

**Report for:** CABINET

---

Date of Meeting:	2 April 2024
Subject:	<b>DEVON PREVENTING SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY 2024-29</b>
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 Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

## **Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations**

On the 9 January 2024, Cabinet approved the overarching statements of intent within the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and its Impact Assessment together with the overarching governance arrangements under the new Serious Violence Duty. This enabled publication of the Devon-wide strategy to be completed by 31 January 2024 as required. The final published document can be found at <https://saferdevon.co.uk/safetypartner/uploads/2024/02/Serious-Violence-Strategy-v.Final-2024.01.31-for-publishing.pdf> and is also attached in full in Annex A.

At the January meeting, Cabinet further resolved:

*That the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 and wider governance arrangements is brought back to the Community Policy Development Group and Cabinet in due course to embed the strategy within the Council policy framework to enable delivery.*

The purpose of this report is to meet the above resolution and enable the Community PDG to make a forward recommendation for adoption of the strategy. As a new strategy within the policy framework it will require full Council approval to adopt.

### **Recommendation:**

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council the adoption the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 as attached in Annex A to enable delivery by as appropriate by the Council's Community Safety Partnership (as a specified authority under the Serious Violence Duty).

## 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 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 was a legal requirement for a strategy for the area to be published by **31 January 2024**. This requirement is set out in The Prevention and Reduction of Serious Violence (Strategies etc.) Regulations 2022 and was achieved as described in the report summary.
- 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 adopted 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. More information on this is set out in the CSP Action Plan 2024/25 as

a separate item on this PDG agenda. This work will be refined now the Devon Strategy has been finalised.

- 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 Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in line with their requirements and timetable. The PCC 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 PCC as designated convener under the SV Duty and serviced by the PCC'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 PCC. 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 been completed to produce a public-facing strategy publication incorporating these components which met the required publication deadline of 31 January 2024.

#### Definition of violence

- 3.4 The strategy follows the SDP agreed definition of violence:

*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 and has been further refined within the final publication version as:

*Our vision is for people, families and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the risk and experience of violence.*

- 3.6 Within this are defined 'focus areas' which are in keeping with the Serious Violence Duty's focus on 'public space youth violence', weapons-related violence and criminal activities where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as drug related activities. The focus areas are also reflective of the findings from the SNA (see 3.9):
- Violence linked to specific contexts and factors, including domestic abuse, sexual violence and violence against women and girls, weapons related violence, violence linked to drugs and alcohol, violence in the context of exploitation and violence linked to specific places and spaces
  - Peer to peer harms, including physical violence, harmful sexual behaviour and violence taking place online

- 3.7 As required under the SV Duty legislation, the strategy is grounded in a public health approach to violence prevention; recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention. It seeks to understand the complexity of violence and its causes, of people's lives and needs, and the complexity present in our systems and acknowledges that violence prevention is a long-term ambition requiring sustained preventative focus, system leadership, commitment and investment.
- 3.8 The strategy therefore outlines a 5-year framework for initial action, laying the groundwork for continued long-term focus on prevention.
- 3.9 As set out above, in line with the SV Duty requirements, in 2023 the SDP completed its serious violence SNA to understand what serious violence is happening in Devon and its drivers. This assessment is available in full at <https://saferdevon.co.uk/safetypartner/uploads/2024/02/PDF-SeriousViolence-Needs-Assessment.pdf>
- 3.10 The assessment highlights the unequal occurrence and effects of violence across Devon; a people and place-based approach to prevention will allow all partners holding the SV Duty to identify groups and places which, due to the disproportionate incidence of violence or factors understood to contribute to its occurrence, require a more targeted focus. This will enable delivery and resources to be directed where need is greatest.
- 3.11 In order to adopt a 'prevention first focus' requires a layered approach that stretches from whole populations through to more highly targeted with groups and places experiencing the most immediate risk of violence. This allows for steps to be taken to prevent violence as early as possible and before individual vulnerabilities have emerged, whilst also responding where concerns are developing or accumulating, and where risks have increased.
- 3.12 The diagram below shows an adapted version of the public health model of violence prevention, showing the three stages of prevention built into the Strategy. These three stages or layers can be described as:

**Layer 1: Universal (Primary Prevention)**

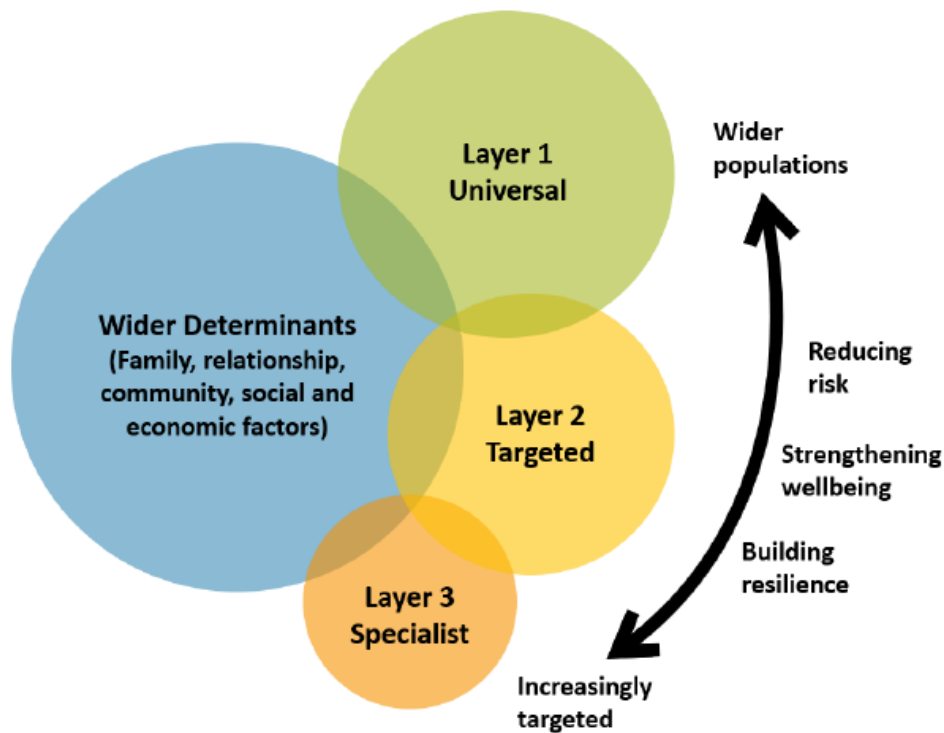
- Prevention of vulnerability factors emerging, focus on large groups with no or few vulnerability factors e.g. adolescents. Example: healthy relationships education in schools

**Layer 2: Targeted (Secondary Prevention)**

- Early intervention where vulnerability factors are emerging or accumulating, with focus on reducing risk and harm. More specific groups. Example: whole family recovery support from domestic violence

**Layer 3: Specialist (Tertiary Prevention)**

- Specialist support where risk is increased or risk of immediate harm. Very targeted groups. Example: work with young people directly experiencing exploitation



Safer Devon: Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (Public Health Model of Violence Prevention, adapted from Public Health Devon).

3.13 Within the above context, the final strategy priorities outline the overarching statements of intent which have been informed in more detail by the SNA. The original six priorities within the draft strategy have been simplified and are now set out across seven areas, separated as core and cross-cutting approaches.

### **Core Priorities:**

Priority 1: Shape a series of preventative responses for young people and adults who, based on their individual needs and experiences, are at greatest risk of involvement in violence, taking account of intersecting needs and the individual ways needs may present.

Priority 2: Strengthen our understanding and response to contextual harms to reduce exploitation and peer group related risks.

Priority 3: Strengthen our early years and early help targeted offer for families where risk and vulnerability factors in relation to violence are present.

Priority 4: Challenge the normalisation of violence, particularly in relation to young people - supporting them to develop healthy and respectful relationships, both intimate partner and peer to peer.

Priority 5: Work towards creating inclusive and supportive education environments where all young people can thrive, with a focus on strengthening their wellbeing, resilience and opportunities.

### **Cross-cutting priorities**

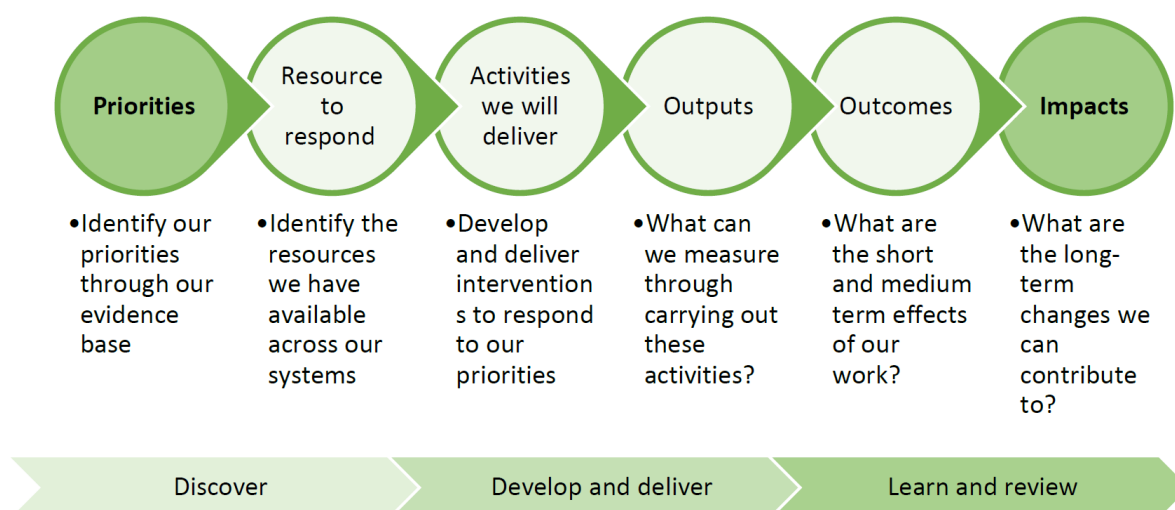
Priority 6: Work towards trauma, shame and neurodivergence-informed systems (see Appendix 1 within the strategy for a definition of these terms).

Priority 7: Strengthen our learning about serious violence, needs and drivers, and what works well as prevention.

## 4 Next steps

4.1 All CSPs will be working with the SDP to define achievable actions, outputs, outcomes and impacts with the subsequent long-term changes we aim to see in our communities in an overarching strategy delivery plan. This will be developed during 2024 following publication of the Strategy. As such, the strategy influence on CSP action planning and local activity will become more apparent from 2025/26 onwards.

4.2 The steps to achieving the intended impacts of the strategy are explored further in the diagram below:



Safer Devon: Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 (model theory of change)

4.3 Once specific, aligned actions have been identified in the East and Mid Devon CSP then performance will be reported back to the SDP who will formally report to the PCC alongside its Devon-level actions or geography specific shared activity with specific CSPs. Our CSP will continue to deliver work that will support the Devon level strategy and will inform an update of the next iteration of our local CSP Action Plan from April 2024. In overall terms, there are some specific opportunities around a modest level of 2024/25 Home Office funding and in more depth going forward within the resources available.

## 5 SV Duty funding

5.1 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 SV Duty.

- 5.2 As the 'local Policing Body', the PCC receives the funding and is responsible for meeting Home Office reporting and oversight responsibilities to ensure the funding is spent appropriately. A funding formula has determined the geographical split set out in the table below (see 5.5) based on an existing approach developed by the PCC for its SVPP which takes into account the overall population base, demographics (e.g. number of young people) and existing violent crime levels.
- 5.3 This 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 PCC.
- 5.4 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 in accordance with the formula 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

- 5.5 As part of the SDP Executive Board our CSP was 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.
- 5.6 As part of the work required to be in place by 31 January, alongside the strategy publication, the SDP was required to submit an outline funding delivery plan to the PCC. Consequently, the SDP entered into a time-limited but robust process with CSPs for funding bids to support projects aligned with the strategy priorities which could be stood-up and delivered effectively within 2024/25. Several Devon-level projects were considered alongside some from district CSPs including East and Mid Devon CSP.
- 5.7 The East and Mid Devon CSP submitted two bids, one of which was successful. This will provide an additional £8k towards the funding of a full-time East Devon District Council based dedicated ASB officer post. As such, the funding will enable that role to extend its work across into Mid Devon and target specific localities or ongoing incidents one-day per week within the district working alongside other agency partners under a refreshed ASB Action Team approach which is part of the wider CSP Action Plan for 24/25.
- 5.8 There is currently no notice of allocation of Home Office funding after 24/25.

## 6 Conclusion



6.1 In order to discharge our duties under the SV Duty we are required to agree publish a strategy and governance arrangements that underpin delivery going forward. The Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy as outlined above (and attached in Annex A) has 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.

## **7 Recommendations**

7.1 In accordance with the above, the following recommendation is made:

1. That the PDG recommends that Cabinet recommends to Council the adoption the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 as attached in Annex A to enable delivery by as appropriate by the Council's Community Safety Partnership (as a specified authority under the Serious Violence Duty).

### **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 1-7) are not agreed by CSPs then the published collaborative strategy for Devon cannot be taken forward. Consequently, as a specified authority the Council would not be complying with the legal SV duty and Home Office funding may not be drawn down.

### **Impact on Climate Change**

None directly arising from the report.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

For consistency, a single EIA was required for the Devon-level Strategy document. The SDP have completed this overarching assessment against the strategy priorities and intended impacts using the Devon County Council (DCC) Impact template which was attached and approved at Cabinet on 9 January 2024.

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.

### **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:** 12 Mar 2024

**Statutory Officer:** Maria de Leiburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

**Date:** 12 Mar 2024

**Chief Officer:** Simon Newcombe

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

**Date:** 29 February 2024

**Performance and risk:** Steve Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

**Date:** 07 March 2024

**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](mailto:snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk).

Telephone: 01884 255255

**Background information:**

Statutory Guidance on Serious Violence Duty

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>