

Dorset Council Plan Priorities – Community Safety

Cabinet – 28 March 2023

Portfolio Holder update from Cllr Graham Carr-Jones

Dorset Council's Plan includes the following commitment, to:

'Work closely with Dorset Police to ensure we achieve the best outcomes when dealing with local crime and anti-social behaviour. We will work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to make Dorset the safest county in the country.'

Councils have been jointly responsible for tackling community safety issues, along with partners including the Police, Probation and Health, since the introduction of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

A huge amount of work has been undertaken by the Council and its partners to address problems such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, violent crime and anti-social behaviour all of which have a devastating impact on individuals and communities.

The Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing & Community Safety chairs the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The CSP is a legal partnership that brings together partners to identify and tackle key community safety issues in the area.

The priority issues currently being addressed by the CSP are:

- Domestic Abuse and Stalking
- Sexual Offences
- Violent Crime
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Rural Crime
- Fraud

They are complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

- Mental health
- Substance misuse
- Complex cases / multiple needs
- Violence against women and girls

As recently reported to the People & Health Scrutiny Committee (Dorset Council's formal Crime & Disorder Committee), much of the Council and partners' activity to tackle crime has become business as usual. This includes:

- A wide variety of services aimed at supporting victims of domestic abuse. Services are provided and commissioned by various partners covering a wide range of needs from emergency safe accommodation to information and advice.
- Joint working arrangements relating to domestic abuse including the High-Risk Domestic Abuse (HRDA) approach that brings partners together to discuss individual cases, share information and develop joined up responses.
- Programmes and initiatives aimed at addressing domestic abuse offending. These include the DRIVE programme and Up2U (DRIVE works with high-harm, high-risk and serial perpetrators of domestic abuse to prevent their abusive behaviour and protect victims. Up2U is a programme for people who use domestically abusive and unhealthy behaviours in their relationships). It is the Council's and partners' ambition to stop people becoming victims of domestic abuse. Working with perpetrators is key to achieving that aim.
- Regular communication and awareness raising campaigns relating to domestic abuse and sexual offences. These are timed to coincide with wider national campaigns such as the 16 Days of Action Against Domestic Abuse.
- Training on a wide range of community safety issues across agencies including domestic abuse, Modern Slavery and Preventing Violent Extremism (training on Modern Slavery and Prevent is mandatory for all Dorset Council staff).
- The completion and implementation of recommendations from Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs). These are multi-agency reviews undertaken when a homicide or suicide is potentially related to domestic abuse. The reviews aim to improve partners' overall response and safeguard future victims.
- A range of tools and initiatives to help tackle cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB) including issuing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Criminal Behaviour Orders and Public Space Protection Orders. Multi-agency Initiatives including Operation Luscombe aim to tackle street based ASB.
- A wide variety of multi-agency initiatives aimed at addressing violent crime and sexual offences in the night-time economy including education, enforcement and public confidence.
- A dedicated multi-agency Rural Partnership Co-ordinating Group that develops joint work and initiatives to tackle rural crime.
- Work to tackle Fraud through 'Friends Against Scams' that aims to provide information, advice and support about fraud and 'scams' as well as allow people to report issues.

Additional activity developed over the last year includes:

- Information on stalking has been incorporated into safeguarding work, including events during national safeguarding week, to help raise awareness of issues.
- Specific modules on stalking have been developed to be delivered through the Dragonfly Project (The Dragonfly Project raises awareness of domestic abuse within communities).

- An assessment has been undertaken of current domestic abuse perpetrator programme offers in Dorset and work is underway with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to access funding opportunities and commission new services.
- The development of a DHR Learning and Improvement Framework that sets out partners' commitment to identifying and acting on learning from DHR work and securing shared opportunities for development and improvement.
- Further development of CCTV and services to address stalking following the successful bid to the Home Office under round four of the Safer Streets Fund.
- Joint working with Housing Associations to address concerns around anti-social behaviour.
- Development of a new three year Reducing Reoffending Strategy that sets out partners' vision to cut crime, reduce harm and protect victims by reducing re-offending through joint working and rehabilitation.
- Further work to address ASB including the 'Turnaround' programme, which is aimed at children on the cusp of the youth justice system.
- Further initiatives relating to Violence Against Women and Girls including the Pineapple Project which aims to provide safe spaces to help safeguard young women in their communities.
- We have looked to use imaginative and effective ways to communicate the messages which help those who have experienced domestic abuse and to raise awareness. For example, we have run an effective campaign of posters on the side of refuse lorries, recognising that these are seen by many people across the length and breadth of Dorset, including those who are remaining inside their homes looking out into the street.

In the last few years, the Council has attracted over £1.8m in additional government funding to help tackle key community safety issues with further funding pledged for future years.

Total crime across the Dorset Council area has decreased over the last six years and the efforts of the Council and its partners helps ensure Dorset remains one of the safest areas in the Country.

Councillor Graham Carr-Jones