

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP – 20 FEBRUARY 2025

Present:

Cllr Karen Rowland	Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, RBC (Vice Chair)
Cllr Terry	Leader, RBC
John Ennis	Probation
Colin Hudson	Thames Valley Police (Chair)
Melissa Wise	Executive Director of Social Care and Health
Jo Middlemass	Community Safety and Enablement Manager, RBC
Jason Murphy	Community Safety, RBC
Rob Abell	RBC
Jason Kew	RBC
Stephen Czajewski	Thames Valley Police
Ollie Foxell	Brighter Futures for Children
Sabina Cannell	PACT
Helen Hathaway	Safer Neighbourhoods Forum
Rachel Spenver	RVA
Carly Newman	Young Voices
Rachel Spencer	RVA
Joanna Godfrey	Berkshire Probation Service
Stephen Leonard	Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service
Nick Haskins	Safer Neighbourhood Forum
Louise Pegg	NHS BOB
Julie Quarmby	Committee Services, RBC

Apologies:

Cllr Leng	RBC
Martin White	Consultant in Public Health
Kirsten Willis-Dewett	South Central Ambulance Service
Jonny Bradish	Brighter Futures for Children
Emma Gee	RBC
Alastair Harsant	Brighter Futures for Children
Bryony Hall	RBC
Matt Gollie	RBC
Zoe Hanim	Prevent/Channel Lead, RBC
George Mathew	ACRE

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31 October 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

2. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP DATA REPORT JAN 2024-DEC 2024/TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROPOSED PERFORMANCE MEETING

Jason Murphy proposed that a Reading Community Safety Partnership Performance Group be set up to review local data trends and shape a narrative for public and CSP, assess the performance of its strategic priorities, assist in the delivery of a local Action Plan and inform the development of future strategies and implement and respond to public surveying and feedback, including from Safer Neighbourhood Forums and the Annual Community Safety Survey. The proposed Performance Group would compose members from the relevant partner organisations and would meet in time to feed into the CSP Executive Group

meetings. He submitted a proposed updated version of the Terms of Reference for further discussion at the next CSP meeting.

AGREED: That the revised Terms of Reference be submitted to the meeting to be held on 3 April 2025.

3. YOUNG VOICES UPDATE AND FEEDBACK FROM SENIOR LEADERS MEETING

Carly Newman reported on work that had taken place since the Online Safety Summit in November 2024:

- Young Voices had been working with Reading Museum on the “Future” section of the Reading’s Digital Revolution exhibition.
- Looking at how to improve young people’s knowledge about safety when out shopping (not online).
- Planning to run another young person’s version of the Community Safety Survey.
- Working with the Youth Access pilot to equip young people with the tools for social action in parks and open spaces, which young people in Reading had identified as an area of particular concern.
- Working with three secondary schools in West Reading to look at safety when travelling to and from school and at how tensions between the schools could be addressed and resolved.

Carly explained that for many young people, their online life was seen as being the everyday and they often felt less safe in real life situations. She added that young people wanted adults to understand what life was really like for them, rather than making assumptions, and then work together to find and implement solutions. Nick Haskins added that Safer Neighbourhood Forums would be happy to work with young people.

AGREED: That the position be noted;

4. SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS INTRODUCTION

Nick Haskins and Helen Hathaway updated the Group on the current situations with their respective Safer Neighbourhood Forums (SNFs):

- Attendees included members of the public and representatives of local groups, councillors etc.
- It could take new members some time to get up to speed with the work of the SNFs.
- It would be helpful to have greater diversity among the membership, and include young people who were under-represented.
- The attendance of representatives from the police was key to the success of the SNFs.
- SNFs worked together when they identified wider Reading issues and would feed up areas of concern to the appropriate organisations.
- The You Say/We did model was helpful in keeping the public informed about the actions that the SNF had taken in their area.
- Lack of budget limited what the SNFs could do.

The Group acknowledged the good work carried out by the SNFs and stressed the importance of the face-to-face contact in dealing with the public and their concerns.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

5. STUDENT SPEAK WEEK FEEDBACK

Jason Murphy, on behalf of Molli Cleaver, Safer Student Partnership, reported on the outcomes of the recent Student Speak Week. Over 400 students had responded and they raised more than 100 issues. The report set out the key themes that had been identified, including:

- Lack of street lighting.
- Walking alone in the dark.
- Anti-social behaviour.
- Behaviour from men.
- Women's safety.
- Concerns over the national increase in incidents of knife and hate crimes.

The Group noted that this was a useful piece of work, that had links to Youth Violence and the SNFs, and Jo Middlemass would incorporate the data provided into a broader document that would be submitted to a future meeting for consideration.

AGREED: That the position be noted;

6. NEW FIRE HUBS

Stephen Leonard gave a presentation on Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service provisions relating to Safe and Well visits, the Adults at Risk Programme, Threat/Risk of Arson Safe and Well visits and Fire Safety Inspections. He added that the level of threat of arson was particularly high in Reading and West Berkshire and work was needed to identify why this was the case and how it could be reduced.

Stephen also explained the new fire hubs model which would see services allocated across East and West hubs rather than by Local Authority area. The changes were still at the planning stage and a more detailed report would be submitted to a future meeting,

AGREED:

- (1) **That the position be noted;**
- (2) **That a further report on Threats of Arson be submitted to the meeting to be held on 3 April 2025.**

7. CLOSURE ORDER REVIEW

Jason Murphy submitted a briefing note on a review of Reading's approach to the use of closure orders to address anti-social behaviour. He explained that the review could be carried out in conjunction with the Adult Safeguarding Team to ensure that vulnerable adults were protected from unintended consequences, such as becoming homeless following a total closure order. Section 77 of the Briefing note set out the following recommended actions:

- a. That Thames Valley Police centrally be asked by the CSP to develop a clear set of principles and guidance for the application of Closure Orders to local officers.
- b. Reading Borough Council and local housing providers should replicate this approach
- c. Decision makers attending the ASB MAP should be invited to comment on requests to initiate Closure Orders (for both ASB and Safeguarding reasons).

- d. The membership of the ASB and Safeguarding MAP should widen to include commissioned services, CMHT, Adult Social Care, Probation, Brighter Futures for Children (Exploitation) and NHS to comment on proposed Closure Orders and support more robust decision making.
- e. Closure Notices should only be served on a property indicating a Closure Order will be made in 48 hours, after a referral had been taken through the ASB MAP.
- f. In person meetings of the ASB MAP should be reinstated to ensure that there is more robust scrutiny of referrals and to track actions, retaining virtual meetings for fast-track decisions, but contingent on the wider membership being involved.
- g. The induction of new officers to NHPT and relevant RBC Officers should include reference to what to do.
- h. This would include a session on the Complex Adults and Risk Meeting, safeguarding responsibilities, the role of the ASB and Safeguarding MAP and expectations of when and if a Closure Order could be reviewed.
- i. Develop a local protocol with legal services, linked to tenancy enforcement and safeguarding, prior to a Closure Order being imposed at an address.
- j. Explore the potential for RBC Legal Services to be able to seek Closure Orders independently of TVP.
- k. The focus of the Complex Adults and Risk Meeting should ensure subjects of the meeting are always those involved in the perpetration of ASB or in the context of cuckooing, perpetrating the vulnerability that befalls a tenant.
- l. Closure Order activity to be reported to the Reading CSP and assurance provided to Safeguarding Adults Board.
- m. Community Safety Team to work with Safeguarding Adults Board on SAR and ensure Reading CSP is sighted on themes arising from this.
- n. An audit of existing Closure Order cases should be undertaken with Adult Social Care to review what, if any safeguarding processes were followed.
- o. Implement a programme of training with reference to 'Beyond the Line', a recent report on cuckooing, produced by the North West Regional Organised Crime Unit and University of Leeds.
- p. Bi-annual reports should be received by both the CSP and West of Berkshire Safeguarding Adults Board.

Jason also reported that work would be undertaken with partners to look at how those responsible for the behaviour leading to the closure orders were dealt with to prevent them from just relocating to another property and causing the same problems again. Partners were also being asked to identify alternatives to closure orders where possible. Jason explained that a Multi-Agency Panel (MAP) would usually consider the case for a closure order and could also refer the property to other services if that were more appropriate.

AGREED:

- (1) That the recommendations set out in full in Section 77 of the report be agreed;**
- (2) That a further report be submitted to the CSP in July 2025.**

8. COMBATTING DRUGS PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Jason Kew reported that the Combatting Drugs Partnership (CDP) was using a whole system approach to reduce supply and demand for drugs and improve recovery rates. A new executive group had been agreed with membership including the PCC and Directors of Public Health, plus appropriate representatives from partner groups.

Jason also gave an update on the work being carried out locally:

- Work was being undertaken on provision of rehabilitation at home, which had shown some good results and was considerably less expensive than residential rehabilitation. A further report on this option would be submitted to a future meeting of the CSP.
- Alcohol related deaths had decreased significantly, which bucked the national trend. This could be attributed to the work carried out by the ICB-led Alcohol Professionals Network which had improved access to services.
- Heroin supply had decreased in purity, with the addition of nitazines (synthetic opioids) that could lead to increased risks for users. Nitazines were also being added to other drugs. However, cocaine had been increasing in purity.
- Thames Valley Police were carrying naloxone, which could help to reduce deaths from accidental overdoses.
- A recent study had shown that the provision of safe inhalation pipes alongside needle exchanges had led to an increase in the number of people entering treatment for the first time, as they could be given information on services available at the same time.
- Partners were investigating the feasibility of providing Buvidal in Reading. This was a monthly injection that removed the craving for opiates, stabilising users and giving them the opportunity to access further treatment.
- The top 10% of drug users in Reading were responsible for 63% of acquisitive crime. A reduction in these users would therefore lead to a corresponding decrease in crime.

The Group noted that as people became aware of successful referrals for drug users, more would come forward to access treatment. Jason Kew also reported that, further to data collected by the ambulance service on drug hotspots, partners were looking into the feasibility of providing naloxone in public defibrillator boxes and noted that project management resources would be needed in order to progress this further.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

9. YOUTH JUSTICE HIS MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE PROBATION (HMIP) UPDATE

Ollie Foxell gave a presentation on the review of the Youth Justice Service by His Majesty's Inspectorate Probation. This set out the action plan that had been agreed following the inspection and which included actions to address the three themes of high-level organisation, court work and out-of-court work. He added that much of the good work that had been carried out by the service had not been recorded by the retrospective inspection.

Jo Middlemass asked that the Youth Service identify what the CSP as a body could do to support them, as distinct from the support offered by each of the individual partners. John Ennis explained the support offered by the Probation Service. Rachel Spencer noted that there used to be funding available from the One Reading partnership, and that it would be worth checking if this was still the case.

Ollie noted that the significant lack of resources impacted on the ability to provide a strong prevention offer, which would target young people before they entered the Youth Justice system.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

10. DOMESTIC HOMICIDE REVIEW RESPONSE

Jason Murphy reported that, following a recent Domestic Homicide Review, the Home Office had made recommendations to improve the current process. A small task and finish group had been set up to discuss the implementation of the recommendations and a further report would be submitted to the CSP.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

11. PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP

Stephen Czajewski, Thames Valley Police, reported that the Violence Reduction Units had now become the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Partnership and partners were being asked to deliver more across a wider brief. The partnership would be launched in Spring 2025.

Jason Murphy added that Brighter Futures for Children had been fully involved in the process as there was overlap with prevention for 8 to 18-year-olds about whom there were concerns, but had not yet passed the threshold for intervention. Young Futures would be used to create hubs, similar to Sure Start provision for younger children, where services could be accessed. Stephen would circulate a briefing note on the new service once it was available and would be happy to convene a briefing meeting should it be required. A further report would be submitted to a future SCP meeting.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

12. CSP ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PUBLIC AND FOR THE HOUSING, NEIGHBOURHOODS & LEISURE COMMITTEE

Jo Middlemass reported that the CSP report would be submitted to the meeting of the Housing, Neighbourhoods and Leisure Committee to be held on 9 July 2025. Officers were also intending to produce an annual report for the public, which would also be submitted to the Committee in July, in order to lead into the annual community safety survey.

AGREED: That the timetable for reporting the annual Community Safety Partnership reports be agreed.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jason Murphy reminded the Group that the Boothbus mobile music studio for young people would be in Coronation Square today at 1.00pm.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

11. DATES OF FUTURE MEETING

The next meetings for 2023/24 would take place on:
3 April 2025

All meetings start at 9.30am, in the Council Chamber, Civic Offices.

(The meeting commenced closed at 11.59am)