

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee (via Committees Briefing)		
DATE:	29 June 2022		
TITLE:	Community Safety Partnership Update		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	Cllr Karen Rowland	PORTFOLIO:	Environmental Services and Community Safety
SERVICE:	Housing & Communities	WARDS:	All Boroughwide
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#### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out an update in relation to the workplan of Reading's Community Safety Partnership. The report also sets out a proposed timeline for delivering its new three-year Community Safety Strategy and Plan.
- 1.2 Reading's Community Safety Partnership was established under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which set out a statutory requirement for key responsible authorities, including local authorities, to work together to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and minimise re-offending in local areas. Each Community Safety Partnership must carry out regular strategic assessments to understand its local issues relating to crime and disorder and in turn, develop a strategy to set out how it will tackle those identified issues. In addition to this, Community Safety Partnerships are required to share strategies with Police and Crime Commissioners and review the strategies on an annual basis.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Housing Neighbourhood and Leisure Committee note the progress of the workplan of the Community Safety Partnership and the intention to produce a new Community Safety Strategy for endorsement by the Committee in November.
- 2.2 That the lead member for Environmental Services and Community Safety is given delegated authority to approve consultation questions which will be posed when the public consultation is conducted in respect of the CSP & Serious Violence Strategies.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is driven by an Executive Group, which is chaired by Reading's Local Police Area (LPA) Commander, with the deputy chair being the Council's portfolio holder for Community Safety. The 'Responsible Authorities' who form part of the Partnership are:

- Reading Borough Council
- Thames Valley Police
- National Probation Service
- Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Berkshire West Clinical Commissioning Group

However, Reading's Community Safety Partnership has welcomed a wider range of partners in recent years and is continuing to develop improved links with other boards and partnerships operating in Reading, including the One Reading Partnership, Youth Justice Board, Health and Well Being Board and Prevent Management Group.

### 3.2 The main responsibilities for Community Safety Partnerships are to:

- Have a strategic group to direct the work of the partnership
- Regularly engage and consult with communities on their priorities and work to achieve them
- Set up a process for information sharing
- Analyse data including crime data and patterns to identify priorities in an annual strategic assessment
- Produce a three-year rolling partnership strategy/plan and monitor progress
- Produce a strategy for reducing re-offending
- Commission Domestic Homicide Reviews as required

### 3.3 Reading currently has an Executive Group that oversees the work of the CSP and the delivery of its responsibilities. In 2021 in view of a number of issues on the horizon the Chair of the CSP (the then LPA Commander of Thames Valley Police) and the Executive Group agreed an internal review of what work was required to put the partnership on a solid footing for the next few years. The approaching issues included:

- The Thames Valley's Police and Crime Commissioner announcement of the intention to reduce the Community Safety Fund allocation to Reading (this has now been confirmed and it will be reduced by half over a tapered 3 year period).
- The incoming legislation in relation to the Serious Violence Duty
- The approaching end of the current Community Safety Strategy which had had limited time to move forward due to the impact of the pandemic. The priorities for the strategy were - Adult Exploitation and Modern Slavery, Violent Crime and Serious ASB & Class A Drug misuse including County Lines.
- A need for the partnership to be more effective in terms of customer engagement and communications.
- Rising concerns from residents about crime

## 4.0 CURRENT POSITION

### 4.1 Following the internal review the following workplan was put in place:

Action	Timescale
Resetting of Terms of Reference and Membership of the Group	Complete
Review of Governance of workstreams reporting into the CSP	Complete
Commissioning of a comprehensive strategic assessment of need, to include a focus on serious violence to ensure it complies with the new Serious Violence Duty	Complete

Re-establishing capacity for performance information and data for scrutiny of the CSP	Complete
Development of a new Community Safety Strategy/Plan with clear priorities to ensure limited funding for the CSP is appropriately targeted	Underway to complete by October
Development of a Serious Violence Plan	Underway to complete by October
Review of Community Engagement Mechanisms	October
Peer Review to ensure that the CSP operates to the best of its ability and takes note of good practice	October
Improving the communications of the CSP to provide information and reassurance to residents on the work that is being undertaken to tackle crime.	Ongoing

- 4.2 Much of this work is now complete or underway and although there has been a change in LPA Commander since this work commenced, they are fully supportive of the workplan. It is intended that a new Community Safety Strategy and Plan will be in place from November this year following a consultation exercise on the priorities and subject to agreement and endorsement by Housing Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee. The priorities set out in the strategy will be based on the needs in the area as gleaned from the strategic assessment.
- 4.3 Timeline for delivery of the strategy is as follows:
- Draft Strategy agreed by the CSP - July 22
  - Public Consultation on the priorities in the draft strategy - July/August 22
  - Finalised Strategy agreed by CSP - September 22
  - Finalised strategy for adoption to Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee - November 22
- 4.4 Although a new strategy is currently being developed the normal police activity and partnership working in the town continues to tackle crime and disorder especially in the area of serious violence examples include:
- The setting up of a new serious violence group, a partnership between the police, Reading Borough Council and Brighter Futures for Children and the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit to deliver the Serious Violence Plan and oversee actions to tackle serious violence in the town. This is chaired by the Executive Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services in RBC.
  - Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit, Starting Point & Royal Berkshire Hospital Navigator Scheme - The Navigator Programme started in 2021 and aims to stop the cycle of violence and the strain this puts on the NHS. This is done by working with those aged 13-24 who attend A&E for violence related injuries and/or risk-taking behaviour. The Navigators are able to have conversations with these young people, within A&E, who are often more reachable at that time. The Navigators will then also signpost the young people on to relevant community groups or organisations and offer mentoring to help the young people access assistance to achieve change.

- Installation of knife bins - Waitrose Car Park, Caversham; Cintra Park; Coley Park Community Centre; Kensington Park; Orts Road; Tilehurst Triangle. The bins are managed by RBC Environmental Services and the knives are disposed of appropriately
- Thames Valley Police participation in the national Operation Sceptre knife crime weeks, which take place twice a year. Activities include increase in pro-active policing, targeting places where knife crime occurs; raising public awareness of the dangers of carrying a knife; encouraging anyone who has or knows someone who may carry a knife to dispose of it safely in a knife amnesty bin.
- Home Office Safer Streets 2 funding to tackle neighbourhood crimes in parts of Abbey, Battle and Coley wards in 2021/22 by the designing out of crime.

4.5 Resourcing for the CSP is becoming more limited. The main financial input into the CSP, through Reading Borough Council, has been through the Community Safety Fund, which is allocated through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC). In 2013/14, funding previously allocated to Local Authorities by the Home Office & other government depts to help deliver crime & disorder work was transferred to Police & Crime Commissioners, along with responsibility for delivering these services.

4.6 During 2014 and 2015, the OPCC worked with the Police & Crime Panel to develop a needs-based formula, which was approved, however, the phased transition was not fully implemented. The new formula has now been introduced with a phased transition period over the next 3 years. The implications for Reading are that the funding received will have reduced by just over 50% by the end of the financial year of 2025 and bids will have to be submitted, setting out how the funding will be utilised and be linked to supporting the outcomes set out in Thames Valley's Police and Criminal Justice Plan.

4.7 The reduction in funding over the next 3 years has required the CSP to review how the funding will be allocated moving forward. The CSP agreed to allow the previous percentage allocations to continue for 2022/23, however, a process has been built in to the CSP Terms of Reference to allow the CSP Executive Group to consider how it will bid on funding for forthcoming financial years. Funding for the next 3 years is set at:

2022/23: £373,411  
2023/24: £293,694  
2024/25: £213,977

## 5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The purpose of this section is to ensure that proposals contained in reports support the Council's vision and Corporate Plan priorities:

Reading Borough Council's vision is:

*To help Reading realise its potential - and to ensure that everyone who lives and works here can share the benefits of its success.*

5.2 This area of work will contribute towards the Thriving Neighbourhoods priority, with a focus on reducing crime and to create safer communities and neighbourhoods for residents of Reading.

## 6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no environmental or climate implications arising from this report.

## **7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 Whilst the CSP continues to face unprecedented challenges and further obligations placed upon it, there is a desire amongst the partnership to improve Reading's approach to tackling crime and disorder. Underpinning all of this work is a renewed focus on partnership working and communication, ensuring that all other partnership strategies and plans that feature an element of tackling crime and disorder are reflected in the new wider Community Safety Strategy. In addition, that all resources are effectively utilised, with the 'Responsible Authorities' working more collaboratively with communities and those partners who work with and in those communities to develop and deliver long term solutions to ensure Reading remains a safe place to live, work and visit.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not required for this report but will feature as part of the new strategy.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998, set out a statutory requirement for key responsible authorities, including local authorities, to work together to reduce crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and minimise re-offending in local areas.
- 9.2 Further to the statutory obligations placed upon Community Safety Partnerships, on 28 April 2022, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act received Royal Assent, with the legislation setting out a wide-ranging package of measures intended to prevent and tackle crime and disorder. The Serious Violence Duty is a key part of the Government's programme of work to prevent and reduce serious violence. The legislation creates a new duty on local authorities, chief officers of police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities. Chief Officers of Police will be required to ensure they work alongside other specified authorities under the duty to share data and intelligence, formulate an evidence-based analysis of the problem and then produce a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues. In addition, section 6(1) of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, which sets out the strategies Community Safety Partnerships must formulate and implement, has been amended to explicitly include serious violence.

## **10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Reading's Community Safety Partnership has had oversight of the Community Safety Fund allocation that is facilitated through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley. In terms of how the Community Safety Partnership operates, it continues to function on limited resources, with Reading Borough Council providing the administration and co-ordination of the Executive Group and co-ordination of its strategic assessments, strategies and plans.
- 10.5 The reduction in funding over the next 3 years will require changes to the Community Safety Partnership budgets within Reading Borough Council, however no additional funding will be requested at this time and the expenditure will be tailored to meet the amount of funding available

## **11. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1 None

