



DORSET POLICE & CRIME PANEL – 24 JULY 2025

ENHANCING SAFETY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF POLICY & COMMISSIONING

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This report provides a detailed response to the Dorset Police and Crime Panel's request for further assurance on measures to enhance the safety of women and girls. It outlines the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) oversight, public engagement, commissioning and partnership working, as well as reflections on adopting best practice.

The PCC ensures Dorset Police addresses the safety of women and girls through scrutiny and by monitoring performance. This includes tracking a comprehensive suite of indicators – such as domestic abuse and sexual assault outcomes, stalking arrest rates, and victim satisfaction. The Force Performance Board also conducts thematic “deep dives” to explore areas like victim disengagement and best practices in case handling. Public perception is a critical metric, with insights derived from surveys, victim feedback, and consultation with third-party organisations.

Public trust is shaped more by lived experience than by statistics. The PCC engages extensively with the community through correspondence, forums, targeted campaigns, and social media. The OPCC runs an annual safety survey and partnerships with charities, educational institutions, and women's networks further strengthen engagement.

The OPCC collaborates with statutory and voluntary agencies to tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG) across both urban and rural communities. The VAWG Scrutiny Panel, which reviews case handling and provides recommendations for improvement to the Force, was established by the PCC. The OPCC also supports education-based interventions and community safeguarding schemes like the Pineapple Project.

Dorset Police faces significant budget constraints. VAWG initiatives do not have ringfenced funding and many rely on limited-term grants like the Safer Streets Fund. Funding gaps challenge the sustainability of night-time safety patrols, CCTV coverage, and victim support services. The PCC continues to seek additional investment opportunities and collaborates with councils to enhance public space safety through Community Safety Accreditation Schemes (CSAS) and targeted patrols.

The safety of women and girls remains a top priority in Dorset. Through strong governance, broad engagement, collaborative partnerships, and creative resourcing, the PCC aims to foster safer communities. However, ongoing financial limitations and the need for sustained cultural and systemic change remain key challenges to long-term progress.

PURPOSE

This paper responds to the Dorset Police and Crime Panel's request for further assurance on community safety as it impacts women and girls. Building on previous written papers and verbal updates, and the PCC's December 2024 blog, this paper outlines current oversight, public engagement, financial context, partnership activity, and potential adoption of best practices from elsewhere. It also outlines a response to the following Key Lines of Enquiry:

- I. How is the PCC ensuring that the Chief Constable is addressing continuing concerns about women's safety, based not only on available data but also public perception?*
- II. How does the PCC engage with the public to understand the perception on safety and what measures are being taken to improve public confidence?*
- III. What are the financial challenges in this area and what additional resources can be given to increase safety both in and around key venues and on public transport?*
- IV. How is the PCC already working in partnership and what further can be done to develop a collective approach from all partners to tackle inappropriate behaviour towards women?*
- V. What is the PCC's views on the initiatives adopted in Westminster and what appetite is there to consider a similar strategy across Dorset?*

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The safety of women and girls in public and private spaces remains one of the most pressing challenges for policing and community safety. In Dorset, while significant progress has been made, the persistent disparity between recorded crime data and the lived experiences of women and girls suggests that much more must be done.
- 1.2 As a result, the Police and Crime Panel has received numerous and frequent updates on the PCC's work in this area, including an update on stalking, domestic abuse, and coercive control at the last Panel meeting in February.
- 1.3 The Panel has also specifically referred to the PCC blog of December 2024. This blog sits alongside numerous others, including in the last quarter: [the support available to victims of stalking](#); [the comprehensive service provided by Victim Support to victims of domestic abuse](#); [an overview of two specialist initiatives](#) – the Unity Promise in the BCP council area, and the Pineapple Project in the Dorset council area which focus on education, prevention and changing attitudes towards violence against women and girls; and [the work of the VAWG scrutiny panel](#).
- 1.4 Given that previous work mentioned, and recognising that both the Panel and members of the public have already had detailed information on the various initiatives underway, this paper will default from the usual position of providing a comprehensive overview of the services offered, and instead directly focus on each of the key lines of enquiry in turn, as per the Panel's specific request for further assurance.
- 1.5 Through this paper, the PCC therefore seeks to offer continued assurance to the Panel and public alike that women's safety remains a high priority and to outline the delivery challenges and opportunities for further action.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Improving women's safety cannot be approached purely through a criminal justice lens. A whole-system, multi-agency strategy is essential, particularly when it comes to addressing the societal and environmental factors that enable violence, harassment, and fear to persist.
- 2.2 Across Dorset we have a clear commitment to tackling violence against women and girls. Our approach reflects the national direction, recognising the many forms of violence against women and girls including a focus on areas of greatest risk to them. Areas such as domestic abuse, stalking, harassment, child abuse and exploitation, rape and sexual offending are key priorities for us all, with relentless work underway to protect and achieve justice for those affected.
- 2.3 The role of the PCC in this space is two-fold: to provide visible leadership and to act as a bridge between the police, partners, and the public. This includes advocating for and distributing funding, setting strategic priorities through the Police and Crime Plan, and ensuring the police service remains focused on keeping women and girls safe, despite an increasingly challenging delivery environment and financial context.
- 2.4 The challenges impacting the voluntary and community sector should be specifically highlighted. Whilst Government funding for universal victims' services has not met pace with demand, economies of scale of delivery and a relentless focus on efficiency has meant that to a degree there has been some mitigation. However, specialist services such as rape crisis centres, stalking and domestic abuse advocacy workers, and the provision of safe spaces for women are typically delivered by an under-funded third sector, which does not have the advantage of operating at scale, or with shared back-office systems or support services.
- 2.5 Whilst evidence from national reviews such as the HMICFRS thematic inspection into violence against women and girls (2021) and research conducted by organisations including YouGov and UN Women UK shows that public confidence remains deeply affected by both actual experiences and perceptions of safety, it should be recognised that Dorset faces unique challenges and opportunities.
- 2.6 As a county with urban centres, a thriving night-time economy, and large rural and coastal areas, a tailored approach to women's safety must be taken that recognises both geographic and demographic diversity, and takes account of significant populations changes during the course of the year as populations well over the summer period. Bournemouth and Poole face different issues from Bridport, Portland, or Shaftesbury – but all communities deserve a strategy that works for them.

3. GOVERNANCE

How is the PCC ensuring that the Chief Constable is addressing continuing concerns about women's safety, based not only on available data but also public perception?

- 3.1 The primary method of oversight and scrutiny of Dorset Police performance remains through the Force Performance Board, chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and attended by the OPCC's Chief Executive and Performance Manager. This Board sets and

scrutinises monthly delivery against the performance metrics and targets for Dorset Police in line with the Force's strategic vision and purpose and the priorities of the Police and Crime Plan.

3.2 Dorset Police has specific performance targets for a range of metrics aligned to tackling and reducing violence against women and girls, including but not limited to:

- Improving serious sexual assaults positive outcome rate
- Improving rape positive outcome rates
- Maintaining domestic abuse positive outcomes rates
- Improving the arrest rate of high-risk domestic abuse perpetrators
- Reducing the incidence of Outcome 16 (where a suspect is identified in a case, but the victim doesn't support further police action)
- Improving the stalking positive outcome rate
- Improving stalking arrest rates
- Improving file compliance submissions to CPS
- Improving management of high harm offenders
- Improving the use of civil orders (domestic violence prevention notices and orders, sexual harm prevention orders, stalking prevention orders)
- Improving victim care quality
- Improving victims' overall satisfaction rate
- Improving community perception of fairness
- Improving gender representation across ranks and roles.

Each one of these metrics is produced monthly and any performance exceptions are considered by the Board.

3.3 Additionally, the Board will undertake 'deep dives' into specific thematic areas – for example in recent months, the Board has:

- Considered evidence behind why victims typically disengaged from supporting police investigations and set out a range of opportunities to address these and drive further gains in positive outcome rates and achieving justice for victims.
- Identified specific teams across Dorset Police who were performing better in regards to rape and serious sexual offences outcomes, and codified their best practice including achieving earlier and more detailed advice from CPS as cases are being built, and strengthening processes around effective supervision and decision making.

3.4 As articulated under paragraph 3.2, several of the metrics relating to tackling violence against women and girls are specifically focussed on public perception, whether on an individual basis (through collected victim feedback, such as satisfaction rates and complaint figures), a community basis (via third-party services, focus groups or scrutiny panels) or on a wider basis (through surveys, for instance).

3.5 Of course, the Force and OPCC also make use of a variety of additional resources to assess public perception. This includes the broader consultation and engagement work undertaken by the OPCC (see section 4); information provided by charities, thinktanks and advocacy organisations; research by academic partners; and national surveys, such as the Crime Survey of England and Wales; and media analysis.

3.6 In addition, it is important to stress that individual Force strategies and plans are increasingly informed by the voice of the victim, as are OPCC commissioned services – again, ensuring that public perception, as well as criminal justice data, is used to assess performance.

4. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

How does the PCC engage with the public to understand the perception on safety and what measures are being taken to improve public confidence?

- 4.1 Although policing spends much of its time considering how public trust and confidence might be improved, the reality is that this is not as simple as one might expect. For example, a reduction in crime may not necessarily result in improved public confidence if those members of the public do not recognise the improvement that has been made. Our perception of crime, like that of other public services, is largely dependent upon our own experiences and so individuals may not feel safer, even if the statistics suggest that they are. It is understood then, that much of our work in this space will not have an immediate impact, nor indeed a tangible impact at all, instead the objective being that an ongoing shift in culture and increase in understanding will progressively improve the comparative levels of public confidence.
- 4.2 With that said, the PCC uses multiple channels to understand and improve public perception, including face-to-face and online surveys, attending community forums and meetings, and targeted campaigns.
- 4.3 It is also important to note that – although not outlined in detail here for the sake of brevity – the PCC and OPCC regularly contribute to the engagement activities carried out by the Force and other partner agencies. This includes the dissemination of partner campaigns via OPCC channels, the provision and undertaking of PCC quotes and interviews, and other activities such as helping with the logistics of events, or perhaps the PCC delivering speeches at events, to list a few examples.
- 4.4 In terms of specific engagement activity that the PCC undertakes, this is extensive and ongoing. First, as the Panel will be aware and, is outlined within the Annual Report, the PCC is directly contacted by thousands of members of the public each year. As expected, a proportion of this correspondence will naturally include information, questions and ideas from residents and organisations relating to violence against women and girls. Key themes from external correspondence are collated and information is used by the OPCC to inform scrutiny activity and ‘sense-check’ the work of the Force.
- 4.5 The information provided via public contact is supplemented not only by the many and varied public meetings that the PCC attends each year, but also specific engagements with relevant charities, women’s networks, educational establishments and community groups about violence against women and girls. Naturally, such meetings provide an insight into public perception, while also giving the PCC an opportunity to talk through the positive work being implemented in Dorset.
- 4.6 Of course, OPCC maintains and monitors a range of engagement platforms, with several thousand social media followers. Members of the public using those channels are directly engaged with as appropriate and key issues, in particular about feelings of safety, are escalated to the PCC. Similarly, the OPCC attends a wider variety of public events to seek the public’s views and discuss safety matters and public perception is also fed into the OPCC via our community volunteers and our scrutiny panel members.
- 4.7 On top of this engagement activity, the Panel will be familiar with the extensive surveying undertaken by the OPCC each year. This includes an annual safety survey which is used to understand public perception about the police and feelings of safety. This survey captures public perception data on those crime types most commonly identified with violence against women and girls, such as domestic abuse, sexual assault, stalking and drink spiking. Whilst these are not exclusively offences relating to violence against women and girls, women and girls are disproportionately affected by these crime types.

4.8 As noted throughout this paper, the PCC does not work alone in his efforts to engage the public and improve public confidence, with both local Community Safety Partnerships identifying VAWG as a priority area to tackle. Indeed, OPCC and partners work together to change public perception through various means, such as education and co-ordination of safe spaces. Examples of this are:

- **Walk and Talk Scheme** was piloted across 2023 and 2024 by Dorset Police in Weymouth, Portland and Dorchester. This scheme offers the opportunity for members of the public to walk areas they feel unsafe in with officers, describe their thoughts and concerns, and hopefully witness that it isn't unsafe. The take-up of these pilot schemes was disappointingly poor and as a result the Force Lead is currently considering different approaches to the scheme.
- **Women running at night survey** by Dorset Police. This was delivered to better understand the experience of female runners, especially after dark. The survey received 422 responses from across Dorset, and some of the key findings from the survey include:
 - 80% of women change their route due to safety concerns
 - 92% avoid certain areas when running
 - 61% have experienced or witnessed inappropriate behaviour when running
 - 57% have experienced verbal abuse
 - 63% have experienced wolf whistling / cat calling
 - 30% have had their path blocked
 - 27% have been followed
 - 9% have been touched

Survey respondents also reported that these incidents are not contained to the evening or night, and that they are also harassed at all times of the day. The next steps for this project are being developed by the police lead.

5. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

How is the PCC already working in partnership and what further can be done to develop a collective approach from all partners to tackle inappropriate behaviour towards women?

- 5.1 Violence against women and girls, and indeed the safety of all in our communities, remains a key priority for statutory partners across Dorset. It is recognised that success is rarely achieved alone so partners, both statutory and non-statutory, work alongside communities to achieve our ambition.
- 5.2 The partnership delivery landscape in Dorset is well established and the OPCC and police work closely with Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole and with Dorset to proactively maintain community safety and prevent crime and disorder – through community safety partnerships, a multi-agency safeguarding hub, both adult and child safeguarding boards, and a variety of other partnership structures.
- 5.3 Whilst it would be the preference of both Dorset Police and the OPCC for there to be a single VAWG strategy and action plan, supported by a shared KPI suite, policing absolutely recognises partners' view of the necessity to have bespoke tactical plans for specific local issues, demographics, communities, and geographies. The PCC also recognises partners' view that to not have these specific, local plans would weaken and not strengthen the collective partnership response to VAWG.

- 5.4 Likewise, it is understood that partners do not currently support the production of a pan-Dorset set of KPIs, albeit this is with a clear rationale of guarding against the risk of masking hot spots and trends which require a specific and local targeted response.
- 5.5 The OPCC, however, continues to work hard to bring different groups together to build consensus, and to share understanding and prioritisation at a strategic, rather than tactical level. Last year, for example, the OPCC organised a conference for professionals working to tackle VAWG. The event, specifically for education professionals included teachers, childcare staff, and others in the sector, was focused on keeping our children and young people safe, with a particular emphasis on early years children (aged 0-11 years old).
- 5.6 Speakers at the event covered a broad range of topics including a case study example of a child in an early year setting displaying concerning behaviour, where professionals were reminded to be alert to the signs which could be linked to domestic abuse or sexual assault. A Detective Inspector presented on the work of the Child Abuse Team. The Forensic Paediatrician from the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) explained their work and dispelled myths around child examinations. This was followed by staff from Paragon, who explained the work they undertake as Young Person's Domestic Abuse Advisors and STARS attended to share the work they are undertaking to raise awareness for the support available to victims. Attendees were then welcomed to network, engage and discuss together their experiences and support each other.
- 5.7 There was representation from a wide range of organisations, including: Respected, The Pineapple Project, Acts Fast, Safempowerment, STARS, Paragon, The Shores (SARC), Dorset Police and the OPCC. The event included engagement stands for attendees to have an opportunity to learn about the great work and services available to support them, share ideas and feedback.
- 5.8 The OPCC has also set up a VAWG Scrutiny Panel, which reviews the handling of public contact relating to VAWG cases such as rape, stalking and domestic abuse to ensure these reports are being handled appropriately. This Panel includes membership from a variety of statutory and non-statutory groups including:
- Dorset Police VAWG Lead
 - Dorset Police Strategic Lead (for the respective area)
 - Local Authority DA Leads
 - Dorset Domestic Abuse Forum Chair
 - STARS Dorset
 - Paragon
 - Victim Support
 - BCHA
 - Dorset SARC
 - Independent Member (x2)
- 5.9 The Panel considers cases on a quarterly basis, and a redacted example of a case is outlined below for insight into the work undertaken by the panel.

VAWG Scrutiny Panel Case Example

The victim was approached by a vehicle whilst out walking. The vehicle had its window down and the victim witnessed a male without any trousers on and appearing to be masturbating. The victim carried on her journey on foot and minutes later, the suspect reappeared in his vehicle and stopped the victim again.

Police officers located the suspect an hour later in his vehicle and he was arrested for outraging public decency. The suspect admitted the offence.

Officers attended the victim's home address to obtain a witness statement and complete a victims' needs assessment. The victim was provided with information about Victim Support and relevant material to help support her later giving evidence at court. The Victim was updated as to the outcome of the interview and that the suspect was charged.

Overall, the VAWG panel felt the incident was handled sensitively and calmly and from the early stages police staff checked the victim's welfare on several occasions, had a good level of empathy and seemed to put her at ease. Only one area was found for improvement, which was in relation to follow up support, in acknowledgement that sometimes victim might not feel the impact of the events until a later date, and it should have been made clearer that support could be access at a later point if needed.

5.10 As a result of this overview and scrutiny, the OPCC provides case specific feedback to Dorset Police for learning. This has included, for example, feedback regarding control room processes and systems, such as concerns regarding callers hearing a dial tone when placed on hold, the need for a more empathetic response, and reassuring callers that officers are on route.

5.11 In the event reoccurring issues are identified, which has not occurred to date, these will be formally raised with the Force Lead to establish relevant action to resolve.

5.12 **Safer Streets Fund**

In addition to the above, the OPCC, in partnership with the Local Authorities, bid for round 5 of the Home Office Safer Streets Fund, subsequently being awarded £785,055.

5.13 The fund invited PCCs, in collaboration with local partners, to bid for initiatives to tackle VAWG, improve safety, and the perception of safety in areas identified as problematic. Round 5 of the fund was focused mainly on VAWG but also included burglary and acquisitive crime.

5.14 The fund included initiatives such as:

- **CCTV – Bournemouth**

16 CCTV cameras installed across Bournemouth, including Horseshoe Common and Westcliff. These areas were identified as key routes out of the night-time economy (NTE) with poor lighting and natural surveillance.

- **CCTV – Weymouth, and Town Council Connectivity**

Dorset Council purchased five redeployable CCTV cameras for Weymouth, installing them on key routes out of the NTE to provide additional surveillance for previously unobserved routes. The hope is that this will provide a visual deterrent for potential offenders as well as enabling identification of crime and suspects.

The grant also funded CCTV connectivity for Town Councils across Dorset, to the Dorchester control room. Previously, Town Council CCTV was not monitored and used retrospectively only, whereas the new connection provides 24/7 monitoring. The following areas have been connected to the Dorchester Control room: Blandford, Gillingham, Lyme Regis, Swanage, Sherborne and Wimborne.

- **Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole Unity Promise – Bournemouth**

This saw 40 venues across Bournemouth sign up to actively promote safety in the NTE, reassuring their employees and customers that they take women's safety

seriously. This includes training for staff in bars, pubs and nightclubs in how to recognise unhealthy behaviour and steps to protect potential victims.

- **Alcohol & Consent Training – Across BCP**

STARS Dorset were commissioned to provide educational inputs for 15 to 20-year-olds, focusing on consent, respectful relationships and bystander awareness training. Recruiting three additional roles, this education saw more than 2,900 students engaged with a further 62 consent events delivered.

- **Community Guardianship Intervention**

Security staff recruited to conduct patrols every Friday and Saturday night in Bournemouth from 10pm to 2am. Further expansion saw patrols started on Tuesday and Thursday nights. The interactions with the patrols have covered a variety of issues ranging from picking up broken bottles, waiting with drunk people until their lift turns up, helping to call taxis for people who are stranded, guiding people in the right direction for their hotels, calling ambulances for people who have been hurt in a fight and providing ad hoc support as needed.

- **Licensing Security and Vulnerability Initiative (LSAVI) – Dorset**

LSAVI is a self-assessment tool designed to help licensed premises provide a safer and more secure environment for their managers, staff, customers and local communities, covering topics such as, VAWG, drink spiking, CSE, violence, ASB, theft and burglary. Visits have been undertaken by the Licensing team and Dorset Police's Alcohol Harm Reduction team to encourage engagement.

- **The Pineapple Project – Weymouth, Portland & Dorchester**

Expansion of the Pineapple Project in Weymouth, Portland & Dorchester. The aim of the scheme is to safeguard young women in the community by partner shops and premises offering a safe space for women and girls should one be needed. 17 venues across Weymouth, Portland and Dorchester have gone through the vetting process, and the team have also visited schools and colleges where they have engaged with hundreds of young people to highlight the support they offer.

6. FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

What are the financial challenges in this area and what additional resources can be given to increase safety both in and around key venues and on public transport?

- 6.1 The financial predicament of Dorset Police is a matter of record, and Panel members are well versed in the challenges – suffice to say then that Dorset Police have had to, and are planning to, achieve over £15m pounds in savings through 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26, against a current operating budget of £183m.
- 6.2 The financial challenges in this area, therefore, are no different from other priority delivery areas. It should also be recognised that VAWG is a multifaceted issue and as a result does not have a specific or ringfenced budget allocation in its own right. That is not to say that funding is not prioritised for VAWG offences, quite the opposite in fact, with crime types such as domestic abuse and sexual violence prevention and victim services being prioritised across policing and partner agencies. However, the root causes of violence against women and girls are broad and investment is required right across the public and private system to drive improvements.
- 6.3 Indeed, were this a police funding issue alone, the challenges might arguably be more easily articulated and addressed. However, it is well recognised that wider societal and public health factors are at play – be that the education and support provided to boys

and young men, the impact of adverse childhood experiences, addiction, media/social media influence, and many other factors besides.

- 6.4 Specifically on budgets though, the cycle of competitive bidding, and time-limited and new funding initiatives is challenging and creates an environment of uncertainty, making it difficult to embed long-term solutions and develop sustainable partnerships with the private and voluntary sectors. By way of example, this paper articulates how a suite of initiatives designed to improve the safety of women at night have been piloted through various grant schemes, such as Safer Streets Fund, in very recent years. However, following the cessation of that funding, it has not always been possible to fully mainstream the delivery of those initiatives within existing budgets. That means that several of the various schemes and initiatives listed throughout this paper, whilst still operational, are not as fully funded as they once were and so have reduced in operation and scale over recent years.
- 6.5 Similarly, these funding constraints are also felt at the national level, and there has been some reduction in the delivery of national schemes in recent years, such as the:
- Railway Guardian app operated by British Transport Police, which allows users to share their journey with trusted contacts, and to directly contact BTP staff; and the
 - Enough campaign, which encourages everyone – but particularly men – to recognise, and safely call out and intervene when they witness inappropriate behaviour towards women and girls, often from within their own peer groups.
- 6.6 Even with a tighter, more local focus, the issue of safety is not merely the responsibility of the OPCC or police. Public place safety is hugely influenced by local authority investment and budgets. However, it is fully recognised that enhancing safety of women and girls by improving the physical infrastructure – for example through better lighting, CCTV, availability of bus or private hire services – requires significant capital investment, and that retrofitting existing venues or transport areas can be prohibitively expensive.
- 6.7 It is also equally realised that enhancing staffing for visible patrols, or dedicated contact or safety points, particularly those associated with the NTE, will require funding costly overtime, or increasing provisions for staff working at unsocial hours, and this can also be prohibitively expensive. However, the PCC assists with some of these budgets where possible. For example, the PCC provides annual funding towards CSAS schemes in Boscombe, Poole and Weymouth, which provide high visibility patrols during the day and night-time hours. These employees are council staff who have been accredited with limited police powers to deal with lower-level crime.
- 6.8 Equally, the OPCC, alongside partner agencies, will continue to explore opportunities to bid to Government funds to enable us to deliver evidence led programmes of work to prevent crime (see paragraph 5.12 onwards for further detail).

7. 'AFTER DARK' STRATEGY

What is the PCC's view on the initiatives adopted in Westminster and what appetite is there to consider a similar strategy across Dorset?

- 7.1 In March 2025, Westminster City Council launched its inaugural 'After Dark' strategy and implementation plan to improve the city's evening and night-time environment. The draft strategy closed for public consultation on 22 June, and at the time of writing, the final version of the strategy is planned for publication and implementation.
- 7.2 This strategy includes:

- Enhanced safety measures including expanded CCTV, better lighting and greater protections for women and vulnerable individuals.
- Dedicated Late-Night Entertainment Zones to encourage new live music and entertainment venues to set up away from residential areas.
- Improved accessibility and more family friendly or non-alcoholic activities.
- Support for LGBTQ+ venues.
- Improved night-time public spaces with amenities and inclusive design to create a welcoming environment for all.

- 7.3 The Westminster strategy appears to offer a comprehensive approach to managing the night-time economy by balancing safety, inclusivity, and economy. Given Dorset's existing initiatives and challenges, developing a localised version of this strategy might be beneficial, and would build on the existing work underway in BCP and Dorset to maintain a vibrant night-time economy whilst maintaining a clear commitment to safety, inclusivity, and diversity.
- 7.4 Given such a strategy would be local authority-led and recognising that both BCP Council and Dorset Council are well placed to lead the development of such a strategy, and undertake a broad public consultation, both Dorset Police and the OPCC would be content to be key delivery partners – in particular, contributing to the safety and enforcement aspects of the strategy.
- 7.5 When focusing on the section relevant to policing and crime prevention, it is evident that some of the activities detailed in the 'After Dark' Strategy align to the work delivered across the county over the last two years through the Home Office Safer Streets Grant (see paragraph 5.12).
- 7.6 Therefore, in the absence of a specific strategy, it offers reassurance that partners in Dorset can evidence they are prioritising and delivering initiatives and embedding best practice locally to help reduce VAWG and help make women and girls feel safer when out in our communities.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the report.

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