

Cabinet

23 January 2024

Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30

Recommendations

That Cabinet

- 1) Endorses the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30 (Appendix 1) and the summary document (Appendix 2); and
- 2) Supports the approach being taken to address the Serious Violence Duty in Warwickshire and the County Council's contribution to meeting the duty.

1.0 Key Issues

- 1.1. The Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 introduces a new statutory requirement referred to as the Serious Violence Duty.
- 1.2. In summary, the above Act places a duty on specific organisations known as the 'specified authorities' to plan and collaborate to prevent and tackle serious violence in their local area. Specified Authorities are:-
 - **Police** - Chief Officers of police for police areas in England and Wales
 - **Justice** - Probation Services and Youth Offending Teams
 - **Fire and rescue authorities** operating in England and Wales
 - **Health** - Integrated Care Boards including Public Health
 - **Local authorities** – District/Borough and County Councils
- 1.3. The legislation allows two or more specified authorities to collaborate to prevent and reduce serious violence in a "local area". This means that authorities are permitted to work across local government boundaries and in doing so, collaborate on strategies which cover areas greater than that which they primarily provide services in. It has been agreed by all of the Specified Authorities that the local area is Warwickshire.
- 1.4. Warwickshire County Council is a Specified Authority in its own right. In addition the functions of Youth Justice, Fire and Rescue and Public Health sit within the County Council. Therefore, our role in leading the collaboration between all Specified Authorities to meet the Serious Violence Duty is particularly important to Warwickshire County Council and the endorsement of the strategy by Cabinet is a key part of this leadership.

- 1.5. To fulfil the Serious Violence Duty, the Home Office has set out a series of mandatory requirements. These include:
- **Strategic Needs Assessment** – There is a requirement to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment setting out the profile of serious violence within the local area. A Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment has been produced using a wide range of partnership data as well as qualitative case study analysis of individuals engaged with either the Warwickshire Youth Justice, or Probation Service, due to serious violent offences. The Strategic Needs Assessment is available on request.
 - **Serious Violence Strategy** – To produce and publish a strategy setting out how Specified Authorities will work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in the local area.
- 1.6. The Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board (SWPB) is the Countywide governance body which ensures that all agencies with a responsibility under the Crime and Disorder and Criminal Justice legislation, meet their statutory duties. It is responsible for the Countywide Community Safety Agreement (CSA) which sets out the key community safety priorities across the County. The CSA is mandatory in two tier areas under the Police and Justice Act 2006.
- 1.7. The SWPB has a number of subgroups with responsibility for specific priority areas or statutory responsibilities. These include Youth Justice Chief Officers Board, Violence Against Women and Girls, Prevent, Reducing Reoffending and the Serious Violence Executive and Delivery Groups.
- 1.8. Based on the findings from the Strategic Needs Assessment, the Strategy has been refreshed and was supported by the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board, on behalf of all Specified Authorities, on 5th December 2023. The SWPB is the governance body with overall responsibility for the Serious Violence Duty, on behalf of all of the Specified Authorities.
- 1.9. Each of the named Specified Authorities have agreed their own approval process and how they will review progress. These processes have already been completed or will be completed within the statutory timeframes. This has been confirmed by each Specified Authority.
- 1.10. Based on the findings of the findings of Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment, consultation and case study analysis, the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30 highlights that:-
- Whilst Warwickshire is a safe place to live, with relatively low levels of serious violence, the causal factors that can lead to violent conflict are just as prevalent in the county as in other areas of the country.
 - The case study analysis identifies a series of impact factors or “triggers” which can lead to an escalation of risk-taking behaviour in childhood and adolescence. Developing interventions to address these triggers, at the times when they occur the most, provides the best opportunity to prevent this escalation.

- Intergenerational domestic violence, particularly where children witness domestic violence on multiple occasions, is a key contributing factor to violence and conflict. There is an opportunity for partnership agencies and educational providers to work together to better identify and support children who are impacted by domestic violence.
- Street based serious violence, particularly where weapons are used, is driven by personal conflict and feuds that have built up over time. There is an opportunity for partner agencies to use a wide range of intelligence, including social media intelligence to intervene and prevent conflict escalating.
- There are specific local areas in the county which are at higher risk of being impacted by serious violence. Focusing on these areas is a priority for all partner agencies.

1.11 The findings and recommendations set out in the strategy haven been aligned with the Director of Public Health Annual Report on Domestic Abuse as well as the County Council's approach to both Levelling Up and Community Power.

1.12 A short public facing summary version of the strategy has been developed. This will be published on the Safe In Warwickshire website (Appendix 2).

2.0 Options and Proposal

2.1. Whilst the Serious Violence Duty places a series of requirements on Specified Authorities, including district, borough, and county councils, working collaboratively with partners across the county is considered to be the best approach for Warwickshire.

2.3. The Warwickshire County Council Community Safety Team has taken the lead, on behalf of the Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board to ensure that all Specified Authorities met their statutory requirement under the Serious Violence Duty.

2.4. There is an option for each of the four Community Safety Partnerships (CSP's) (South Warwickshire CSP, Rugby CSP, Nuneaton and Bedworth CSP and North Warwickshire Responsible Authorities Group) to develop their own response to the Serious Violence Duty. However, this would result in significant duplication by other Specified Authorities and would not demonstrate a cohesive response to the countywide challenges of serious violence and their causes.

2.5. The development of the strategy has been a collaborative partnership approach involving all of the Specified Authorities, the Warwickshire Police and Crime Commissioner, schools, senior leads involved in the Levelling Up agenda and partners engaged in violence prevention programmes.

2.6. A delivery group involving all of the Specified Authorities has been established to ensure the recommendations set out in the strategy are being progressed and delivered.

- 2.7. The Serious Violence Delivery group has responsibility for the delivery plan, commissioning and evaluating interventions and identifying good practice.
- 2.8. As part of our approach to violence prevention the delivery group is also responsible for developing training for front line services across all Specified Authorities, including the County Council to embed this into our accepted ways of working.

3.0 Financial Implications

- 3.1. The Home Office is providing funding over the period January 2023 – March 2025 for Specified Authorities in the local area to meet the above requirements. The funding is divided into two distinct cost areas:
 - **Labour Costs** - This includes the costs associated with preparing and developing the SNAs and local strategies. It includes familiarisation costs, training, meeting costs, analysis, and strategy development. This funding must be used to meet the Specified Authorities' labour costs incurred under the Duty, this can include the cost of additional resource in the local area to reduce the burden on the Specified Authorities.
 - **Non-Labour Costs** – This includes the costs associated with implementing the Specified Authorities' local strategy to reduce serious violence (the interventions). This can include the salary costs for delivering these interventions.
- 3.2. Home Office funding is provided through the Office of Police and Crime Commissioners who are required to ensure that Specified Authorities are taking appropriate steps to meet their duty.
- 3.3. It has been agreed with the Specified Authorities across Warwickshire that the Warwickshire County Council's Community Safety Team will take the lead in developing countywide intervention programmes and Home Office funding will be allocated as appropriate.
- 3.4. It is the intention that interventions will align with existing service provision and aimed at developing sustainable programmes by better alignment of partnership resources. There will be a particular focus on programmes that bring together multi agency teams in order to maximise skills that can respond to the triggers of violence and thereby reduce the risk of escalation into high cost service provision.
- 3.5. This approach will ensure that the funding is aimed at programmes which are sustainable or are building capacity within local communities to prevent violence in local areas identified as most at risk through the serious violence needs assessment.

- 3.6. Aligning the programmes with the Community Powered Warwickshire and Levelling Up programmes, creates the greatest opportunity for sustainability and value for money.

4.0 Environmental Implications

- 4.1. There are no direct environmental implications associated with this report.

5.0 Timescales associated with the decision and next steps

- 5.1. The refreshed Safer Warwickshire Partnership Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30 (Appendix 1) and the summary document (Appendix 2) will be published on the Safe in Warwickshire website and the associated delivery plan will be implemented, overseen by the Serious Violence Delivery group.

Background papers

1. Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board – Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30.
2. Safer Warwickshire Partnership Board – Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30 - Public facing summary strategy
3. Serious Violence Prevention Strategy 2024-30 - Equality Impact Assessment.

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Local Member(s): N/a – county wide matter

Other members: Councillors Chilvers, Clarke, Feeney and Fradgley.