

Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 15 February 2023

Community Safety Agreement 2023 - 2026

Recommendation

- a. I recommend that the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews and comments on this report relating to the Community Safety Agreement 2023-2026 within Staffordshire.

Local Member Interest:

N/A

Report of Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

Summary

1. The report has been prepared at the request of the Chair of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update Members on the partnership priorities within the Agreement and outlines how Staffordshire County Council is meeting its statutory duties related to Community Safety.

Background

2. The Community Safety Agreement (CSA) outlines the key community safety priorities for Staffordshire. It is reviewed and refreshed every three years. The CSA can be viewed as Appendix 4 of this document.
3. The CSA is mandatory for two tier authorities and helps us to meet our statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (as amended by the Police and Justice Act 2006) in which responsible authorities are required to consider crime and disorder in the delivery of all their duties.
4. Staffordshire County Council must meet the obligations of the statutory duty but also has an additional role in providing the overarching governance for community safety partnership (CSP) priorities.
5. The 2023-2026 CSA aims to develop a joined-up approach to public service delivery, to enable more effective and co-ordinated strategic planning across partner agencies and to ensure sustainable and lasting improvements in delivering outcomes. It recognises that community

safety issues do not always respect district boundaries, and that coordination of effort can lead to economies of scale, and more effective outcomes.

Governance

6. The Staffordshire Community Safety Partnership, known as the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategy Group (SSCSG) is responsible for the efficient and effective delivery of the Staffordshire Community Safety Agreement priorities to comply with statutory responsibilities.
7. The group is chaired by the County Council Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture. Membership includes senior officers from across the responsible authorities: Staffordshire Police, Staffordshire District & Borough Councils, Staffordshire County Council, Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service, NHS, and Probation Service and non-statutory agencies.

Countywide Partnership Priorities

8. The Staffordshire Community Safety Strategic Assessment and the eight District and Borough Strategic Assessments identify the priorities that sit within the CSA. These assessments draw upon data held by partners and include emerging issues with input from a wide range of stakeholders, including District Community Safety Partnerships.
9. The areas identified as Local Community Safety County Wide partnership cross cutting priorities are detailed below. There are local priorities contained within the local community safety strategic assessments sitting at District/Borough CSP level which will be included in their local plans (e.g. vehicle crime, rural crime).
 - a. Domestic Abuse
 - b. Community Cohesion & Tackling Extremism
 - c. Serious Violence and Violence against Women and Girls
 - d. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
 - e. Drug Supply & County Lines
 - f. Fraud
 - g. Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons (incl. Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health) and Child Exploitation

Locality Priorities

10. In addition to the thematic priorities, the Knowledge Hub at Staffordshire Police has identified localities within Staffordshire which, due to levels of crime, disorder, vulnerability, and risk, would benefit the most from a

strong partnership focus, in order to address long-standing challenges and vulnerabilities.

11. These areas have been identified through a combination of different elements of local area data (including crime, ASB and police intelligence and insight) covering multiple years, including pre-pandemic. Assessment of areas considers levels of crime and disorder over time and the overall levels of vulnerability and risk in each area. The local authorities listed below have specific wards identified within their boundaries where a more holistic approach is required.

- a. East Staffordshire
- b. Cannock
- c. Stafford
- d. Newcastle-under-Lyme

12. Areas have also been identified as a local priority using the same data used to identify force-wide priority localities. Risks in these areas are considered in the context of their local Safety Partnership area and appropriate responses will be included in local policing and CSP plans.

Reporting performance against priorities

13. In addition to coordinating the Community Safety priorities and producing a Community Safety Agreement, Staffordshire County Council has to meet the legislative requirements in its own right to ensure compliance.

14. The SSCSG is directly responsible for monitoring performance and holding partners to account for the following partnership priorities:

- a. Community Cohesion and Tackling Extremism
- b. Fraud
- c. Locality priorities for East Staffs, Stafford, Newcastle, and Cannock

15. The partnership priorities are outlined in further detail within sections six to eight of the Report.

Community Cohesion and tackling extremism

16. This priority is divided in two with two leads reporting into the SASCSG. Tackling extremism is reported by the Prevent Coordinator at SCC whilst the Community Cohesion reporting is coordinated by the Support Staffordshire partner representative.

17. **Tackling Extremism** - Staffordshire County Council is a specified authority for tackling extremism under the Prevent Duty.
18. As part of the Prevent duty SCC has a coordinating role and the implementation of Prevent is overseen by a multi-agency Prevent Board, chaired by the County Commissioner for Regulatory Services and Community Safety. The Board meets quarterly and receives input and guidance from a Home Office Regional Advisor for Prevent acting as a critical friend.
19. The Prevent Board reports into the Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent CONTEST partnership Board, which oversees all the counter-terrorism strands of activity and is chaired by Staffordshire Police. The Prevent Board also provides updates to the SSCSG on performance within Staffordshire.
20. The priorities for the Prevent Board are informed by the annual Counter Terrorism Local Profile (CTLP), presented by West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit (WMCTU) and completion of the Home Office Self-Assessment Tool Kit. A delivery plan is developed to drive partnership working to meet the requirements of the Prevent Duty and to respond to and manage risk. Progress against the Prevent Delivery Plan is reported to the Prevent Board on a quarterly basis.
21. The current priorities contained in the Prevent partnership Delivery Plan are as follows:
 - a. Training,
 - b. Completion of the Home Office Prevent Duty toolkit,
 - c. Safeguarding,
 - d. Young people,
 - e. Online threat,
 - f. Referral pathways
22. These are also priorities for SCC and progress is ongoing with a key priority area for delivery this year being refresher training for relevant staff.
23. Training has previously taken place for all staff in SCC, and refresher training has recently become available after a delay to the national system rollout. The Community Safety Team are currently working with Learning and Development colleagues to host the training on SCC's own IT platform via a link to the Home Office site. This will enable evidence of course completion to be captured in line with the Duty requirements. Further face to face training from the Home Office is currently being developed and once this is available, it will be reviewed and rolled out to appropriate staff.

24. Staffordshire schools have held Prevent focused briefings and Prevent featured in the Council's recent Education Safeguarding Conference. There has also been a Prevent briefing carried out for adult social care staff.
25. In addition, development training has taken place for Channel panel Core Members alongside specific training for the Chair and Deputy Chair.
26. At the latest Prevent board a presentation was delivered by a CTU analyst who provided reassurance to the board on the referral process within Staffordshire. The presentation showed that referrals in Staffordshire are received from a wide variety of different organisations and the number of referrals converting into cases progressing to Channel is operating at a conversation rate of around 25%. This is significantly higher than other local authorities within the West Midlands and indicates that the referrals in Staffordshire are of good quality.
27. The Council recently received feedback from the Home Office as part of the annual self-assessment process. The Feedback acknowledged that the partnership has progressed significantly over the last 12 months which has been attributed to the support and commitment of the partners, and the ongoing commitment and support of SCC via the Prevent Board Chair and the County Commissioner for Community Safety.
28. **Community Cohesion** describes the ability of all communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict. It can therefore be used as a measure of how well different minority and majority communities develop and relate to each other and this is led by Support Staffordshire on behalf of the partnership for reporting activity to the SSCSG.
29. At the last SSCSG meeting, a new set of indicators was proposed and accepted. These were agreed and will be reported on at future meetings:
 - a. Indicator 1: People are able to actively contribute to their community through volunteering.
 - b. Indicator 2: People are able to come together within local communities to discuss challenges and problem solve together.
 - c. Indicator 3: People from diverse backgrounds are supported to feel included, respected and celebrated in local communities.

Fraud

30. This priority is Police led and regular reports are provided to update the Board on progress.

31. Fraud offences are recorded and collated by Action Fraud at the City of London. Fraud offences have been rising steadily over several years with reporting figures believed to be significantly less than the actual number of fraud victims. The scale of the issue is difficult to measure as many victims never report their involvement or hide their financial loss from family and friends for fear of being blamed for their involvement (Cross, 2016).
32. The annual assessment for Fraud and Cybercrime for 2022-2023 highlights Fraud as one of the UK's Strategic crime issues and forms part of the Strategic Policing Requirement from April 2023. National Fraud reporting is down 15% on the previous year. Social media continues to be a key enabler for Fraud and Cybercrime.
33. In 2022 to 2023 there were 4852 incidents of Fraud and Cybercrime reported by Staffordshire residents. This represents a reduction of 14% from 5642 reported in 2021-2022
34. It should be noted that Staffordshire Police have not investigated all the reports. They are assessed at the centre and distributed accordingly based on positive lines of enquiry for the suspect. Therefore, the numbers of investigations go up and down dependent on positive investigations within the area.
35. The Police Cyber Champion Programme designed to address online fraud is now delivering both internal and external courses which Staffordshire police are participating in.
36. Much of the police activity is concentrated on Cyber incidents and they are looking to increase resource to allow more work to be conducted in the Fraud space.
37. Staffordshire Police representatives also attended the recent National SOCEX conference where Fraud and Cybercrime was a key feature. The subject matter discussed will develop the Staffordshire direction going forward.
38. The conference highlighted that 89% of fraud is cyber enabled and there were 3 million victims of Fraud that reported their incidents in 2022-2023 which equates to 41% of all crime.
39. Regular contact is maintained with City of London Police to understand the work being completed and to achieve a joined-up approach to fraud incidents at the point of handover from action fraud to Staffordshire Police.

40. A new computer system is expected during 2024 which aims to transform the quality of disseminations from Action Fraud and also improve the Victim experience when reporting and with updates available online. It is recognised that this may increase figures and demand but is expected to improve understanding of how much fraud currently goes unreported.

Locality priorities

41. As highlighted at paragraph 11, four District/Boroughs have areas identified within the latest Community Safety Strategic Assessment where a more holistic approach to Policing is required.

42. The East Staffordshire, Newcastle, Cannock, and Stafford CSP managers, together with the relevant District/Borough Police Chief Inspector are work together to tackle issues in their area.

43. SSCSG Members have agreed that there will be a deep dive into one of the localities at each meeting so that partners can understand the actions being taken to reduce the crime in the location.

44. At the last SSCSG meeting Cannock District provided the first of these updates and highlighted a number of actions that had been undertaken so far. These are included as Appendix 1 of the Report:

Community Safety Priorities updates reported to SSCSG for priorities where governance lies elsewhere.

45. Where there are existing governance arrangements in place to report against these priorities and hold partners to account, the aim is not to duplicate effort or reporting wherever possible. Regular updates are provided to the SSCSG for information where governance is through alternative Boards.

46. The following priorities are included in the Community Safety Agreement where governance arrangements are sitting outside of the Safer and Stronger Board

- a. Domestic Abuse
- b. Serious Violence Serious Violence and Violence against Women and Girls
- c. Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)
- d. Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons (incl. Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health) and Child Exploitation

Domestic Abuse

47. Members will be aware that Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office (SCO) have jointly re-commissioned Domestic Abuse (DA) services across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, with the SCO acting as lead commissioner. Services include provision for victims, perpetrators, children, and young people.
48. New contracts have been established with Victim Support, (branded as New Era) for the provision of both victim and perpetrator services, for a five year period (3 years with option for a further two, one year periods) and commenced on 1 October 2023.
49. Overarching governance for the contract is provided by the Domestic Abuse Commissioning and Delivery Board (DACDB) which is jointly chaired by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire County Council representatives.
50. A report is included on this Committee's work programme for 2024 for Scrutiny by Members of performance when the new contract has been operational for six months.
51. DA Co-Commissioners monitor performance through quarterly and annual service reviews, and non-commercially sensitive data is reported to the DACDB in support of the pan Staffordshire DA Performance Framework.
52. Following the completion of the initial 5 year contract with New Era some highlight performance outcomes are included in Appendix 2 of this report.

Serious Violence and Violence against Women and Girls

53. Overarching governance of this priority is via the Serious Violence Executive Board reporting into Staffordshire and Stoke Community Safety Strategic Forum chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner
54. Updates to the SSCSG are provided by joint leads from Staffordshire Police and the Police and Crime Commissioners Office.
55. The SSCSG receives an overview of work undertaken by partners, under the remit of the Violence Reduction Alliance (VRA), to implement the agreed Serious Violence Strategy and violence reduction initiatives.
56. SCC discharges its responsibility in respect of the serious violence duty through the VRA. Staffordshire Police have ring-fenced resource to

support the advancement of the serious violence strategy, VRA and prevention approach to serious violence.

57. A Violence Reduction Alliance website has been developed and is now live. This website can be viewed on the following link <https://violencereductionalliance.co.uk/>

58. There is a refreshed Violence Reduction Alliance Strategy due to be launched early in 2024 and a performance framework to demonstrate improvement, relating to the strategy and priority areas will be developed for regular reporting and scrutiny.

59. An overview of the activity of the VRA has been included as Appendix 3 to this Report.

Anti-Social behaviour

60. This is a police led priority and ASB is managed locally at a District / Borough level.

61. The Police and Crime Commissioner commission a service covering Stoke and Staffordshire to provide support for ASB victims and Victim support, branded as Harmony provide support in these areas. The Community Safety Commissioning officer at SCC is a member of the contract performance management meetings and contributed to the partner panel for the procurement exercise.

62. As part of additional funding available for increased presence of police and other uniformed authority figures in problem areas for ASB, in 2023 Staffordshire was allocated £2m to over the next two financial years. Conditions for this funding include a having a visible increase in presence and a multi-agency response is required.

63. There has already been effective partnership working between Newcastle Under Lyme Borough Council, commissioned services and the third sector resulting in better information sharing and better use of legislation in the town centre, with a Public Safety Protection Order now in place for the town centre.

64. This approach has resulted in some positive outcomes with a reduction of 10% in ASB incidents in the town centre and crime reducing since July 2023.

65. There are a number of reporting requirements that Staffordshire Police have to provide for the Home Office and regular updates on progress is reported to the SSCSG on an ongoing basis.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Persons (incl. Alcohol, Drugs and Mental Health) and Child Exploitation (CE)

66. The Child Exploitation lead for the County Council is the Head of Futures Matters, within the Children and Families Directorate.
67. Previously a joint CE Task Group with Stoke-on-Trent, was in place, however there is now a Staffordshire only partnership group addressing the needs of children who are missing and those at risk of exploitation/being exploited. This group is jointly chaired by the Police and the Local Authority.
68. The newly formed group reports directly into the Childrens Safeguarding Scrutiny and Assurance Partnership, however an update report is also provided to SSCSG for information.
69. In relation to alcohol, drugs, and mental health priorities, these are considered within the Health and Wellbeing Board's remit and governance is provided by the Health Scrutiny Board.

Drug Supply and County Lines

70. There is a national approach to this work via the National Crime Agency, with local strategic ownership sitting at Chief Superintendent level. Reporting of activity is not included in the CSA, but this paragraph has been included in the Report for completeness as ad hoc reporting is provided by police representative on the Safer and Stronger Communities Strategies group when appropriate.

Link to Strategic Plan

71. This Report links with the following County Council's strategic priority:
-Encourage good health and wellbeing, resilience, and independence.

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

72. N/A

Community Impact

73. N/A

List of Background Documents/Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Domestic Abuse Outcomes

Appendix 2 – Cannock Locality actions
Appendix 3 – Violence Reduction Alliance Activity to date
Appendix 4 – Community Safety Agreement 2023- 2026

Contact Details

Assistant Director: Catherine Mann, Interim Assistant Director for Culture, Rural and Safer Communities

Report Author: Trish Caldwell
Job Title: County Commissioner, Regulatory Services and Community Safety

Telephone No.: 01785277284

E-Mail Address: Trish.Caldwell@staffordshire.gov.uk

Report Author: Fiona Chapman
Job Title: Commissioning Officer, Community Safety

Telephone No.: 07815827769

E-Mail Address: Fiona.Chapman@staffordshire.gov.uk