

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Report

Committee:	Policy and Resources Select Committee
Date:	5 November 2020
Title:	Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group
Report From:	Director of Adults' Health and Care

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Purpose of this Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work of the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group.

Recommendation

2. That the Policy and Resources Select Committee note the progress on the work of the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group (HCSSG) in establishing strategic community safety priorities for Hampshire and for overseeing effective multi-agency collaborative arrangements.

Executive Summary

3. This report seeks to provide an update and assurance on progress of the work of the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group in overseeing multi-agency collaboration at the county level in pursuit of agreed community safety priorities.

Contextual information

4. The Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group (HCSSG) was (re) established in July 2018 and meets quarterly. It is required to prepare a Community Safety Agreement based on a strategic assessment for the area and to oversee the county-level collaborative arrangements for addressing these priorities and how the responsible authorities under community safety legislation might otherwise work together to reduce crime and disorder or combat substance misuse.

Membership of the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group (HCSSG)

5. The HCSSG is chaired by the Director of Adults' Health and Care and is attended by the Director of Children's Services, Director of Public Health, the Assistant Chief Executive and leads from Emergency Planning, Mental Health and Substance Misuse, Safeguarding Services for Children and Adults, Trading Standards, Supporting Families and the Youth Offending Team. Senior partners attend from representing HMP Winchester, the National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Service, Hampshire Constabulary, Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, the Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group Partnership, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, the Local Criminal Justice Board, the Civilian Military Partnership, district and borough housing services, and community safety officers from Hampshire's district and borough community safety partnerships. Lead officers from Portsmouth and Southampton attend as observers.

Hampshire Strategic Assessment for Community Safety and Hampshire Community Safety Agreement.

6. The HCSSG has agreed a Strategic Assessment in March 2019 and reported to Policy and Resources Select Committee in November 2019 and Cabinet in December 2019. This remains a live document reflecting dynamic national and local priorities. Following the December 2019 Cabinet, the Strategic Assessment and County Agreement were updated to include the Serious Violence Problem profile for Hampshire and the multi-agency Response Plan prepared by the Hampshire Violence Reduction Unit. This element and the central funding contribution for 2020-21 were subsequently approved by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Home Office in February 2020. The strategic assessment and Community Safety Agreement will be updated for March 2021 with regard to updates in the Police Force Assessment, the Joint Strategic Needs assessment and the Serious Violence Problem profile.

Oversight of the county-wide multi agency arrangements in delivering the Community Safety Agreement.

7. The HCSSG has reviewed progress quarterly against the strategic priorities in the Community Safety Agreement and continues to provide assurance of continual strategic collaborative arrangements. During its last two meetings, there has been a specific focus on the impact of Covid-19 on the strategic priorities and collaborative arrangements. Below is a summary of the key developments against each priority:

Priority 1 – The threat of serious organised crime, especially related to the exploitation of children, including 'county lines' gangs

8. Nationally Covid-19 has had little impact on the county lines and serious organised crime activity with business models operating as usual with some changed methods of operation. This remains an area of focus for partnership activity around serious and organised crime. There are identified national risks being addressed relating to:

- a shift from travelling county lines drugs suppliers to recruitment of young people living in counties
 - targeting young people who had no current involvement with services -a “clean skin” approach.
 - a reduction in the quality and purity of drugs due to reduced supply
9. In Hampshire intelligence was showing little evidence of price and quality changes. Hampshire Constabulary had participated in Operation Venetic where nationally £50m drugs had been seized which is modest progress against a backdrop of the UK being the highest importer of cocaine and heroin in Europe.
 10. Under Operation Monument Hampshire Constabulary has continued work with the London Metropolitan, West Midlands and Merseyside forces representing the key supply sources for county lines with around 80% of Hampshire’s county lines trade originating from London. In Hampshire this has focused on the “middle market” where much of the activity is co-ordinated. Regional and local drugs networks and county lines activities had been mapped with county lines activity predominant in the north of the county and more established local drugs networks in Southampton. A dedicated team is driving enforcement activity which is producing positive results with arrests with sufficient evidence to secure remands and prosecutions often with guilty pleas for drug supply offences. Importantly this is also yielding good intelligence to reveal other networks and vulnerable people being targeted for exploitation. The constabulary is working closely with districts in tactical co-ordinating meetings and Fortress meetings to develop safeguarding plans for those identified at risk. A peer review of all districts is being conducted to ensure consistency and quality of approach and the outcome will be shared with partners. The sharing of intelligence with MET teams and children’s partnerships is critical and there is specific work around missing people who are deemed high risk.
 11. The Constabulary, working with the multi-agency Violence Reduction Unit is also looking to adopt amended practices for police encounters with under 25s, including stop and search, introducing a trauma informed approach in line with a common strategic approach by partners.
 12. The challenges being addressed by partners include limitations in the safeguarding powers of local authorities, including for children in local authority care, to restrict movement, monitor and manage behaviour, including where individuals are attempting to pursue financial gain. This complexity emphasises the need to continue to develop mutual understanding of roles and powers, and work closely to manage risk using expertise such as that in the Willow Team.
 13. In terms of preventative approaches there is a focus on partnership activity with Project Gateway, the Youth Offending Team and local children’s partnerships to determine the underlying risk and issues driving involvement of young people and to break the cycle, providing positive opportunities and creating aspiration. Excluded children remains a concerning area for focus. Police Education Partnership managers are working closely with schools and local

authorities to ensure a long-term co-ordinated approach to a number of school-based interventions.

14. The partnership is looking to bring further coherence to all aspect of drug relate harm and risk across enforcement, treatment and preventative work streams. There is also a concerted effort for partners to further increase intelligence reports to the Constabulary.

Priority 2 - The increase in serious violence including knife crime affecting young people

15. A multi-agency Violence Reduction Unit for Hampshire has been established led by the Director of Public Health in in conjunction with arrangements across the cities and the Isle of Wight headed by the Office off the Police and Crime Commissioner as the accountable body for Home office funding. There has been continued strong partner engagement and, despite short term dedicated funding, a strong commitment to embed the priority and agreed interventions within normal service delivery.

16. Key elements of the partnership Response Plan for 2021 include enhancements of the following interventions and activities using Home Office funding:

- Youth Crime Prevention capacity
- Protection of YP affected by county lines through the Willow Team with a focus on supporting children attending pupil referral units
- School based interventions focusing on high risk children
- Young adult rehabilitation serious violence intervention
- Developing front-line workforce skills and knowledge
- Local voluntary and community programmes in priority hot-spots

17. The partnership is also working with the police and NHS A&E providers to develop the “Cardiff model” whereby A&E data is used to identify serious violence hotspots and impacts to inform local problem solving. This contributes a significant amount to the overall picture on serious violence.

18. The partnership has worked hard to maintain as many of the interventions as possible during the lockdown period although some activities have been paused or amended. The partnership is working to understand both the short and longer-term impacts of Covid-19 on serious violence and an updated problem profile is in preparation.

19. There are strong strategic links across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight through the VRU Core Group which is being used to share learning and co-ordinate interventions.

Priority 3 – The interconnected impacts of mental ill-health, substance misuse, domestic abuse and adverse childhood experiences

20. The strategic partnership arrangements around substance misuse, trauma, mental health and domestic abuse have been reviewed and strengthened with

a direction to ensure greater cohesion across these linked agendas as well as improved links across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. A new Mental Wellbeing Executive and Domestic Abuse Executive have been created alongside a Trauma informed Approaches Board co-chaired by the Director of Public health and the Assistant Chief Constable.

21. During Covid-19, substance misuse services were continuing to be engaged via phone and video conferencing where possible in one to one and group arrangements. Face to face meetings are being held with high risk service users. Notably there had been positive engagement of young people using digital channels creating a potential positive legacy.
22. There has been an increase in clients accessing alcohol services. Efforts were being made to help clients access in-patient detox services with the challenges of social distancing. There are some delays in appointments for prescriptions and there have been successful moves towards moving some clients from daily to weekly prescriptions. The number of people completing treatments had been maintained and would be monitored monthly.
23. The Domestic Abuse Executive is driving a more strategic approach to common communications, including for BAME communities, perpetrator interventions, support for victims, assessing demand, sharing data and learning, and work with young people. There had been an increase in demand during Covid-19 and referral mechanisms across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight had been harmonised which have been welcomed by the Police. A number of case learning reviews of cases are in progress to assess the journey of families through the whole system.
24. The Trauma Informed Approaches Board is leading a consistent approach with common language and branding across agencies. A workforce development plan has been established with training provision by Rockpool using funding from health Education England. There had been progress in combining police, ambulance and children's services data to look at key risk factors.
25. The Mental Health Partnership Board is developing a broad approach to improving mental health beyond commissioned services, having regard to additional risks through Covid-19. There has been a continued increase in demand including young people moving into adult services. The volatility of the Covid-19 experience has given rise to a shorter notice in new young people coming through the system with some significant conditions affecting mental health and other services requiring intense partnership working. Recent months have seen an unprecedented use of community treatment orders requiring managed plans by multi-disciplinary teams for support living in the community.
26. There was a significant multi-agency drive to communicate that mental health services remain open to the public through GPs and Community Wellbeing Centres. This is an attempt to identify and manage conditions earlier to achieve better outcomes. The evidence around the impact of Covid-19 is still being assessed and would inform the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

27. The HCSG is looking to ensure strong voluntary, community and faith sector representation on the Boards covering these areas.

Priority 4 – The threat of radical extremism

28. The prevent Partnership Board and the Channel Panel intervention has continued to function effectively during Covid-19. There has been a sustained increase in referrals to the Channel panel relating the younger age group.

29. The Partnership has focused on

- effective sharing of Counter Terrorism profiles with partners
- working with district community safety partners to create local situation risk assessments
- updating and driving workforce awareness and training
- embedding the new national referral process
- communication and engagement with specific stakeholders to manage specific risk
- developing digital communications opportunities

30. A separate report on PREVENT is presented at Item X on the agenda.

Priority 5 – Ensuring inclusion and cohesion in a changing society

31. The HCSSG continues to give close attention to the need to engage diverse stakeholders across all community safety themes and to consider how intelligence and communications can be more closely aligned and co-ordinated and used across community safety priorities. This has been highlighted during the attention given to the impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable and minority groups and the Black Lives Matters developments.

32. Alongside the Strategic Co-ordinating Group and Tactical Co-ordinating Group, the Partnership has shared information and intelligence on public perceptions and tensions during lockdown, and the response to current and potential future additional cohesion risks relating to Extinction Rebellion, the accommodation of asylum seekers and rough sleepers and the forthcoming EU Exit position.

33. The Constabulary has been undertaking a daily and weekly assessment which has influenced the management of policing and community engagement based on experiences, evidence and potential risks. There has been a significant programme of consultation on the police response and management of Covid-19 providing strong assurance of confidence and used to inform direction and the policing approach. The HCSSG will be pursuing

opportunities to combine this with current engagement by local authorities and other public agencies to support its priorities.

Priority 6 – The capacity challenges of voluntary support for vulnerable people

34. This priority was set as a key risk based on the impact of austerity and a key issue affecting the broad range of community-based services which prevent the risk of offending and impacts on victims. Beyond the financial position, Covid-19 has presented further and more complex issues for the resilience of the sector affecting its response and role in recovery.
35. It is clear that the response of new and existing community groups, volunteers and neighbourliness has highlighted the tremendous resilience of communities during lock-down. Research between the County Council, the University of Winchester and Communities First Wessex has borne out the attitudes and capacity of residents to help others and the benefits they have derived. However, it has also confirmed several supply and demand challenges:
 - The rapid emergence of community groups will not necessarily be sustained for the large part beyond a crisis.
 - Some volunteers are suffering from taking on too much responsibility and many carers are becoming overwhelmed
 - Many volunteers within the traditional demographic could benefit from returning to volunteering roles but it may not be safe to do so, they may have lost confidence or the same roles may not still exist
 - The increased amount and complexity of need is requiring new, more specialist volunteers with a longer-term commitment, presenting recruitment and development challenges for the sector to meet new role requirements
 - Those who have signed up for national schemes can become frustrated and the opportunity lost if they are not given immediate tasks
36. Practical support is being offered to organisations wishing to re-open services focusing on those supporting the most vulnerable. There is some positive quick recovery from those groups active during Covid-19, particularly those working with homeless, vulnerable older people, young carers and domestic abuse. There were particular challenges for those traditionally offering face to face support and street-based outreach including those working with young people including around their mental wellbeing. As well as practical barriers, there were capacity considerations especially in services with specialist staff and volunteers which are experiencing higher demand and increased need especially linked to financial hardship. Citizens Advice is a positive example of an organisation which had responded admirably and worked well with the County Council by creating greater capacity to manage significant increases in demand.

37. The HCSSG is actively promoting an understanding of these challenges and engaging the community and voluntary sector in the partnership arrangements under each priority.

Priority 7 – Creating opportunities for all children to engage in positive activities and to build aspiration

38. This priority has presented major challenges as children have been largely house bound throughout the spring and summer. The key focus of the work of Children's Service and its partners during Covid-19 has been on ensuring that children are able to return to school safely which will have the biggest impact on community safety and children's well-being.
39. The priority has been to ensure schools can provide access for vulnerable people to attend. There had been a major drive in social workers engaging with schools which has yielded excellent results with around 54% of vulnerable pupils in school, one of the highest rates in the country. This is likely a higher rate given that some vulnerable pupils attended schools outside the Hampshire local authority area. Pupil referral units would be opening as normal. Home to school transport provision was presenting several significant challenges.
40. During the six-week summer holidays, the provision of summer schemes had been a challenge. Some schemes have taken place, but this represented about 40% of normal activity. A specific DFE funded programme for vulnerable families which had been effective, but outcomes are yet to be reported.
41. Referrals to children's social care has begun to increase sharply and are currently between 15 and 20% above the level in the previous year similar period. This had been the case since June. The expected surge stored up in lockdown was now beginning to filter through including for a number of teenagers with serious cases of exploitation being revealed.
42. Staffing levels have been maintained to deal with the additional demand. Once the school return has settled down there would be a greater opportunity and desire to be able to focus again on some of the preventative interventions although the planning for outbreaks and potential return to home learning requirements remains a priority.

Conclusions

43. This report demonstrates positive progress in the work of the Hampshire Community Safety Strategy Group, especially during the Covid-19 measures in ensuring greater alignment and effective multi-agency working to address Hampshire's community safety priorities.

REQUIRED CORPORATE AND LEGAL INFORMATION:

Links to the Strategic Plan

Hampshire maintains strong and sustainable economic growth and prosperity:	yes
People in Hampshire live safe, healthy and independent lives:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy a rich and diverse environment:	yes
People in Hampshire enjoy being part of strong, inclusive communities:	yes

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

Document

Location

Document Location

Hampshire Community Safety Strategic Assessment

Hampshire Community Safety Agreement

EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

1. Equality Duty

The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by or under the Act with regard to the protected characteristics as set out in section 4 of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation);
- Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;
- Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic within section 149(7) of the Act (see above) and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

- The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

<http://intranet.hants.gov.uk/equality/equality-assessments.htm> No adverse impacts