

Southend-on-Sea City Council

Report of Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment
To
Cabinet

On
13th September 2022

Report prepared by: Joanne Stowell Director of Public Protection

Agenda
Item No.

Adoption of the Community Safety Partnership Strategy
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee

Cabinet Member: Councillor Martin Terry- Cabinet Member for Public Protection

Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report sets out the priorities, high level ambitions and intentions of the partnership over the next 3 years as outlined in the Community Safety Partnership Strategy (2022 – 25) for formal approval.
- 1.2 The strategy seeks to set out a direction of travel and key functions of the Community Safety Partnership. Upon approval of the strategy, the annual strategic assessment will be compiled and reviewed by the partnership to allow focused action and resource deployment for the forthcoming year.

2. Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 **Agree the priorities within the Community Safety Partnership Strategy (the Strategy) 2022 – 2025 as attached at Appendix 1;**
- 2.2 **Present the Strategy to full Council on the 8th of December 2022 for formal adoption;**
- 2.3 **Agree that the Executive Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment together with the Chair of the Southend Community Safety Partnership Board, approve any minor changes required to the Strategy arising from emerging local crime priorities identified in the crime needs assessment.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory partnership set up under Section 57 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998; the overarching aim of the partnership is to ensure that Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC) continues its journey to achieve reductions in crime and disorder and improve the safety of those who live and work in the City.
- 3.2 There is a statutory requirement to prepare and implement a local Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy every 3 years, known locally as the Community Safety Partnership Strategy (the Strategy). In addition, there is also a requirement to complete an annual Strategic Impact Assessment (SIA).
- 3.3 The Southend Community Safety Partnership Board (CSPB) undertakes a statutory duty of completing a Strategic Intelligence Assessment (SIA) annually. The purpose of the assessment is to evidence insights on emerging trends, prioritising crime and disorder themes into high level strategy. However, on reviewing the current arrangements, the Director of Public Protection noted that the Strategy has not previously been published.
- 3.4 Notwithstanding the above, the requirements to reduce crime and disorder in the City were still delivered by the CSPB, successes include:
- Utilising gang injunctions to disrupt county lines and the behaviours of young people;
 - Expanding the “See The Signs” media campaign, resulting in 9,900 views on social media and 25,110 views online;
 - Introducing a Public Space Protection Order in Leigh-on-Sea and increased a uniformed presence within the area;
 - Maintaining the Purple Flag status;
 - Delivering Operation Heatwave;
 - Delivering Operation Union;
 - Increasing the number of Hate Crime Ambassadors and number of Hate Incident Reporting Centres (HIRCs) available to Southend citizens, and
 - Introducing a specific Southend Domestic Abuse Strategy.

CSPB Arrangements

- 3.5 The CSPB has a joint Chair arrangement between Essex Police Leadership and the Director of Public Protection. It meets on a quarterly basis, and has the responsibility for developing a Strategy that delivers the priorities determined by Essex Police, the results of a SIA, as well as those that are important to our residents.
- 3.6 The CSPB comprises of statutory and non-statutory partners; it brings the member organisations together so that they can cooperate at a strategic and operational level to improve community safety outcomes for the residents of Southend. Board Members include:
- Southend-on Sea City Council

- The Cabinet Member for Public Protection
- South Essex Homes
- Essex Police
- Essex Ambulance Service
- Essex County Fire & Rescue
- Southend Clinical Commissioning Group
- National Probation Service
- Dept of Work and Pensions
- Southend Association for Voluntary Services

Preparation of the Strategy

3.7 In preparing the Strategy there must be regard to:

- The priorities within the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFFC) for Essex's 'Police and Crime Plan 2021 -24 (PACP 21-24);
- The results from the annual SIA;
- The results of the completed risk matrix with CSP Stakeholders to understand threat, risk and harm. Providing a score against community safety issues, considering the following; Impact against victim, community, public expectations and the environment, Likelihood of a community safety issue occurring, examining frequency, volume and trends, organisational position, considering the impact of the issue on organisations, and if it is a national issue, the economic cost of issue, if the CSP has the capacity and capability to respond to the issue, identifying any gaps,
- The concerns of residents, through analysis of the results of the Residential Survey, discussions held at Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) and Local Community Meetings (LCMs), which highlighted issues that impact on a communities' quality of life;
- Southend 2050 objectives and
- CSP stakeholder's strategies (outlined in Appendix 1, page 17).

The Priorities

3.8 Broad strategic themes have been identified within the Strategy this enables flexibility in responding to changing crime trends and any emerging local issues. Delivery will be reviewed annually in line with Southend's annual SIA and local trends, this will ensure that delivery reflects local need, whilst also maximising opportunities for joint working across the City.

3.9 The agreed priority themes within the Strategy are:

- Priority One: Safe and Confident Communities
- Priority Two: Reducing Violence Against Women and Girls
- Priority Three: Reducing & Tackling Hate Crime
- Priority Four: Reducing Knife Enabled Serious Violence

3.10 Priorities are not ranked in any order. Each priority has associated delivery mechanisms to drive them forward and will be reviewed annually to ensure that

they are relevant and monitored periodically to determine progress. If priorities are changed in the future this document will be updated to reflect them.

Priority One: Safe and Confident Communities

3.11 This priority will tackle high volume crime and anti-social issues across the City that concern our residents and businesses the most, as well as targeting resources on those areas that are highlighted as hot spots through either the highest levels of crimes reported, or through noted increases. Our aim will be to reduce crime, reduce ASB and improve the confidence of residents and provide reassurance.

3.12 The specific high-volume crimes that will be focused on are:

- ASB
- Street based robberies
- Crimes associated with the Public Space Protection Order

Although not a high-volume crime, the final focus in this area is mitigation from the threat of hostile vehicle attacks.

3.13 The specific high-volume crimes will be tackled, and resources will be targeted on those areas that are highlighted as hot spots, through either the highest levels of crimes reported, or through noted increases. The aim within this priority is to reduce crime, reduce ASB, improve the confidence of residents and provide reassurance.

3.14 Data analytical tools and partnership tasking groups will be used to track and respond to local crime trends in real time, and to provide local input to develop appropriate responses to City concerns.

Priority Two: Reducing Violence Against Women & Girls

3.15 In addition to high volume crimes, the Strategy also has a strong focus on high harm crimes that have been identified as priority issues within the PACP 21-24, and they reinforce the commitment to tackle violence, vulnerability and exploitation in the City.

3.16 This priority looks at protecting women and girls from violence, as too many women and girls suffer harassment, abuse and violence on a daily basis, whether at the hands of partners, family members or strangers, and this is always unacceptable. This priority supports the PFFC in its stance of taking a zero-tolerance approach wherever this violence and abuse takes place. This does not mean that the suffering experienced by men and boys is diminished, and the services commissioned will support victims and survivors whatever their gender.

Priority Three: Reducing and Tackling Hate Crime

3.17 This priority focuses on work to tackle those crimes that are motivated by malice or ill will towards a social group based on race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or gender identity. Communities that are divided and fearful are more

susceptible to intolerance, hatred and targeting. In addition to the targeted groups.

Priority Four: Reducing Knife Enable Crime

- 3.18 This priority is aimed to work with Southend CSP stakeholders in establishing a Knife Crime Matrix to help prevent and deter individuals and groups from committing acts of serious violence and carrying/using knives. Knife crime is defined as an offence where a knife/blade is used or threatened.

Delivery of the Strategy

- 3.19 Delivering on the priorities outlined in the Strategy requires a range of partner organisations working together, to share the skills, powers and resources that are available to them. Such an approach is essential to improving community safety, as the drivers of crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are often multiple and complex, cutting across a range of different agencies and services. As a framework strategy, the intention is not to provide comprehensive, prescriptive detail on partner actions. Instead, it provides a broad outline of actions that will be taken by Partners in supporting the overall ambitions, and further signposts the partner strategies, policies and plans that contain the detailed actions. (Appendix 1 page 17).

Endorsement of the Strategy

- 3.20 The Strategy was endorsed by the Chairs of the CSPB and the Cabinet Member for Public Protection in June 2022; and scrutinised by CMT on the 3rd of August 2022. However, as per the Constitution of SCC, it must be presented to Full Council prior to formal adoption.

4. Other Options

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce the Strategy, as such, there are no alternative options to consider.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 Southend City Council is a responsible authority of the Community Safety Partnership under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Act places a statutory duty on the local authority to work with other responsible authorities to develop and implement a strategy for reducing crime and disorder.**

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Southend 2050 is the City's shared ambition for the future, it includes six themes, each with associated outcomes, the themes are:
1. Pride and Joy
 2. Safe and Well
 3. Active and Involved
 4. Opportunity and Prosperity

5. Connected and Smart and
6. Future Ways of Working

6.2 The Strategy seeks to deliver outcomes that impact positively on our residential and business communities by: reducing crime and the fear of crime, increasing safety, protecting the environment, engaging with our residents and partners, using the latest technology to aid enforcement, and annually reviewing the ways in which we work. A by-product of achieving the above aims, is that the prosperity of the City is improved, as such, the Strategy is pivotal to achieving the corporate vision and contributes to all six high level strategic priorities set out in Southend 2050. However, given the broad context in which community safety exists, the strategy makes a particular specific contribution to themes 1,2 and 4.

6.3 Financial Implications

6.4 SCC CSP does not receive funding, however Partners' plans and strategies clarify where they will focus their time and effort and their broad activity to meet priorities.

6.5 From time to time, central government makes available one-off funding opportunities to support community safety work such as from UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), and when possible, partners apply for such funds. Having said that, it is important to note that whilst funding is available, it is not awarded equally and quite often has to be shared across other priorities.

6.6 Legal Implications

6.7 In line with the statutory duty under Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the Southend Community Safety Partnership must formulate and implement a strategy for reducing crime and disorder in the area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment).

6.8 By producing the strategy and by completing an annual SIA, which informs the following years' operational actions, SCC is fulfilling its statutory requirement.

6.9 The Director of Legal Services has cleared this report.

6.10 People Implications

6.11 This paper's recommended approach has no specific People implications; the priorities within the Strategy crosscut across the agencies that make up the CSP. Delivery against the priorities will be via mainstream activity and any grant funding that the City is able to secure, including this year's £27,713.84 PFCC allocation.

6.12 It should be noted that should resourcing be reduced, the ability to deliver against the objectives within the Strategy will be compromised.

6.13 Property Implications

6.14 This report's recommended approach has no specific property implications.

6.15 Consultation

6.16 In developing the Strategy and its priorities, consultation and engagement was undertaken with partners, stakeholders and relevant services within the Council. The first draft of the Strategy was sent to partners and the Chair of the CSPB in April 2022 for comment, and subsequent feedback was included; the updated draft was agreed by the Chairs of the CSPB in June 2022. All comments were addressed, minor amendments to the Strategy made, and the Cabinet Member for Public Protection agreed the recommendations.

6.17 The opinions of residents were sought via the Residential Survey undertaken in 2021; 1206 residents responded to a variety of questions, including feelings of safety and concerns about crime and ASB in the City. With regards to the perception of crime and particularly in relation to feelings of safety, 81% of residents reported feeling safe when in their local area during the day, 54% felt safe when out alone after dark, and 53% felt safe on public transport, and 68% felt that crime and ASB was a priority.

6.18 It should be noted that the resident's perceptions are not necessarily borne out of personal experience, but often influenced by the media or anecdotal experiences of others.

6.19 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.20 SCC wants to ensure that it provides services and strategies which address the needs of all members of the community. As such the Council conducts Equality Impact Assessments as strategies, policies and services are developed to:

- Consider issues relating to age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion & belief and sexual orientation;
- Obtain a clearer understanding of how distinct groups may be affected;
- Identify changes which may need to be built into an initiative as it is developed;
- Comply with legislative requirements & identify good practice.

6.21 By working on the four priority areas identified, there will not be unlawful discrimination or contradictions under the European Convention of Human Rights. Statistics and data have been used and analysed to highlight the high-risk areas to the Community Safety Partnership and our communities. All members of our communities have been considered, and there have been no groups omitted from the process. The impact of working on the proposed priority areas will not discriminate against individuals or groups. In fact, the proposed priorities are expected to have a positive impact on vulnerable groups.

6.22 Risk Assessment

6.23 There is a legal requirement to produce the Strategy, and undertake an annual SIA, as such, there are reputational, environmental, economical and legal risks to the Council for not pro-actively pursuing an improvement in crime and disorder levels.

6.24 The recommendations in this report recognise the importance of constructive dialogue with the partner organisations within the CSP, and the importance of coordinated and collaborative working. With that in mind, there is also a risk to the Councils' reputation for working in partnership, should it not support the priorities identified through a partnership strategic assessment process.

6.25 Value for Money

6.26 Physical health, mental wellbeing and life satisfaction are all enhanced through improvements in public safety, and the reduction of crime and disorder. The social return on investment from improvements in these areas is well documented within the Public Health arena, and the fiscal benefits are thought to be more than three times greater than any cost assigned.

6.27 Community Safety Implications

6.28 Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the Council to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder. Support for this Plan will ensure that the Council proactively contributes to addressing the identified community safety priorities for the City. The detrimental impact of crime, and anti-social behaviour is a high priority for local residents, and the work to be undertaken in addressing the identified priorities, will improve the quality of life for our communities; help reduce crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour itself and promote public confidence in our services and those offered by our partners.

6.29 Environmental Impact

6.30 The enforcement and prevention work that will be undertaken to support the Strategy will make a significant contribution to the quality of the physical environment, tackle those responsible for crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, and prevent some offences in SCC.

6.31 With the above in mind, Priority One in particular (Safe and Confident Communities), takes envoi-crime into account. This will include fly-tipping, and the priority addresses the 'Broken Windows' metaphor, of how crime and disorder tends to flourish in environments where small problems (such as broken windows) go unaddressed. Essentially, the theory is that as the environment falls into neglect and disrepair, people responsible for crime and disorder interpret the lack of care for the environment as permission to use and abuse it without repercussions. The Strategy, seeks to address these issues, and aims to bring about environmentally improvements, as well as reductions in crime.

7. Background Papers

7.1 There are no relevant background papers.

8. Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1 - The Community Safety Partnership Strategy