

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 14 MARCH 2022
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY AND HOUSING STRATEGY
COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 District Councils have a mandatory duty to act as a “responsible authority” on their local Community Safety Partnership (CSP), in order to plan and deliver measures to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, to reduce offending and promote assurances to the public whilst working together with other statutory and non-statutory organisations.
- 1.2 Over the last twelve months, the Welwyn Hatfield CSP has continued to manage the impact of COVID-19, tackled varied levels of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and continued to deliver youth engagement/support projects such as ‘Positive Pathways’ and ‘No More.’
- 1.3 The partnership has reacted and evolved to meet the challenges associated to COVID-19 with even stronger partnership arrangements being put in place, to ensure that communication and joint working are maximised.
- 1.4 In September 2021 the CSP’s priorities were reviewed and refreshed, and these are set out in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.13.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report and presentation of the Community Safety Partnership’s successful work over the past 12 months.
- 2.2 That the Committee notes that the risk of crime locally remains low. However, the partnership still works to continue to both reduce crime and the impact that crime has on residents of the borough.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 The composition of the CSP can be found in Appendix One which also sets out the various subgroups that form the CSP.
- 3.2 Appendix Two sets out a copy of the CSP’s Three Year Plan, which provides the partnership with some strategic direction as it works to make this borough a safer place to live and work.
- 3.3 The CSP has the following set of principles, which guide its activity.
 - Information sharing and excellent communication
 - Using partnership resources wisely/efficiently
 - Partners attendance is required at Joint Action Group (JAG)/Responsible Authorities Group (RAG)
 - Partners need to trust in each other’s expertise and integrity
 - All objectives/actions need to be evaluated and lessons learnt to be shared within the partnership to support us improve and develop

- Work on the principle of "prevention first" is a better solution than "intervention"
 - Partners need to be open to change and adapt actions to enable learning, improving, developing, and achieving better results
 - Partners to have consistent approach to public engagement. Ensure united, consistent messages reach everyone in Welwyn Hatfield
- 3.4 The priorities and actions can be found in detail in the Strategic Action Plan, but in summary they are:
- 3.5 **1 Help people to feel safe within their homes**
- Key actions under this priority are to reduce vulnerability to burglary; promotion of fraud and scam prevention; reduce the risk of cuckooing in the borough and to identify and protect those at risk of hoarding.
- 3.6 **2 Help people feel safe in their community and local environment**
- Key actions under this priority are to raise public's confidence by providing Community Safety awareness and reassurance events; combat county lines and associated risks within the borough and to tackle fly tipping.
- 3.7 **3 Identify and protect vulnerable people**
- Key actions under this priority are to prevent young people becoming involved with antisocial behaviour and criminal lifestyles; support the rough sleeping strategy to reduce rough sleepers and to support our community to report hate crime.
- 3.8 **4 Support, protect and identify victims of domestic abuse whilst also tackling the root causes and preventing future harmful relationships.**
- Key actions under this priority are to raise awareness of Domestic Abuse Services available in the district or online; promote healthy relationships education to young people and to work together to implement new powers and duties under the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.
- 3.9 **5 Supporting the community through covid 19 recovery.**
- Key actions under this priority are to increase awareness of mental health and wellbeing support services; promote community inclusion and to work in partnership with public health with recovery from the pandemic.
- 4 Community Safety Success through 2021**
- 4.1 Although the partnership was unable to deliver Year 6 Crucial Crew face to face again this year, the programme was delivered through an online interactive home learning pack for young people to use at home, incorporating all the key messages whilst making it fun at the same time.
- 4.2 Weekly operational meetings of all key partners within the CSP continued throughout the year. This has proven invaluable in maximising communication and optimising joint work opportunities. Officers also meet fortnightly to review and undertake supervision of anti-social behaviour cases via SafetyNet to ensure cases are actioned and that effective joint working is taking place.
- 4.3 Offering security and reassurance to some of the borough's most vulnerable residents and repeat victims of ASB through the installation of ring doorbell cameras. This project has been extended with more cameras now in circulation.

- 4.4 The council has established a Domestic Abuse Coordinator post, to ensure that the council meets its responsibilities under the new legislation and to review and refresh pathways to help and support victims. The new postholder will be starting in April 2022.
- 4.5 Community engagement is very important to the CSP, and we have achieved more face-to-face engagement this year, including during the Big Summer campaign, when the CSP attended a number of town centre events as well as a CSP Engagement Day on 11th August in Hatfield Town Centre. The team also attended the Welcome Fair at the University of Hertfordshire, where they were able to engage with a large number of students.
- 4.6 Safeguarding for our most vulnerable and at-risk young people continued throughout the year. Tight knit partnership working ensured that vulnerable young people were still able to receive support from our well-known intervention projects Positive Pathways and No More. Op Brillo has been reinvigorated to successfully tackle youth ASB hotspots.
- 4.7 Additions to the borough's CCTV network has provided additional resource in the partnership's approach to tackling ASB. Specifically, the new cameras in Moneyhole Lane Car Park and KGV Playing Pitches Car Park which have previously seen a high level of ASB. The ASB associated with car meets and drug dealing have all but ceased.

5 The road ahead for 2022

- 5.1 The CSP will continue to commit to educating young people, parents/guardians, and professionals around a range of topics. The priority areas we will focus on include grooming, exploitation, county lines, youth violence, mental health, and domestic abuse.
- 5.2 Domestic abuse (DA) will remain a key priority for the CSP as we move forward into the new financial year. The new Domestic Abuse Coordinator will help to consolidate referral pathways between agencies and co-ordinate action planning meetings for repeat victims of low/medium risk DA. We shall also continue with the CSP action plan on ending Violence Against Women and Girls. Officers will continue to support the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) for high-risk victims of domestic abuse and contribute to Domestic Homicide Reviews where necessary.
- 5.3 Further consultation to extend the area that the Public Spaces Protection Order covers will take place, following the extension of the order in Hatfield Town Centre.
- 5.4 Mental health will also be one of the partnership's key priorities for the year, as we are aware that the pandemic has impacted peoples' mental health and wellbeing. We will work with the council's Youth Partnership Officer and Public Health team to deliver a range of projects that will include awareness training to professionals, schools, and support for residents (including young people).
- 5.5 The Community Trigger will be publicised more widely with a refreshed approach to ensure that the public are aware that they have the right for the CSP to review any cases of ASB that they feel have not been appropriately managed.

6 Financial Implication(s)

- 6.1 The new Domestic Abuse Coordinator role referred to in this report is a fixed term role funded by a domestic abuse grant received from the government.

6.2 The delivery of the plan, where Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council are the responsible party, are met from existing budgets, along with grant funding where appropriate.

8. Legal Implication(s)

8.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a statutory responsibility to review the discharge of crime and disorder functions by responsible authorities in its areas.

7 Risk Management Implications

7.1 The recognised risk that a partner might disengage from joint work is reduced in the case of the CSP because each responsible authority has a statutory duty to take part. Partners recognise the value of the CSP, and the main threat to partners' involvement arises from major legislative or organisational changes.

7.2 Any specific risks associated with project delivery are recorded on the council's Risk Management system.

8 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)

8.1 There are no implications for security and terrorism arising from this report.

8.2 The CSP support the governments CONTEST strategy and the Prevent agenda.

8.3 The CSP offers support and training to professionals through the Herts County Council Prevent Lead Officer.

8.4 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council sits on the County Prevent Board and also co-ordinate information requests from the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit.

8.5 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council also has a PREVENT steering group which meets regularly to review the council's commitment to the PREVENT agenda, which ties in with the Community Safety Partnership.

9 Procurement Implication(s)

9.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

10 Climate Change Implication(s)

10.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

11 Link to Corporate Priorities

11.1 The content of this report is linked to the council's new corporate priority for Sense of Community and Safety.

12 Communications Plan

12.1 Providing community assurance is a key target of the CSP. This is done via campaigns and initiatives and ensuring that the partnership actively engages with the community on all matters relating to improving their safety.

12.2 The CSP has its own social media channel and pages on the Council's website. The CSP also ensures that partners are engaging in borough wide initiatives by sharing and engaging within online media across the partnership.

12.3 The CSP continue to have a presence in the borough's ONE Welhat magazine which is sent to every home.

13 Health and Wellbeing

13.1 Residents of the borough should always feel safe in their local area, as that is key to an individual's positive health and wellbeing.

14 Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with this report, as it is for information only.

Name of author	Bianca Moreira ex 2174
Title	Community Partnerships Manager
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Appendix One – CSP Structure, including different sub-groups
Appendix Two – 3-year Strategic Plan