

COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP EXECUTIVE GROUP – 19 FEBRUARY 2026

Present:

Cllr Karen Rowland	Lead Councillor for Environmental Services & Community Safety, RBC (Chair)
Professor Keith Brown OBE	Invited guest
Cllr Terry	Leader, RBC
Melissa Wise	Executive Director of Social Care and Health
Jo Middlemass	Community Safety and Enablement Manager, RBC
Sarah Gardner	Community Safety, RBC
Zoe Hanim	Prevent/Channel Lead, RBC
Amanda Nyeke	RBC
Lynne Mason	RBC
Elizabeth Palmer	TVP
Gassan Shaladan	TVP
Hannah Powell	Probation Service
Michael Greenway	OPCC
Neil Whitieman	Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS)
Martin Chester	South Central Ambulance Service
Lianne Lewis	Safeguarding Adults Berkshire West, BOB ICB
Rachel Spencer	RVA
Carly Newman	Young Voices (for items 7-10)
Julie Quarmby	Committee Services, RBC

Apologies:

Lara Patel	Executive Director of Children's Services, RBC
Sally Andersen	RBC
Jill Marston	RBC
Bryony Hall	RBC
Alastair Harsant	RBC
Matt Pearce	RBC
Jonny Bradish	RBC
Matt Golledge	RBC
Jason Kew	RBC
Martin White	RBC
Colin Hudson	Thames Valley Police (Vice-Chair)
Stephen Leonard	TVP
Chantal Foster	Probation Service
Gail Muirhead	Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Service (RBFRS)
Kirsten Willis-Drewett	SCAS
Kathy Kelly	BOB ICB

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

2. SAFEGUARDING ADULTS - FINANCES AND WELFARE

Professor Keith Brown OBE attended the meeting to give a presentation on the effects of adult mental capacity on the ability to make decisions, particularly around financial and medical matters, and how best vulnerable adults could be safeguarded. Keith explained that

whilst many people were capable of making day-to-day decisions, they might not have the capacity to make more complex decisions. This could be important, particularly when it came to consent, medical treatment and financial matters, and the amount of assistance an individual required would be specific to each decision.

Keith explained how having a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) could help, why they could potentially reduce an individual's autonomy, and why it would be useful for all adults to have one in case of future emergencies. He set out several steps that could be taken, in consultation with banks, to help vulnerable people to stay in control of their finances while reducing their exposure to fraud, including setting daily withdrawal limits, capping international payments, spreading money across more than one account and changing bank cards yearly.

The Group discussed the presentation and noted that there was considerable advice available that could be added to, or sign-posted from the CSP website in liaison with the Safeguarding Adults Board. There would also be value in training front-line staff to be more aware of the issues.

AGREED: That Professor Keith Brown be thanked for an interesting and informative presentation.

3. COMMUNITY COHESION - HOW CAN WE SUPPORT COMMUNITIES TO FEEL SAFE?

Sarah Gardner gave a presentation updating the Group on progress that had been made to identify efficient methods of communicating with communities during high-risk events or activities. Following conversations with community leaders, Thames Valley Police, Prevent and Reading Borough Council, the following recommendations had been proposed:

- Create an effective communications process with a manageable network of representatives.
- CSP to be responsible for the management of the register of representatives.
- Organise an event with Community Leaders during Spring 2026 to start to building resilience together.

Sarah explained that reading Voluntary Action had been working with groups to promote safety at various events that would be taking place over the summer. Zoe Hanim reported that she had been delivering Prevent training to the Voluntary Sector. Gasson Shaladan added that Thames Valley Police were working to ensure that communications across Berkshire West were clear in intent and purpose.

AGREED: That the structure of the work needs to be fed to RBC Leadership for awareness of the project and that the recommendations be endorsed.

4. PREVENT UPDATE

Zoe Hanim gave a presentation giving an update on Prevent activity during January 2026 against the 2025-26 Prevent Action Plan. This included:

- Submitting a Preventing Radicalisation Fund bid,.
- A SEND specialist had joined the Channel Panel.
- Home Office training had been rolled out (special permission had been granted to allow Voluntary Sector members to be trained).
- Developing a training needs analysis template for schools.
- Updating the Safe Venue Hire checklist.

- A meeting of the Community Safety Communications Group on 21 January 2026.
- Online Safety Day on 10 February 2026.
- Development of the Sanctuary Strategy and Action Plan.
- Roll out of mandatory Prevent Awareness e-learning to Children's Services staff for completion by 31 March 2026.

Zoe added that there had been an increase in referrals, with approximately 10% going to Prevent. Rachel Spencer added that the Voluntary Sector and Prevent had discussed the impact of neurodiversity as a factor in making individuals more vulnerable to grooming.

AGREED: That the progress against the 2025-26 Prevent Action Plan be noted.

5. COMMUNITY SAFETY SURVEY AND YOUNG VOICES SURVEY

Sarah Gardner reported on the results of the 2025 Community Safety Strategy which ran between 2 July and 31 August 2025. 725 people had responded to the 2025 survey, compared to 744 in 2024, with the majority of people completing the survey online.

Sarah also reported on the Young Voices Survey which ran between 12 June and 1 August 2025. This had been split into a full and mini survey. 683 people responded to the full survey, and 54 responded to the mini survey. 200 young people were also surveyed during in-person workshop sessions, led by [Young Voices](#). In total 937 young people shared their views on safety.

The Surveys had raised several key points:

Community Safety Survey

- Town Centre issues – including aggressive begging, drug dealing, ASB and women's safety. Approval was sought for the creation of a Town Centre Safety Group to be led by Thames Valley Police's (TVP) Local Policing Team with Colin Hudson reporting back to the CSP on progress with the Group.
- Reckless and dangerous riding of e-bikes and e-scooters. A Reading borough-wide Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) was being implemented on 24 March 2026 to address ASB, including using Electric Scooters or any type of Electric Bike in an anti-social, malicious and/or dangerous manner in a public place..
- Drug dealing and related ASB. In addition to the problem-solving activity at a local level, led through Safer Neighbourhood Forums, this would be fed into the Strategic Needs Assessment as part of the development of the new Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy 2026-2029.
- Lack of Police presence in neighbourhoods. This would be considered as part of the development of the new Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy 2026-2029.
- Retail crime. There were several Retail Operations underway across Reading and the effectiveness of these would be fed into the Strategic Needs Assessment as part of the development of the new Community Safety and Serious Violence Strategy 2026-2029.
- Environmental issues. Five dedicated environmental enforcement officers had been introduced in September 2025 to patrol hotspot areas daily—including weekends and public holidays—to deter environmental offences around litter, fly-tipping and waste duty of care infractions. (including issuing fines).

Young Voices Survey

- Further Young Voices Safety Summits to be held annually, bringing young people into contact with decision-makers and support services together.
- Continuing work to improve safety in public spaces:
 - Parks and Open Spaces project (building on the pilot in Prospect Park) – looking at how safe public spaces are for young people.
 - A safe shops scheme in partnership with The Oracle (based on the Ask for Angela model) to equip security guards to be safe, trusted adults for young people.
 - A ‘Safety Warden’ scheme on buses and at bus stop with Reading Buses, similar to the above.
 - Fire safety – education and communications in partnership with Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service relating to recent cases of fire setting and ritualistic burning of school books at the end of the year.
- Exploring ways to make it easier for young people to report crime and feel confident of the outcomes.
- Hate Crime and ASB – misconceptions and reporting. Understanding young people’s experiences of hate crimes (and what they defined as hate crime) in collaboration with RBC’s Anti-Social Behaviour/Safer Public Realm Teams and partners.
- Further development work to explore the interplay between online harm (focus of Safety Summit 2024) and offline harm (focus of Safety Summit 2025) and how these were interlinked for young people – understanding that this relationship may be different for adults.

Recommendations on actions to improve the 2026 Surveys

Community Safety Survey recommendations

- **Improve response rate** by engaging with a wider group of people, having better engagement with communities and planning more face-to-face engagement. SNF Chairs highlighted a need for more paper surveys.
- **Improve demographic spread** by using trusted representatives (‘Champions’) who could engage with residents through their existing networks – this could include SNF Chairs, Ward Councillors, Housing Officers. SNF Chairs had previously advised that SNF distribution lists could be a way to promote the survey.
- **Review the dates of the survey** – ensuring we could meet our other statutory obligations and capture the results to feed into programmes of work. SNF Chairs had proposed a longer lead-in time that would enable better engagement and would allow us to exploit summer fetes and other activities often held in June.
- **Review questions** – ensuring we could maintain statistical robustness.

Young Voices Survey recommendations

- **School spread and non-school representation (PRU and AP etc)** – making sure young people across all schools, and in non-school/alternative settings were represented in the survey.
- **Age spread** - especially making sure older young people (i.e. 17-25) were better represented in future years via closer collaboration with colleges, workplaces, apprenticeship providers.
- **Better systems to capture and analyse data**, i.e. demographic based.
- **Increasing in-person opportunities to respond** – especially through professionals who worked with young people who would otherwise not be represented.

- **Review and refine questions to ensure they were understandable to young people and captured the experiences we wanted to hear.** Making sure set answer options were representative of the responses young people wanted to give and that 'free text' responses could be better analysed.

Longer term development:

- **Branded platform to respond.**
- **Better/quicker follow-up and 'we heard and we're doing' opportunities** - being able to 'prove' that their feedback has been heard and respected outside of YV structures (other people in power etc) to increase accountability and progress.

AGREED:

- (1) **That the position be noted;**
- (2) **That the recommendations set out above be agreed.**

6. OPCC POLICING REFORM WHITE PAPER & PARTNERSHIP FUND UPDATE

Mike Greenway (OPCC) submitted a report on the OPCC Policing Reform White Papers and the Partnership Fund.

Mike explained that the Government's had published a White Paper **From Local to National: A New Model for Policing** in late January 2026, which set out a proposed new model for policing that would be rooted in local communities and focused on their needs; be more coherent in the way it was organised; more consistent in achieving high standards; and more capable in terms of its workforce, technology, use of data and ability to prevent crime. There was also an ambition to create a national police force (National Police Service) bringing together several current national policing bodies. The focus of the NPS would be on providing a single source strategic leadership for the police service, setting stronger national standards, providing enabling and support services to local policing and a stronger ability to tackle terrorism and serious and organised crime. In addition, there would be a review of the police funding formula and the distribution of police funding once the reforms were underway.

The report explained that the move to end the roles of Police and Crime Commissioners by 1 May 2028 was part of the Government's devolution programme and the expansion of mayoral strategic authorities across the country. For areas that did not have specific mayoral arrangements established by 1 May 2028, new Policing and Crime Boards were expected to be created, led by local authority leaders covering that area. For the Thames Valley area, discussions were underway looking at the options available.

OPCC Partnership Fund

Mike also updated the Group on the **OPCC Partnership Fund**, and in particular allocations that had been provisionally approved for 2027/28. The OPCC had requested all CSPs develop and put forward proposals for their remaining notional allocations of the Partnership Fund up to March 2028 by 28 February 2026. This position had been updated as part of setting the force budget and CSPs had now been provided with a reduced allocation (40%) for financial year 2027/28, which required them to reprioritise project allocations for that year, and propose new projects for 2027/28 should there be any surplus funding following that reprioritisation. For those projects already approved, the OPCC had confirmed funding commitments for the remainder of 2025/26, and for 2026/27.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

7. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP HIGHLIGHT REPORT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE HIGHLIGHT REPORTS

Sarah Gardner gave an update on the progress of the workstreams, activities and projects since 1 December 2025. She reported that Initial scoping discussions for a Town Centre Crime and Safety Steering Group had been held on 10 December 2025 with TVP, RBC, BID, street pastor attendance. The Group would cover the BID, Night Time Economy, Violence Against Women & Girls, PSPO implementation, infrastructure/environment, support, crime/safety, communication/engagement. A copy of the proposed Terms of reference was submitted for approval.

Sarah also reported that the launch of the Public Spaces Protection Order was on track, with a five-week communications countdown in place.

Sarah presented the Domestic Abuse update report, and explained that there was one live Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) which had been commissioned for Case A and which should have a chair in place by April 2026. Case G had been submitted for clarity and did not meet the criteria for a DHR. A supplier had been procured for the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and work was underway to collate data for the SNA.

AGREED:

- (1) That the reports be noted;**
- (2) That the Terms of reference for the Town Centre Crime and Safety Steering Group be agreed.**

8. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE EXECUTIVE GROUP MEETING AND MEMBERSHIP

Sarah Gardner submitted a report explaining that the Group had completed a trial where the Meetings had been organised in two parts: (i) a closed section for statutory partners to discuss statutory matters and (ii) an open part for community representatives to attend and share partner updates. It had been noted that, due to the importance and detail of statutory discussions in the closed part of the meeting, there had not been sufficient time left available in the 'open' part, which had reduced the value for those community representatives attending. It had also been difficult for some of the representatives to attend the meetings during the morning. The report therefore recommended that the open meetings no longer take place. To ensure community and partner voices were still heard by the Executive Group SNF Chairs would agree priorities at each Safer Reading Neighbourhood Forum, which would then be shared with the Executive Group as a written report, Young Voices representative Carly Newman would become a full member of the Executive Group with the caveat that she not attend confidential Prevent discussions and an ACRE representative would be offered the opportunity to share updates into the Executive Group.

AGREED:

- (1) That the open part of the meeting be discontinued;**
- (2) That Carly Newman become a full member of the Executive Group.**

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Jo Middlemass introduced Hannah Powell, the new Probation Services representative on the Group.

Councillor Rowland and Jo Middlemass would review the attendance at meetings to ensure that all partners were able to engage with the Group.

AGREED: That the position be noted.

10. DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting for 2025/26 would take place on:

16 April 2026

Provisional dates for the 2026/27 Municipal Year:

2 July 2026

24 September 2026

5 November 2026

25 February 2027

15 April 2027

All meetings start at 9.30am, venue to be confirmed.

(The meeting closed at 11.38 am)