.14 23 questionnaires were completed online, of which 12 were viable and 11 were incomplete. The viable responses have been detailed in Appendix C. Some minor changes to the strategy, as a consequence of those responses, have been noted. A copy of Appendix C will be published alongside the strategy on the Council's website.

- 4.15 Ideally, more responses would have been received from such a wide circulation. However, it should be noted that people are more likely to complete a questionnaire when they perceive there to be a problem. It is hoped that those consulted felt that the strategy reflects the priorities and actions necessary to improve performance in this area.
- 4.16 On the whole, the respondents who completed the questionnaire were in agreement with the strategy, and approved of the aims and objectives identified. Most said that the document is clear, sensible and in touch with the needs of Stevenage.
- 4.17 All comments have been addressed or answered in Appendix C; with reference to any consequential changes made to the strategy.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

- 5.1.1 SoSafe is supported by existing resources from partners including the Council; and external grant funding from the PCC. The objectives included in the strategy will be delivered through these existing resources.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 The *Crime and Disorder Act 1998*⁵ made it a statutory requirement for a number of public sector organisations (Responsible Authorities) to work together in partnership to tackle crime, drugs and anti-social behaviour.
- 5.2.2 The *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011* further reinforced partnership working by discharging public accountability for policing to PCCs. This legislation also compels CSPs to work strategically in tandem with PCCs through the provision of an annual grant.
- 5.2.3 The *ASB, Crime and Policing Act 2014* compels CSPs to work with a wider range of partners, taking into account more serious crime types like serious and organised crime (SOC), child sexual exploitation (CSE) and forced marriage; resulting in a widening of the remit for CSPs.

5.3 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been completed, and has taken account of feedback from the consultation. The EqIA considers the implications of the strategy for all communities, and relevant revisions to the strategy have been made since the last presentation to the executive committee. A copy of the EqIA can be viewed in Appendix B, and will be published alongside the strategy on the Council's website.

5.4 Risk Implications

⁵ *Crime and Disorder Act 1998* found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/37/contents>

5.4.1 Organisational change may lead to a risk that objectives are not met or completed. The availability of resources has been carefully considered to mitigate this risk. The Community Safety Strategy will be reviewed annually to take any changes into account.

5.4.2 SoSafe and the Council maintain risk registers which are updated every six months.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.5.1 The Community Safety Strategy outlines the partnership and Council approach to Community Safety. It is consistent with the Council's Corporate Plan in its objective to 'help people feel safe.' The strategy also fulfils the Council's cooperative principles through partnership working and inclusivity; and upholds the Council's values by responding to crime through group problem solving, innovation and openness.

5.6 Service Delivery Implications

5.6.1 The Community Safety Strategy impacts on some specific Council services and will need to be reflected in relevant Service Delivery Unit planning processes.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 - Community Safety Strategy 2011/14

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Community Safety Strategy 2015/18

Appendix B - Equalities Impact Assessment

Appendix C - Consultation summary