

Report for: Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting:	9 September 2024
Subject:	COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24
Cabinet Member:	Councillor David Wulff, Quality (Cost) of Living, Equalities and Public Health
Responsible Officer:	Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing & Health (Chair of the East and Mid Devon CSP)
Exempt:	Not Applicable
Wards Affected:	All
Enclosures:	Annex A – Updated East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership Terms of Reference (2024)

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendation(s)

This is an annual report to ensure that the Scrutiny Committee has oversight of the East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the opportunity to review the activities of the partnership during 2023-24, and look ahead to the priorities for 2024-25 and beyond.

Community safety relates to all crime, anti-social behaviour, harm and other behaviours that negatively affect the lives and local environment of communities. Partners with responsibility for community safety are required to protect communities from the threat and consequences of these issues by reducing their incidence and fear of their occurrence.

Following review by the statutory partners within the CSP, the overarching priorities for the CSP remain unchanged for 2024-25, but with a new Serious Violence Duty on 'specified authorities' (including district councils) introduced in 2023 and requiring the CSP partners to work together and publish a joint strategy and action plan to reduce serious violence in their areas. The CSP must therefore take due accord of the strategy

in its priorities going forward. The Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 was published in January 2024 in accordance with legal requirements and deadline.

The future working of CSPs and their formal relationship with the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) was under review by the previous Government following a consultation exercise during 2023 and a range of recommendations had been accepted by the previous Government in November 2023. The previous Government has also consulted on strengthening some of the powers in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The King's Speech in July introduced a number of measures including a new Crime and Policing Bill relating to tackling knife crime, violence against women and girls, antisocial behaviour, shoplifting and a neighbourhood policing guarantee.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. To note the work and completed outcomes of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in delivering activities against the Partnerships priorities and action plan for 2023-24.**
- 2. To note the ongoing priorities of the East and Mid Devon CSP and planned activities for 2024-25.**

Section 2 – Report

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The East & Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership (CSP) was formed in order to meet our statutory duties under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and is a multi-agency group working together to reduce crime and disorder.
- 1.2 The formal operating structure of the partnership comprises of quarterly meetings of all partner agencies. The role of chairing the partnership can be met by any of the statutory partners within the partnership and most recently this function has been carried out by Mid Devon District Council.
- 1.3 The Police and Justice Act 2006 requires the local authority to put in place a method of scrutinising the manner in which the partnership functions. Every local authority must have in place a committee with the power to review and scrutinise the actions of the CSP and make recommendations about how it functions. The East and Mid Devon CSP is scrutinised through this Council's Scrutiny Committee via an annual report.
- 1.4 The statutory CSP partners are:
 - Devon and Cornwall Police
 - Devon County Council (Adult Social Care)

- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
- Probation Service
- East Devon District Council
- Mid Devon District Council (current Chair organisation)
- NHS Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (One Devon)

2 Priority Areas 2023-24 and 2024-25

2.1 The East & Mid Devon CSP Priorities for 2023-24 were informed by the evidence in the Safer Devon Partnership (SDP) Strategic Assessment, which was produced in December 2021 and the CSP Quarterly Update documents. These gave clear indications that the biggest areas of concern were hidden risk, harm and exploitation alongside emerging issues as we transitioned out of the Covid-19 pandemic. East and Mid Devon risks are clearly mirrored within the report, matching the key areas.

2.2 The CSP therefore has priorities based on the Strategic Assessment 2021-22. Below are the priority areas of focus that have been discussed, shaped and agreed by the CSP members:

- **Violent Crime**

- Sexual Violence and Domestic Violence & Abuse
- Street safety (including street drinking)
- Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking
- Violence Against Women & Girls

- **Youth Risk & Vulnerability**

- Community Wellbeing (including mental health)
- Exploitation
- Prevent Duty (in relation to extremist views)
- Anti-social Behaviour
- Hate Crime

- **Serious Violence Duty (new for 2024)**

- **Martyn's Law - The Terrorism (Protection of Premises Bill) 2024**

- **Review of some Community Safety legislation and powers expected by the new Government**

- **For Mid Devon District Council specifically, we have prioritised reviewing our Safeguarding Policy and procedures in 2023/24 and 2024/25.**

2.3 A range of activities were undertaken or supported in 2023/24 and these included:

- For ASB Awareness week the Council joined with the Police to undertake joint visits to our estates and offered support and advice to residents
- Planning, training and delegations were carried out to enable Mid Devon Housing Officers to start to use Community Protection Notices from April 2024, and to encourage greater use of the powers in the Public Health and Regulatory Service
- Officers contributed to the Devon-wide serious violence duty working groups to enable the Strategic Needs Assessment and the Preventing Serious Violence Strategy to be written, scrutinised and signed off
- Discussions were initiated to find an improved means of tackling youth ASB, in partnership with key agencies, to ensure a trauma informed system could be established in East & Mid Devon
- We held an ASB Training Day for Council teams and partner organisations at Phoenix House, provided by Victim Support
- We worked with East Devon and Exeter Councils to thoroughly review our Corporate Safeguarding Policy, and this was signed off by the PDG (March 2024) and adopted by the Cabinet (June 2024)
- We re-launched a 'Safeguarding Champions Group' in 2023 to ensure each department has a safeguarding lead, and to raise awareness of good practice in supporting vulnerable customers and knowledge of how to report concerns to Devon County Council or other agencies
- We provided Safeguarding Training to Elected Members in December and March
- We provided guidance for our staff and Elected Members on how to deal with instances where a client or customer threatens to take their own life. This included access to free on-line training.

2.4 The priorities for 2023-24 have remained unchanged, and have continued into 2024-25, however these were reviewed in the context of the new Serious Violence Duty and the Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy in particular (more below). As overarching priorities they remain fit for purpose, however activity of the CSP will be influenced by the Devon-wide Action Plan that sits below the serious violence strategy.

2.5 The Council became subject to a new statutory **Serious Violence Duty** in 2023. The Duty requires 'specified authorities' to work together and plan to

prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in an area, the cause of that violence, and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence.

- 2.6 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been amended to ensure preventing and reducing serious violence is a statutory priority for CSPs.
- 2.7 Under the new Duty, the SDP was required to produce an evidence based Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) by 31 January 2024 to identify current and long-term issues in relation to serious violence and to understand emerging trends:
[Devon Serious Violence Needs Assessment 2023 - Executive Summary - Safer Devon](#)
- 2.8 The Duty also required that a Serious Violence Strategy be published by 31 January 2024 which identifies the causes of serious violence in that area and details are range of new and existing actions to prevent and reduce serious violence and its drivers that have been identified:
[Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 - Safer Devon](#)
- 2.9 The CSP continues to promote an overarching 'trauma informed' approach across the partner agencies. This approach encourages practitioners and staff to recognise that many service users and community members have experienced some form of traumatic event that they are living with day to day, and may impact on their life choices, activities and actions.
- 2.10 During 2024, the CSP also reviewed and updated its Terms of Reference, a copy of which is attached in Annex A. This was formally agreed with all statutory CSP partners at the April 2024 CSP meeting, however a section with regard to non-voting, non-statutory key partners is currently under further review and will be updated at the next CSP meeting in the autumn.

3 Action Plan 2024-25

- 3.1 Work over the coming year will focus on the following activities:
 1. Continued Partnership working with other Devon CSPs to consider joint project working and funding applications
 2. Review the approach and co-ordination with other agencies in tackling youth ASB, and subject to agreement, re-initiating a Mid Devon Youth ASBAT (ASB Action Team) forum enabling case reviews and a joined up multi-agency approach

3. Work with East Devon District Council to share the resources of their new ASB officer, using serious violence funding to purchase one day per week for Mid Devon
4. Linked to the review above, produce an ASB Toolkit and work with the Police to introduce new Police processes for the roll-out of CPW/CPN legal powers. Provide local training for practitioners and partners to ensure improved use of powers
5. Roll-out of delegated powers to Mid Devon Housing under the ASB toolkit including Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) and Community Protection Notices (CPNs)
6. Link into the evidence base for Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Working Group at Peninsula and Devon level as required under new Duty, and develop a support the development of the overarching Strategy delivery plan for 2024/25 onwards
7. Review further support, training and awareness raising for staff and practitioners on Trauma Informed Approach. This will focus specific services and areas where best practice can the highest impact on transitioning from being *Trauma Aware*, to being *Trauma informed* - this follows up on Council endorsement in late 2022 to work towards a corporate approach where no specific budget resources were available in the 23/24 budget to deliver this more holistically
8. Continued efforts to reduce the violence towards women and girls.
9. Take a multi-agency approach to tackling street safety through disruption, enforcement and taking steps to increase pro-social activities to reduce the risk of repeated incidents
10. Work closely with Mid Devon and East Housing services to review potential commencement of work towards gaining UK benchmark Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation
11. Implement any new legislative requirements and guidance introduced by the Government during the year, for example, **The Terrorism (Protection of Premises Bill)**. There is also a **Crime and Policing Bill** aimed at; improving policing, cracking down on anti-social behaviour, tackling knife and retail crime, and provision of a stronger response to violence against women and girls

12. Promote ASB Awareness week 2024

13. Continue to improve the Council's Safeguarding procedures and awareness, and to provide improved training for staff and Elected Members

14. Participation in a Domestic Homicide Review in the Mid Devon District, ensuring all learning is highlighted and actioned.

4 Funding

4.1 The Council has no operational budget for its community safety responsibilities beyond a contribution of around 0.4 FTE within a wider 0.8 FTE Community Safety and Safeguarding Officer role.

4.2 Historically the Devon CSPs have received annual grant allocations to support local projects and purchases which support achieving the CSP goals by reducing or tackling specific areas of crime or concern. This financial support was withdrawn at the end of 2021-22.

4.3 The CSP is able to encourage and signpost local bids from organisations and community groups for funds from the OPCC Safer Communities Grant Scheme: [PCC Grants - Safer Communities - Devon Community Foundation \(devoncf.com\)](https://www.devoncf.com). The projects must contribute to the Police and Crime Plan by reducing violence, tackling anti-social behaviour, tackling or mitigating drug use or supporting victims of crime. The CSP is unable to make a direct bid to this grant scheme. The Council's Community Safety Officer was invited to sit on the OPCC Grant Panel in 2023.

4.4 Sourcing other funding streams is a limited possibility where joined up working with the Safer Devon Partnership will ensure that we have the best opportunity to secure a proportion of any Devon wide funding that becomes available for specific projects or priorities.

4.5 The CSP has been awarded £8k from the Government (distributed by OPCC) in 2024-25 for a project to expand the use of Community Protection Notices in our area to tackle anti-social behaviour.

4.6 The CSP are legally responsible for the delivery of Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR's) under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. An annual funding contribution has been made by the District Council to Devon County Council (the Safer Devon Partnership) to oversee these reviews on our behalf. There were no DHR's in Mid Devon in 2023-24, but one has begun in 2024-25 with regard a case in the Crediton area.

5 Recommendations

5.1 The following recommendations are made:

- To note the work and completed outcomes of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in delivering activities against the Partnerships priorities and action plan for 2023-24.
- To note the ongoing priorities of the East and Mid Devon CSP and planned activities for 2024-25.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report, aside from highlighting potential costs arising from Domestic Homicide Review responsibilities, as set out below.

Legal Implications

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 makes it a statutory requirement for the Police and Local Authorities to engage with partners to form a Community Safety Partnership for the purposes of reducing crime and disorder. The 1998 Act places a legal responsibility on the Partnership to consult with the Community on the priorities it has set and inform them of progress against the action plan. The Act also requires the Partnership to carry out a Strategic Assessment of the area which is used to inform the partnership priorities. The Partnership is also responsible for conducting Domestic Homicide Reviews and these are led by Devon County Council.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 placed a duty on Local Authorities in England to provide support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. A Devon Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board is now in place to assist with the discharge of these duties and is attended by the Housing Options Manager and/or the Community Safety Officer.

The Serious Violence Duty, which is encompassed in the Police Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 is part of the Government's broad approach to prevent and reduce serious violence. The key strands being a multi-agency public health approach to understanding the drivers and impacts of serious violence, and a focus on prevention and early intervention.

'Specified Authorities' who are subject to the Duty include: local authorities, the police, youth offending teams, Integrated Care Boards, probation, and the fire service.

The Serious Violence Duty requires organisations above to work together to share information, analyse the situation locally and come up with solutions, including the publication of an annual strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence on a local basis. The duty also requires the responsible authorities to consult educational, prison and youth custody authorities for the area in the preparation of their serious violence strategy.

In addition to the Serious Violence Duty Section 17 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act has been amended to make preventing and reducing Serious Violence a statutory requirement for Community Safety Partnerships (CSP).

The Commencement of the Serious Violence Duty was on 31 of January 2023 with a requirement to formalise local partnership arrangements during 2023 and for specified authorities to publish their Serious Violence Strategy by 31 January 2024.

This King's Speech (July 2024) included "Martyn's law", the Terrorism (Protection of Premises Bill) which was included in the last King's Speech but not introduced by the last government. This introduces security requirements for certain public venues and locations.

Risk Assessment

There is a risk to the Council if it does not fully engage with the Partnership in respect of failing to meet its numerous statutory duties. In turn, the ability of the Partnership to provide effective multi-agency working to reduce crime and disorder in our community is potentially reduced.

Impact on Climate Change

None directly arising from the report. The partnership undertakes the majority of its work remotely through electronic communications which limits officer travel and physical meetings.

Equalities Impact Assessment

The 2018-21 CSP Plan has had an equality impact assessment (EIA) completed. The Trauma Informed approach plan in 2019-20 also had an equality impact assessment completed. Overall, no adverse impacts on persons with legally protected characteristics were identified. No significant changes have been made beyond those required legally under the newly introduced Serious Violence Duty outlined above, consequently no new EIA has been produced. The Devon level Serious Violence Strategy went through a formal equalities impact assessment process at Devon County Council. The Councils updated Corporate Safeguarding Policy (2024) was also subject to a new EIA.

Relationship to Corporate Plan

The priorities of the CSP and the activities undertaken as part of the action plan compliment the ambitions of the Corporate Plan 2024-28. In particular this activity contributes to the priority of Community, People and Equalities. The CSP works directly with the wider community, youth groups and local partners to ensure the district is a safe place to live, work and visit which directly supports the delivery of Corporate Plan objectives 2.2 - *We value and will work closely with local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations* and 2.3 - *We will support the health, wellbeing, and safety of our residents.*

Section 3 – Statutory Officer sign-off/mandatory checks

Statutory Officer: Andrew Jarrett

Agreed by or on behalf of the Section 151

Date: 27 August 2024

Statutory Officer: Maria de Leburne

Agreed on behalf of the Monitoring Officer

Date: 27 August 2024

Chief Officer: Simon Newcombe

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

Date: 26 August 2024

Performance and risk: Stephen Carr

Agreed on behalf of the Corporate Performance & Improvement Manager

Date: 27 August 2024

Cabinet member notified: Yes

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Simon Newcombe, Head of Housing and Health (CSP Chair) or Adrian Gardner, Specialist Lead for Community Safety & Safeguarding

Email: snewcombe@middevon.gov.uk / agardner@middevon.gov.uk

Telephone: 01884 255255

Background papers:

Safer Devon Partnership

Information relating to the Devon Strategic Assessment and priorities for Devon.

<https://saferdevon.co.uk/about-safer-devon/>

East and Mid Devon Community Safety Partnership

Local priorities and background information

[East and Mid Devon CSP - Safer Devon](#)

Police and Crime Commissioner Grants

Devon Community Foundation – Grants to enable and empower smaller voluntary and community organisations to reduce violence and ASB

[PCC Grants - Safer Communities - Devon Community Foundation \(devoncf.com\)](#)

Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

[Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29 - Safer Devon](#)

Devon Serious Violence Needs Assessment 2023 – Executive Summary

[Devon Serious Violence Needs Assessment 2023 - Executive Summary - Safer Devon](#)