

# People & Health Scrutiny Committee

## 1 August 2024

### Community Safety Annual Scrutiny Report

#### For Review and Consultation

**Cabinet Member and Portfolio:**  
Cllr G Taylor, Health and Housing

**Local Councillor(s):**  
All

**Executive Director:**  
J Price, Executive Director of People - Adults

Report Author: Andy Frost  
Job Title: Service Manager for Community Safety  
Tel: 01305 224331  
Email: andy.frost@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

**Report Status:** Public

#### Brief Summary:

Under the Police & Justice Act 2006, local authorities are required to have Crime & Disorder Committees that review and scrutinise partners' community safety work. The committees should formally review progress at least once a year.

In Dorset Council, the function of the Crime & Disorder Committee is fulfilled by the People & Health Scrutiny Committee (for scrutiny work) and the People & Health Overview Committee (for any proactive community safety work).

This annual scrutiny report provides information on partners' work, through the Dorset Community Safety Partnership (CSP), in the following areas:

- Dorset Community Safety Plan 2023-26
- Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024-27
- Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24
- Dorset Serious Violence Strategy 2024-25

In this report, it is only possible to provide a broad strategic overview of partners' community safety work. Further detail can be brought back to the Committee should members have any particular areas or issues they would like to explore.

Any observations or recommendations from the Committee will be considered by the CSP and used to help develop its work.

**Recommendation:**

That members of the Committee consider and comment on the community safety annual report.

**Reason for Recommendation:**

To ensure the Council complies with its legal duties relating to community safety.

**1. Background**

1.1 Local authorities are required to have Crime & Disorder Committees that scrutinise the Council's and its partners' delivery of their statutory community safety functions. The committees should formally review progress at least once a year.

1.2 The Council's and partners' work on community safety is co-ordinated through the Dorset CSP. The CSP is a statutory partnership under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. It brings together the following responsible authorities who must work together to understand and address community safety issues in their area:

- Dorset Council
- Dorset Police
- NHS Dorset
- Dorset & Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Authority
- The Probation Service

1.3 This annual scrutiny report focuses on the following work of the CSP:

- Community Safety Plan 2023-26
- Reducing Reoffending 2024-27
- Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24

- Dorset Serious Violence Strategy 2024-25

## 2. **Dorset Community Safety Plan 2023-2026**

2.1 CSPs are required to produce three-year Community Safety Plans that are revised annually. The plans are informed by needs assessments and local people's views about community safety issues.

2.2 The Dorset CSP agreed the latest refresh of its 2023-26 Community Safety Plan on 19th March 2024. The Plan includes the following priorities:

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

2.3 These are complemented by the following cross cutting issues:

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

2.4 Much of the partnership activity that has been put in place over the lifetime of the current and former Community Safety Plans in Dorset 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. Partners have a joint Domestic Abuse Commissioning Charter in place to help align their commissioning activities for domestic abuse services and interventions.
- 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 Up2U Creating Healthy Relationships: 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. Addressing offending behaviour 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).
- A range of tools and initiatives to help tackle cases of anti-social behaviour (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 supporting initiatives such as 'Friends Against Scams' that aims to provide information, advice and support about scams as well as allow people to report issues.

## 2.5 Activity included in the latest refresh of the community safety plan includes:

- Undertaking research to better understand the needs of our diverse communities, including LGBTQ+ people and those with protected characteristics, and how we can ensure those needs are best met.
- Working with partners in the criminal justice system and at the regional and national levels to take action to increase the positive outcome rate for sexual offences.
- Conducting work to understand why victims of sexual violence drop out of the criminal justice process at the early stages.
- Developing our working arrangements with housing associations to help understand and tackle anti-social behaviour issues.
- Assessing and addressing the impact of repeat anti-social behaviour cases / callers, including where mental health is a key factor.
- Identifying repeat offenders of rural crime and working together to disrupt and reduce offending.
- Working to better understand the relationship between organised rural crime and other crimes.
- Working with local businesses to address shoplifting that impacts directly on anti-social behaviour including 'designing out crime'.
- Developing close working relationships with partners in the Voluntary and Community Sector including youth centres, to develop joint approaches to tackle anti-social behaviour.

- Working with young people's forums and groups to better understand issues and inform effective interventions, including the Dorset Youth Association and 0-19 Youth Forum.
  - Supporting the work of the Dorset Combating Drugs Partnership's Prevention sub-group including around education in schools.
  - Ensuring children and young people better understand the risks and drivers for serious violence to prevent them from becoming drawn into crime.
- 2.6 Cross cutting issues set out in the Plan are addressed through the delivery of activities relating to specific priorities. For example, violence against women and girls is addressed through the delivery of actions relating to domestic abuse, sexual offences, serious violence etc; substance misuse is addressed through the delivery of actions relating to anti-social behaviour and serious violence.
- 2.7 The CSP monitors and manages the delivery of the Community Safety Plan at each of its quarterly meetings. This includes using performance information to assess impact and direct activity.
- 2.8 It is a requirement for Community Safety Plans to be formally adopted by the local authority for the area and the latest version of the Plan is currently being taken through Dorset Council for adoption.

### 3. **Reducing Reoffending**

- 3.1 In accordance with the Policing and Crime Act 2009, CSPs are responsible for developing reducing reoffending strategies.
- 3.2 Locally, partners have traditionally developed pan-Dorset reducing reoffending strategies because organisations and issues are common across the area.
- 3.3 The latest strategy (covering 2024-2027) was agreed by the Dorset CSP on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2024. It was developed by partners through the Reducing Reoffending Strategy Group ensuring close links to both CSPs and the pan-Dorset Criminal Justice Board.
- 3.4 The strategy sets out partners' vision for reducing reoffending which is:
- 'To cut crime, reduce harm and protect victims by reducing re-offending through joint working and rehabilitation'.*

- 3.5 It contains information on the reasons for reoffending and the services and programmes operating in Dorset to address issues and includes several strategic principles and objectives.
- 3.6 The strategy sets out activity around early intervention and targeted support, efficient resource allocation and integrated approaches, and outcome-orientated monitoring.
- 3.7 Delivery of the Strategy will be monitored by the CSP with regular updates on progress, including against performance measures, being taken to the group.
- 3.8 It is a requirement for Reducing Reoffending Strategies to be formally adopted by the local authority for the area. The latest strategy is currently being taken through Dorset Council for adoption.

#### **4. Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24**

- 4.1 The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 became law on 29 April 2021. The Act placed new duties on local authorities to establish a Local Partnership Board (LPB) for domestic abuse and produce a needs assessment and strategy relating to support for victims and their children in safe accommodation.
- 4.2 The Dorset CSP took on the functions of the LPB for the Dorset Council area and its terms of reference and membership were updated accordingly.
- 4.3 The Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy was published on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2022 following a period of public consultation. It includes a position statement, an introduction to the requirements in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, recommendations from the needs assessment, a broad outline of activity in response to the recommendations and details on governance arrangements.
- 4.4 Activity in the Strategy is focused on prevention, supporting victims and tackling offending.
- 4.5 The Domestic Abuse Strategy is closely aligned to and complements partners' Community Safety Plan. Progress against the Strategy is monitored regularly by the CSP.

4.6 Central Government has given local authorities new burdens funding to help meet their statutory duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

4.7 Dorset Council has used the funding to:

- Help fund and bolster current safe accommodation-based support.
- Continue and enhance support for children in safe accommodation.
- Provide more housing support for victims of domestic abuse.
- Develop target hardening work so people can remain in their own homes safely (target hardening involves improving the security of a property to reduce the risk of crime and improve safety).
- Undertake research and analysis to understand needs, what works and good practice in relation to domestic abuse.
- Ensure services continue to be provided in the future through the commissioning of a new Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (IDAS) from April 2025.

4.8 Details regarding the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021-24 went to Dorset Council's Cabinet in November 2021 and the final Strategy was published in January 2022. Work has started to refresh the Strategy. This is being driven by partners through the CSP.

## 5. **Dorset Serious Violence Strategy 2024-25**

5.1 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 placed a new duty on the council and its partners relating to serious violence.

5.2 The duty, which came into effect on 31st January 2023, requires the council and its partners to produce an evidence-based analysis of serious violence and develop and implement a strategy in response.

5.3 The partners responsible for the new duty are the same as those responsible for CSPs with the addition of Youth Offending Teams.

5.4 In Dorset, partners agreed to lead their response to fulfilling the new duty through the Dorset CSP and published their Serious Violence Strategy in January 2024.

5.5 The Strategy includes a local definition of serious violence, provides context around serious violence in the Dorset CSP area and sets out partners' approach to tackling issues.

5.6 The Strategy includes six priority areas:

- Develop and deliver approaches to tackle high-harm offending
- Develop and champion activity that supports victims of serious violence
- Ensure children and young people better understand the risks and drivers for serious violence to prevent them from becoming drawn into crime
- Taking action that tackles serious violence in the community, to improve the safety of our streets
- Robustly tackle organised crime, including county lines and rural organised crime.
- Undertake work to further develop our understanding of serious violence.

5.7 The Serious Violence Strategy is closely aligned to and complements partners' Community Safety Plan. Progress against the Strategy is monitored regularly by the CSP.

5.8 Partners have been awarded central government funding to cover the costs of responding to the duty and implementing initiatives in their serious violence strategies. Funding has been channelled through Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and partners in Dorset have worked with the Dorset PCC to determine the allocation and use of funding locally.

## 6. **Financial Implications**

6.1 The Dorset CSP does not receive funding directly, however partners' plans and strategies clarify where they will focus their time and effort and their broad activity to meet priorities.

6.2 New Burdens funding has been made available to Dorset Council to deliver statutory duties relating to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

6.3 Central government has made available funding to partners to deliver the serious violence duty.



6.4 From time to time, central government makes available one-off funding opportunities to support community safety work such as tackling domestic abuse. When possible, partners apply for such funds.

## **7. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications**

7.1 None.

## **8. Well-being and Health Implications**

8.1 Tackling crime and the fear of crime has a significant impact on health and wellbeing.

## **9. Other Implications**

9.1 Community Safety as set out in the report.

## **10. Risk Assessment**

10.1 **HAVING CONSIDERED:** the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

## **11. Equalities Impact Assessment**

11.1 EqIAs have been completed on the Community Safety Plan, Reducing Reoffending Strategy and Domestic Abuse Strategy.

11.2 The EqIA for the Community Safety Plan covered serious violence issues drawing on findings from the serious violence needs assessment work. Given that, a separate EqIA was not needed for the Serious Violence Strategy.

11.3 The EqIA process identified opportunities which will help steer the delivery of the Plans and Strategies.

## **12. Appendices**

12.1 None.

### 13. **Background Papers**

- Community Safety Plan 2023 to 2026
- Pan-Dorset Reducing Reoffending Strategy 2024 to 2027
- Dorset Domestic Abuse Strategy 2021 to 2024
- Dorset Serious Violence Strategy 2024-25

### 14. **Report Sign Off**

14.1 This report has been through the internal report clearance process and has been signed off by the Director for Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer), the Executive Director for Corporate Development (Section 151 Officer), the Corporate Director for Housing and Community Safety, the Executive Director for Adults and Housing and the appropriate Cabinet Member (s).