

Report for: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 09 January 2024

Subject: **SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY STRATEGY**

Cabinet Member: Councillor David Wulff, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure

Responsible Officer: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

Exempt: None

Wards Affected: All

Enclosures: Annex A – Devon County Council Impact Assessment including Equality Assessment

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

The purpose of this report is to advise members on progress with the implementation of the new Serious Violence Duty and to approve the priorities and governance arrangements with regard to the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-2029.

Recommendations:

- 1. That Cabinet approve the overarching statements of intent (Priorities 1-6) within the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and Impact Assessment set out in Section 3.7 and Annex A of this report respectively to enable publication of the strategy as required by 31 January 2024.**
- 2. That Cabinet recommend Council adopt the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and wider governance arrangements in due course to embed the strategy within the Council policy framework to enable delivery.**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Serious Violence Duty (the SV Duty) was introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSC Act) and commenced on 31 January 2023.
- 1.2 The SV Duty requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.
- 1.3 The core elements of the SV Duty are:
 - To establish a local serious violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)
 - To prepare, publish and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence
 - To review and revise the strategy as required.
- 1.4 District Councils and their Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) specifically are named as specified authorities in the duty. There is a legal requirement for a strategy for the area to be published by **31 January 2024**. This specific requirement is set out in The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022.
- 1.5 In common with the other district level CSPs in Devon, the East and Mid Devon CSP is a member of the Safer Devon Partnership (Devon County Council upper tier CSP) who are leading the strategy for Devon. They have worked closely with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop the governance framework for delivery of the duty.

2 Governance arrangements

- 2.1 In Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, a peninsula-wide partnership arrangement already exists to actively tackle serious violence. The Duty will strengthen the region's Serious Violence Prevention Programme (SVPP), mandating regional collaboration via multi-agency delivery. CSPs agreed a Serious Violence Prevention Concordat which sets out a shared commitment to collaborate, to prevent and reduce serious violence across the Peninsula.
- 2.2 Each of the CSPs have therefore already started to develop a local response to serious violence, informed by the Peninsula Strategic Needs Assessment, local Strategic Needs Assessments and other information provided by CSP partners.
- 2.3 Looking ahead, delivery and decision-making associated with core elements of the SV Duty will be met through our local collaboration with the upper-tier Safer Devon Partnership CSP this will allow existing partnerships to tailor their response to serious violence to meet local need. This will also enable the CSPs to report back to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in

line with their requirements and timetable. The OPCC will undertake the administration of official reporting, as per Home Office funding requirements.

- 2.4 Strategic overview and monitoring of the SV Duty at a Peninsula level will be provided by the 'Strategic Serious Violence Prevention Partnership' (Strategic Group). This group will bring together representatives from across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to ensure that the strategic approach is sustainable, and evidence based, and also delivers the outcomes required to meet the needs of the regional community.
- 2.5 The Strategic Group will be chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner as designated convener and serviced by the OPCC's Serious Violence Prevention Team, with specialist support from the office's Governance Team as required.
- 2.6 The purpose of the Strategic Group will be:
- To facilitate and co-ordinate the overall strategic direction of serious violence prevention across the Peninsula; particularly to ensure consistency between the respective Community Safety Partnerships, in such a way that supports sustainability.
 - To provide strategic oversight of the core elements of the SV Duty, and assurance of CSP delivery against the SV Duty.
 - To identify opportunities for collaboration and enable these opportunities as far as possible.
 - To consider and manage strategic risks in relation to delivery of the SV Duty – and emerging gaps and threats.
 - To share best practice, both within and outside of Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly
 - To encourage innovation and identify opportunities for pilots, test and learn projects, and evidence-based practice.
 - To identify and develop opportunities for improvements to data and information sharing across the Peninsula.
 - To align with contiguous Peninsular level portfolios (e.g. the Local Criminal Justice Board)
 - To identify and leverage additional funding opportunities, both regionally and nationally, through joint procurement, grant funding and other avenues.
- 2.7 In line with the SV Duty, the Strategic Group must have each of the specified authorities represented, in addition to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The East and Mid Devon CSP will therefore be included in the membership through the CSP chair and there are still discussions needed to identify the appropriate Local Authority representative for the peninsula.

3 Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

Devon level collaboration and approach

- 3.1 The Preventing Serious Violence Strategy outlines Safer Devon's framework for preventing and reducing serious violence in Devon. As required under the legislation and statutory guidance, the strategy is grounded in a public health

response to violence; recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention.

3.2 Work has been completed through the SDP to commission the SNA and agree the following core strategy components:

- Overall vision
- Definition of violence
- Priorities and intended impacts for work to prevent violence
- Focus area
- Principles and timeline for a delivery plan

3.3 The above components were agreed at the SDP Executive meeting including all CSPs across Devon on 22 November 2023. Work has now commenced to produce a public-facing strategy publication incorporating these components to meet the required publication deadline of 31 January 2024. In meantime, each CSP is seeking a relevant local democratic decision on the strategy priorities which enable the SDP to provide Home Office assurance on our Devon level agreement and framework for a collaborative approach required to meet the SV Duty.

Definition of violence

3.4 The SDP have agreed the following definition of violence within the proposed strategy:

The intentional use of physical, sexual or psychological force or power (including threats of violence, and including coercive and controlling behaviour).

Vision, focus and priorities

3.5 The strategy vision has been defined as:

Our vision is for our residents, families and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the fear and experience of violence. We will work with our communities to prevent harms as early as possible, address the impacts of harms that have occurred, and work to strengthen people's wellbeing, resilience and opportunities in life.

3.6 The defined 'focus areas' which are in keeping with the SV Duty focus on 'public space youth violence' are weapons-related violence and drug related criminal activities with a strong emphasis on young people, and are reflective of the findings around serious violence identified in the SNA.

3.7 The strategy priorities outline the overarching statements of intent which have been informed in more detail by the needs assessment. Each priority will be accompanied by an impact, outlining what change is anticipated in our communities as a result of delivering work against the priorities.

- Priority 1 - work towards **trauma-informed, shame-competent and neurodivergence-aware systems**

- Priority 2 - **respond to young people and adults who are at greatest risk of involvement in violence** to take account of their individual needs and experiences, including the likelihood of intersecting needs and the individual ways needs may present.
- Priority 3 - strengthen our understanding and response to **contextual harms, including risks from peer groups and from exploitation.**
- Priority 4 - strengthen our **targeted offer for families, including early years and early help**
- Priority 5 - **challenge the normalisation of violence in young people** and supporting them to develop healthy relationships, both intimate partner and peer to peer.
- Priority 6 - **create inclusive, supportive education environments where all young people** can thrive, with a focus on strengthening their wellbeing, resilience and opportunities

3.8 Performance will be reported back to the Safer Devon Partnership who will formally report to the OPCC. The East and Mid Devon CSP will continue to deliver work that will support the Devon level SV strategy and will inform a key update of the next iteration of our local CSP Action Plan from April 2024.

4 SV Duty funding

4.1 The Home Office has provided limited funding for 23/24 and set out an indicative, higher level of support for 24/25 to specified authorities to prepare for and deliver the Duty. As the 'local Policing Body', the OPCC receives the funding and is responsible for meeting Home Office reporting and oversight responsibilities to ensure the funding is spent appropriately.

4.2 Funding associated with the SV Duty will be devolved to each upper-tier Community Safety Partnership (SDP in Devon). The SDP are responsible for ensuring that specified authorities including District CSPs can access this funding to support them to meet the duty with opportunities within this approach of working collaboratively across Devon. The SDP will be required to agree to the terms of a Grant Agreement with the OPCC.

4.3 Non-labour funding (for interventions) will be allocated by an agreed funding formula; labour funding (for staff to deliver the SV Duty) will be allocated equally between the four upper tier CSPs. Whilst this may be subject to refinement, the Home Office has provided indicative funding levels for 24/25, under a total of £657,300. This will be devolved as follows:

Community Safety Partnership	Non-labour funding (split by formula)		Labour funding
Safer Cornwall (including Safer Scilly)	25%	£125,804.25	£38,520
Safer Plymouth	26%	£130,836.42	£38,520
Safer Torbay	19%	£95,611.23	£38,520
Safer Devon	30%	£150,965.00	£38,520

4.4 As part of the SDP Executive Board our CSP will be involved in agreeing the distribution of the Safer Devon element of the funding. The labour costs will be utilised at SDP level to support the delivery of the Strategic Needs assessment and strategy development.

4.5 There is currently no allocation of funding from the Home Office post 2024/25.

5 Conclusion

5.1 In order to discharge our duties under the SV Duty we are required to agree and publish a strategy and governance arrangements that underpin delivery going forward. The core components Devon Strategy as set out above have been developed by the SDP including East and Mid Devon CSP as SDP Executive members. The strategy utilises a public health approach over the next five years to address the key areas identified through the SNA.

6 Recommendations

6.1 In the context of the above, the following recommendations are made:

1. That Cabinet approve the overarching statements of intent (Priorities 1-6) within the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and Impact Assessment set out in Section 3.7 and Annex A of this report respectively to enable publication of the strategy as required by 31 January 2024.
2. That Cabinet recommend Council adopt the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and wider governance arrangements in due course to embed the strategy within the Council policy framework to enable delivery.

Financial Implications

These are set out in Section 4 above.

Legal Implications

These are set out in Section 1 with further information on governance set out in Section 2 above.

Risk Assessment

There is a risk that if the Devon strategy and in particular the overarching statements of intent (Priorities 1-6) are not agreed by CSPs then a collaborative strategy for Devon cannot be published by the deadline of the 31 January 2024. Consequently, all specified authorities including the Council would not be complying with the legal SV duty and funding may not be provided by the Home Office.

Impact on Climate Change

None directly arising from the report.

Equalities Impact Assessment

For consistency, a single EIA is required for this Devon-level document. The SDP have completed this overarching assessment against the strategy priorities and intended impacts using the Devon County Council (DCC) Impact template which is attached for reference in Annex A.

The overarching vision and aims underpinning the strategy is for residents, families and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the fear and experience of violence. It sets out to work with our communities to prevent harms as early as possible, address the impacts of harms that have occurred, and work to strengthen people's wellbeing, resilience and opportunities in life.

In achieving the above, the strategy adopts a public-health led methodology which is preventative and targeted as required by legislation. It is therefore intended to provide a framework for actions and interventions that support some of the most vulnerable or at risk persons in society and takes a trauma-informed approach. Consequently, the strategy accords with public sector equality duty and proactively seeks to address needs of people who are disadvantaged or suffer inequality as a result of serious violence.

The DCC impact assessment is much broader than just an equality analysis and covers a level of economic analysis, human rights information and environmental analysis. It also provides an in-depth summary of the strategy stakeholders, their interest and potential impacts. As such, it provides helpful additional contextual information on the strategy as well as setting out how the public sector equality duty has been met. The assessment was supported by district colleagues in Teignbridge and Exeter. It will remain a draft document until DCC have completed their formal strategy adoption process.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

Communities are a priority for the Council and this includes seeking opportunities to address public health issues and disparities to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Mid Devon.

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 19 Dec 2023

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 19 Dec 2023

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe

Agreed by or on behalf of the Chief Executive/Corporate Director

Date: 07 December 2023

Performance and risk: Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 11/12/2023

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing
Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk.
Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

Statutory Guidance on Serious Violence Duty
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>