

**COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP
16 NOVEMBER 2021**

**COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP – COMMUNITY SAFETY
WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Dennis Knowles
Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health,
Regulation and Housing (Chair East & Mid Devon CSP)

Reason for Report and Recommendations: To provide members with an overview of the discussions of its Working Group on Community Safety and recommendations that group is putting forward.

Recommendation: That members agree the recommendations of the Working Group as follows:

- 1. That members have the opportunity to complete the Mental Health First Aid Training in order to enhance and support their community liaison role within communities**
- 2. That members have the opportunity to receive a regular Community Safety Partnership (CSP) quarterly updates to assist them keep abreast of current CSP themes, projects and achievements.**
- 3. Officers to provide members with a briefing on Modern Slavery with a local flavour by March 2022**
- 4. Members agree that that officers review Mid Devon District Council becoming a ‘Trauma Informed Council’ and potentially adopt a trauma informed approach to future service delivery, which may be based on the Plymouth Trauma Informed City model or other examples and provide a subsequent paper for members to review at its January meeting**

Recommendations 1-3 refer to all members of the Council and recommendation 4 refers to members of this PDG.

Financial Implications: There is no direct financial implications arising from this report aside from the additional cost to cover the cost of training in relation to Mental Health First Aid Training for Members and Trauma Informed Training for Staff. The Council already has access to online Mental Health First Aid training so cost may be minimal and could be met from the corporate or member training budgets if required.

Budget and Policy Framework: Financial implications are discussed above. There are no policy implications at this stage. Recommendation 4 is likely to give rise to new policy considerations but they will be discussed as part of the proposed future paper.

Legal Implications: None directly arising from this report.

Risk Assessment: There is a risk to the Council if it does not engage with the Community Safety Partnership (which has MDDC and East Devon District Council member representation) in respect of failing to meet statutory duties. In turn, the ability of the partnership to provide effective partnership working to reduce crime and disorder in our community is potentially reduced and these recommendations reflect the positive role and impact that our elected members can have in respect of community safety issues.

Equality Impact Assessment: There are no policy recommendations as a result of this report or key decisions therefore no equality impact assessment is required. Nonetheless, it is helpful to recognise the CSP Plan and the wider purpose of the CSP itself is to help protect or support some of the most vulnerable persons in our community.

Relationship to Corporate Plan: [start text here and continue without indenting]

Impact on Climate Change: [start text here and continue without indenting]

1.0 Introduction/Background

1.1 The Community Policy Development Group had expressed a concern with Sexual Violence against Women and had formed the Working Group to look at the current priorities of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and how this looked to prevent harm to women and girls.

1.2 Two working group meetings were held, the first on 30 June 2021 and the second on 23 August 2021. Attendees from the PDG and members of the working group were:

Cllr M E Squires who was elected Chair,
Cllr E M Andrews,
Cllr C Collis,
Cllr W Burke, and
Cllr B Holdman.

1.3 Cllr D J Knowles also attended in his Cabinet lead capacity.

1.4 The group was supported by the following officers:

Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing, and
Julia Ryder, Specialist Lead for Community Safety & Emergency Planning

2.0 **Current Community Safety Partnership Priorities**

2.1 Information relating to the current CSP priorities was provided and a discussion held to enable Members to understand the process of how these were identified and prioritised. This is based on gathering data from a wide range of agencies and a great deal of data relating to police logs and subsequent crimes recorded. There is also a significant link to the priorities within the Police & Crime Commissioners Police & Crime Plan.

2.2 The current, adopted 2021/22 CSP Priorities are as follows:

- Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Problem Drink and Drug Use
- Violent Crime
- Exploitation – Including online safety and modern slavery
- Youth Risk and Vulnerability

3.0 **Working Group considerations**

3.1 The Working Group recognised that these priorities will incorporate the impact of violence towards women and girls.

3.2 It was acknowledged that the current night time economy in Mid Devon was still re-establishing following the closures of pubs and nightclubs during the pandemic lockdown periods. It was noted by the Working Group that CCTV plays a significant role in supporting public safety during both the day and night times in Mid Devon Town Centres

3.3 Public access to the Tiverton Police Station in order to report issues was discussed and the indication that the Police & Crime Commissioner was investigating the opportunity to reopen the public access was investigated, with feedback that this is still a possibility in the longer-run.

3.3 During the pandemic support agencies and police have seen a significant rise in the number of victims coming forward to report sexual and domestic abuse and seek support. The new Domestic Abuse Act 2021 gives local authorities new responsibilities to protect victims by the provision of supported accommodation. Mid Devon is represented at the new Devon Domestic Abuse Partnership that is working to deliver these new responsibilities across Devon. A full report on safe accommodation was provided at the September PDG meeting.

3.4 It was discussed and acknowledged how much mental health, in all areas of society, have been impacted by the pandemic and mental health is a thread through many of the priority areas of the CSP work. Mental Health First Aid

Training is currently offered to MDDC staff and it was discussed how elected members could make positive use of this knowledge as part of their community liaison role if they also undertook the training.

- 3.5 The Working Group trialled receiving email updates on CSP priority related topics for a 6-week period. On reflection the Working Group felt that the topics were too wide-ranging and the volume of information too high to be of value on a continuous basis. It was felt a monthly or quarterly CSP summary update would be more beneficial to members.
- 3.6 The Working Group were informed of the close working relationship between the CSP and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall and were encouraged to provide feedback to the consultation for the new Police & Crime Plan that was at that point in time.
- 3.7 The Working Group were provided with information relating to Modern Slavery and the implications of this locally within Mid Devon. Consideration was given to the idea of a Modern Slavery Champion who would promote activities and information within the council and externally within communities. On reflection the Members felt that this was too big a role for an Elected Member to hold on top of their council commitments.
- 3.8 The Specialist Lead Community Safety & Emergency Planning explained that Community Safety Partnership aimed to be a 'trauma informed' group meaning that all staff involved would receive a minimum standard of training to enable awareness of past trauma when supporting and dealing with members of the public and staff. Trauma is often the underlying factor to physical and mental health issues, substance addiction, domestic abuse, violence and vulnerability to exploitation. This has significant impact on communication and socialisation skills and behaviours.
- 3.9 It was suggested that the Council could investigate becoming a recognised trauma informed council, the first in Devon. Plymouth is a trauma informed City and this could be taken as the base model, albeit recognising Plymouth is a unitary, upper-tier Local Authority with wider responsibilities. This would assist officers and members in becoming more empathetic to customers, communities and staff needs and enable better support to those that could benefit from improved understanding by service providers.

4.0 Summary

- 4.1 The initial purpose of the Working Group was to establish if there is further opportunity to develop and support Community Safety work with regard to the Safety of Women and Girls. The current priorities of the CSP incorporate work that broadly covers safety to all in communities. The Sexual Violence &

Domestic Violence and Abuse Forum hosted by the CSP does include projects to directly address violence towards women and girls.

- 4.2 New legislation from the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the forthcoming Serious Violence Duty will require local authorities and partner agencies to formulate partnership responses which will certainly impact on protecting women and girls in a positive way.
- 4.3 It was noted that resources, both staffing and financial, for the CSP are limited. From 2022/23 the Police & Crime Commissioner has withdrawn automatic funding for all CSPs in Devon & Cornwall. This means additional resource is required to formulate funding applications to the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner or other funding sources in order to fund future project work supported by the CSP.

5.0 Recommendations from the Working Group

- 5.1 The following points are the recommendations from the Working Group to the PDG for consideration and approval.
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 3. Officers to provide members with a briefing on Modern Slavery with a local flavour by March 2022
 4. Members agree that that officers review Mid Devon District Council becoming a 'Trauma Informed Council' and potentially adopt a trauma informed approach to future service delivery, which may be based on the Plymouth Trauma Informed City model or other examples and provide a subsequent paper for members to review at its January meeting

Contact for more Information: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk or Cllr Margaret Squires, CPDG member and chair of the CPDG Community Safety Working Group msquires@middevon.gov.uk

Circulation of the Report:

Cabinet Member for Community Well Being (Cllr Dennis Knowles)
Members of the Community Policy Development Group
All Leadership Team
All Corporate Management Team
All Operations Managers

List of Background Papers:

More information on Plymouth City Council as a Trauma-informed Council is available here:

<https://www.plymouth.gov.uk/adultsandchildrensocialcare/childrensocialcare/academic/socialworkplymouth/informationandresourcespractitioners/traumainformedpractice>

CSP Priorities Report 2021-2022 – Community Policy Development Group 23 March 2021