

Meeting: EXECUTIVE
Portfolio Area: Community Safety
Date: 13 MARCH 2018

COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY 2018-21

BUDGET & POLICY FRAMEWORK

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the draft strategy which outlines the emerging priorities of the SoSafe partnership for the next three years which was considered by the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) at its meeting on 5th February 2018.
- 1.2 The Council's Constitution includes the Community Safety Strategy as a Budget and Policy Framework item and as such the draft document, post consideration by the Executive, will then be reviewed by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The final report, incorporating comments made by that Committee will be submitted to the Executive for recommendation to Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That subject to the approval of the Executive the draft Community Safety Strategy accompanying this report be referred to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee before the final recommendations Council are approved.
- 2.2 That the draft Community Safety Strategy accompanying this report be approved noting its focus on the work of the SoSafe partnership.
- 2.3 That implementation of the strategy will be achieved through co-operative working with communities and key partners via the activities of the Joint Action Group and overseen by the Responsible Authorities Group.

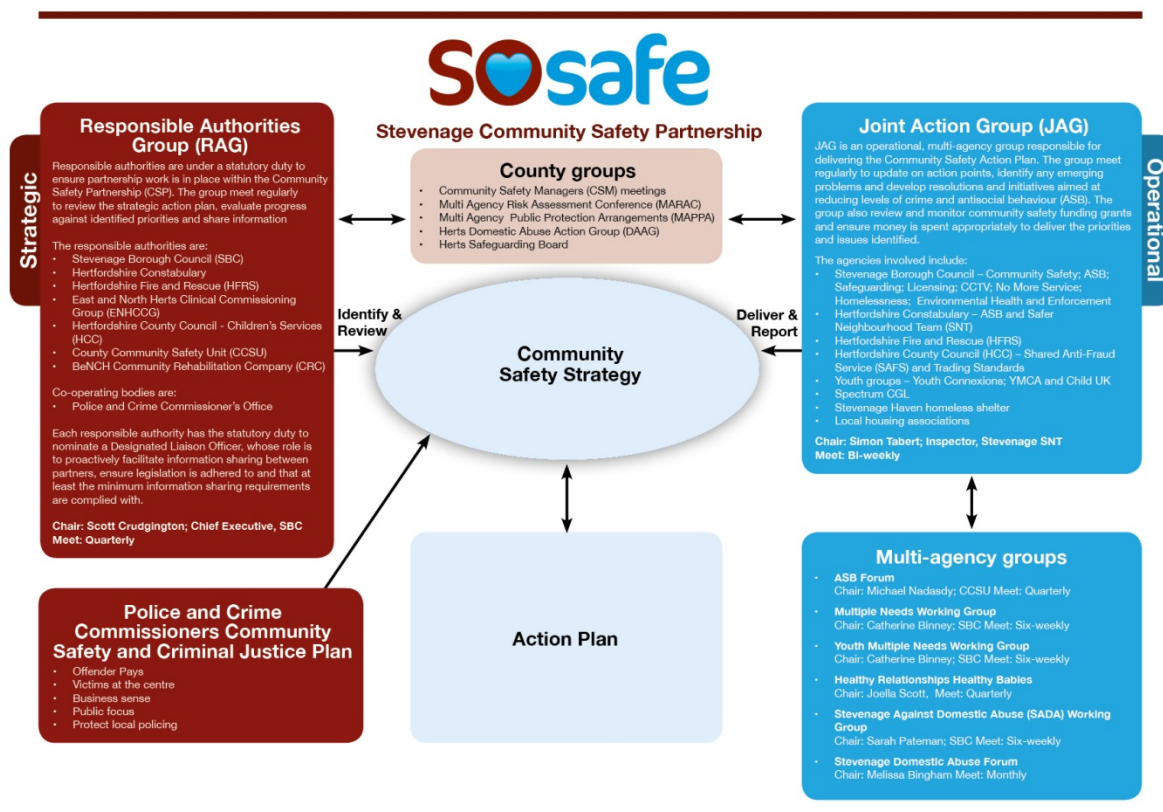
3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The town is rapidly changing and with a preferred developer now on board to help take forward the town centre regeneration ambitions there will be much more change to come over the coming months and years. The population is growing and a broad cross-section of people have chosen Stevenage to live

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and work in. Stevenage continues to be a safe place to live and work. There are however, peaks in crime and anti-social behaviour, often through the sudden occurrence of a criminal activity, or a spate of connected incidents. The council is aware through the most recent Residents Survey that people in some parts of the town feel troubled by youth nuisance and that they are concerned about going out after dark. The Community Safety Partnership - SoSafe will work to address these issues working co-operatively with local communities.

- 3.2 The development of a strategy is central to the overall purpose of the Community Safety Partnership and is summarised in the diagram below.



- 3.3 This strategy will ensure that Stevenage, as a co-operative council, utilises its available resources in the most effective manner possible to deliver meaningful crime reduction outcomes. SoSafe is committed to building on progress achieved in recent years, and will strive to continue to drive down crime and disorder in Stevenage. In his most recent visit to the partnership in February 2018 the Police and Crime Commissioner recognised the strength and effectiveness of SoSafe as a community safety partnership.

- 3.4 Between 2015-2018 the partnership secured £132k of external funding to help it deliver on priorities and initiatives. This funding resulted in the delivery of some innovative projects including the SoSafe Youth Ambassadors, the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) Traveller Project and various community reassurance events. In addition to this, the No More Service allotment successfully secured a £1,000 grant from the Tesco Bags for Help scheme and in February 2018 SADA won the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Excellence in the Community award.

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- 3.5 The ASB Team managed a number of complex cases that resulted in successful enforcement action being taken. This included re-possession of a nuisance property on the Absolute Ground for Possession, as well as a Property Closure Order on an address where drugs were being dealt that resulted in a high level of ASB for the residents.
- 3.6 Numerous partnership operations with the Police were undertaken such as regular residents' surgeries in tower blocks where there were reports of ASB and crime, have helped to reassure residents and encourage them to report nuisance behaviour.
- 3.7 During the year the partnership has engaged with residents on a number of occasions including the Domestic Abuse 16 Days of Action and Operation Night Owl which targeted drinking and the night time economy. The partnership has been instrumental in arranging training for front line staff, partners and volunteers; including tackling extremism, DA Awareness, Hate Crime Awareness Training, Safeguarding and Child Sexual Exploitation Training.
- 3.8 By properly engaging with the local community and working with them to shape the service offer it has been possible to increase the profile of the partnership and highlight the benefits of co-operative through the work of volunteers and partners and through mechanisms like the ASB forum. It has also been possible to highlight what can be achieved when resources are co-ordinated and strategically aligned in particular the outcomes achieved through SADA.
- 3.9 During November and December 2017, the SoSafe Partnership worked with local partners to shape the draft strategy. The themes for the strategy were further developed at consultation events in the town centre and via surveys shared with customers. There are a number of differences between the 2015/17 and 2018/20 community safety strategies. Notably, the overall aims have changed to focus on helping people to feel safe and to tackle perceptions of ASB and crime. This will be achieved by empowering residents to get involved and encouraging them to learn more about actual levels of crime and disorder in Stevenage. The 2018/20 strategy aims to safeguard the broader spectrum of vulnerable people beyond those who are victims of domestic abuse. ASB will be tackled with partners and the local community, working co-operatively. In the 2015/18 strategy, the No More Service set out to reduce harm to the individual/client, whereas the 2018/20 strategy is seeking to motivate clients to break the cycle of addiction themselves by understanding the impact their substance misuse has on the community, not just the individual.
- 3.10 The proposed strategy accompanies this report. It is suggested that, subject to Members approving the strategy for implementation, it should be adopted by the Responsible Authorities Group on 23 April 2018.

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- 3.11 Members of the Community Select Committee, in their Policy Development role, were consulted on this report at a meeting with the Portfolio Holder held on 5 February 2018.
- 3.12 There are a number of key points that require consideration. These are set out in the following sections of the report and formulate the rationale upon which the recommendations are presented.

4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED COURSE OF ACTION AND OTHER OPTIONS

4.1 Local priorities for Stevenage

- 4.1.1 The draft Community Safety Strategy has been compiled based on evidence obtained from Police Performance Reports, the 2017 Residents Survey results, consultation with members of the public and partners and surveys completed by service users. The priorities identified are those that ranked highest, following the consultation.

From 2015-2018 the identified priorities were:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce Crime and Disorder
3. Provide a Co-ordinated Response to Domestic Abuse
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) with partners
5. Reduce harm caused by drugs and alcohol

The five key priorities identified for 2018-2021 are:

1. Helping to make People feel Safe
2. Reduce crime and Disorder
3. Protect and Safeguard Vulnerable People
4. Tackle antisocial behaviour (ASB) Co-operatively with partners
5. Break the cycle of substance misuse and offending

These priorities are underpinned by two overarching objectives to:

- Build Resilient Communities
- Work co-operatively with communities to help reduce fear of crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

4.2 Rationale for priorities

- 4.2.1 This strategy provides a framework for the activities and initiatives that the partnership delivers to improve community safety and community confidence in the town. Following consultation with members of the public and partners, this strategy identifies the priorities that SoSafe will focus on over the next

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three years. Whilst many of the priorities remain the same as in previous years there is a broadening focus on the wider safeguarding agenda. Domestic abuse remains a key area of focus within this arena, but alongside issues such as child sexual exploitation and human trafficking. The council also remains committed to a cooperative approach of working with communities across the town and this remains an underlying theme across all objectives.

4.2.2 Alongside the strategy, a detailed action plan is produced each year, which shows how SoSafe will achieve its aims and objectives. It contains specific targets and is monitored, updated and reviewed regularly.

4.2.3 As the Co-operative Neighbourhood Management Programme progresses, there will be further opportunities to develop localised approaches to support delivery of the Community Safety Strategy at a neighbourhood level. For example it may be possible to deliver more targeted intervention in neighbourhood hot-spots, and/or to work with colleagues to design-out crime in planned neighbourhood improvement works. There will also be further opportunities to develop interventions with local neighbourhood-based community and voluntary organisations.

4.2.4 The Community Safety Strategy has been developed with due regard to the following:

- Public Consultation
- National Developments and Changes to Legislation
- Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) plan *Everybody's Business*
- Annual Strategic Assessment for Stevenage 2016/17
- County Community Safety Unit (CCSU) domestic abuse strategy and the Stevenage Against Domestic Abuse Strategy
- CCSU drugs and alcohol strategy
- National Probation Service Reducing Offending Strategy
- Historical and Current Crime Data.
- Residents Survey.

4.3 Strategic fit and context

4.3.1 The profile of the SoSafe partnership is of growing importance and it is increasingly being called upon to share best practice and co-operative ways of working. The responsibility to make Stevenage a safe place to live, work and visit is paramount to all SoSafe partners.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial Implications

5.1.1 The council will utilise existing resources to help tackle some of these issues, including its communications functions, its continued investment in CCTV and the work of its own community safety team. There is also recognition that a

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number of existing activities that are having a positive impact are reliant on time-limited funding, such as New Homes Bonus and other external funding resources. Decisions on the future of some of these services will need to be considered in relation to this. These funding challenges are also being considered through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Unit Review. The community safety strategy remains a partnership strategy for the town and the council will continue to work with other commissioners and funders such as Herts County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Government Departments and other funders to help lever in investment where possible.

- 5.1.2 There may be some match-funding or pump priming requirements related to progressing certain initiatives and projects. The SoSafe partnership Action Plan is developed annually as part of the final strategy and will highlight where resources will be required to support delivery of specific projects.

5.2 Legal Implications

- 5.2.1 Production of the strategy is a legal requirement of the community safety partnership. The Crime and Disorder Act 1988 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 1996) requires the responsible authorities for an area to formulate and implement a strategy for the reduction of crime and disorder (including anti-social behaviour adversely affecting the local environment); combatting the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances and for the education of re-offending in the area.

5.3 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 5.3.1 The council is committed to providing high quality services that are relevant to the needs and responsive to the views of all sections of the local community, irrespective of their race, gender, disability, culture, religion, age, sexual orientation or marital status. The General Equality Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) requires the council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in the exercise of its functions.
- 5.3.2 There is recognition that crime and ASB can disproportionately impact upon those with protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act. The 2017 Hate Crime Conference hosted by the council highlighted the potential for this to happen at a local level. SoSafe will strive to involve the community in the design and delivery of the interventions which tackle crime and drive down disorder and anti-social behaviour. Relationships will continue to be built with groups around the town, including those from different faiths, BME groups and the traveller community, LGBT communities, women, girls and older people. It will be essential to ensure interventions meet specific needs for different parts of the community and are delivered in a meaningful and empowering way.

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5.4 Risk Implications

5.4.1 The strategic commitment of key stakeholders in the development of the strategy has helped to mitigate key risks such as focussing on the wrong priorities or those over which the partners have little impact or influence. Risks will continue to be considered as interventions develop through the ongoing work of RAG.

5.5 Policy Implications

5.5.1 The strategy links into other key SBC policies including the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults and the health and wellbeing strategy.

5.6 Staffing and Accommodation Implications

5.6.1 Posts within the Community Safety Team will be realigned to fit the strategic aspirations within the strategy through the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Unit Review.

5.7 Human Rights Implications

5.7.1 The development of the strategy has taken into account human rights including a person's right to defend their rights in the courts and compels public organisations (including local authorities and the police) to treat everyone equally, with fairness, dignity and respect.

5.8 Service Delivery Implications

5.8.1 The strategy will influence and shape the work of the SoSafe Partnership and its delivery strands are clearly aligned back to the outcomes that are sought. This will also apply to the function of the Responsible Authorities Group that will oversee delivery of the strategy reporting to Stevenage Together.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

BD1 - Community Safety Strategy 2015/18

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/committees/117036/117040/117104/Council-25-Feb-2015-Item13-AppA.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix A - Draft Community Stevenage Strategy 2018/21