

**Meeting:** Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 22 January 2015

**Subject:** Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment, Identified Priorities for 2015 - 2016

**Report of:** Cllr Brian Spurr, Executive Member for Community Services

**Summary:** This report informs Members of the two priorities and emerging issues that have been identified through the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment. The priorities have been recommended by the Community Safety Partnership Executive and are subject to public consultation. Members have been invited to comment on the emerging priorities before they are recommended for adoption by the Community Safety Partnership.

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**Advising Officer:** Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services

**Contact Officer:** Joy Craven, Community Safety Partnership Manager, Community Services (0300 300 4649)

**Public/Exempt:** Public

**Wards Affected:** All

**Function of:** Council

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## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Council Priorities:**

1. The agreement of the two priorities, and the subsequent work in reducing offences, incidents and offending, will make a significant contribution to the quality of life experienced by local residents and communities. Joint work on the priorities by all of the community safety statutory partners will also contribute to the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Plan ("Your Priorities 2012 – 2016") priority of 'Enhancing your local community'. Delivery of these priorities will contribute to the reduction of crime, anti-social behaviour, fear of crime and increase public confidence.

### **Financial:**

2. The majority of work is undertaken using existing resources within each partners' organisation. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) is responsible for the Community Safety Fund across Bedfordshire and the Partnership will bid for funding to provide additional support to existing resources where suitable.

3. Financially the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) saves on resources; by pulling together to work on priority areas that affect them all, using an intelligence led approach.

**Legal:**

4. Under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council has a statutory duty to do all that it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder in its' area. The Crime and Disorder Act also places a statutory duty on the Council, along with the other Responsible Authorities (Police, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Bedfordshire and Rescue Service, Bedfordshire Probation Trust), to produce an annual Strategic Assessment which identifies crime and disorder priorities for our area.
5. The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 sets out the requirement for the PCC and the CSP to have due regard for each others priorities and plans. The timing of the Partnership Strategic Assessment and CSP Plan have ensured the PCC is informed of our priorities and the Office of the PCC has the opportunity to refresh the Police & Crime Plan.

**Risk Management:**

6. There are risks and challenges to working in partnership with the statutory partners of the CSP, should the Council not agree with the identified priorities. The strategic risk register includes a strategic risk relating to the fragility of our partners, which includes Police, Clinical Commissioning Group and Probation. The strategic risk focuses on the fragility of our partners, as a result of the significant changes and pressures they face, including budgetary pressures, transfers of responsibilities, geographical factors, confusing accountabilities and increasing complexities. These factors increase the risk that services to our public could be compromised.
7. There is a risk to the Council should it not agree with the partnership data and analysis that has been provided. If new priorities were to be agreed without supporting data and evidence, the process would not stand up to scrutiny, and would not be based on intelligence. This would make it difficult to gain support from partners to work with us on any new issue.
8. There are potential community implications if work on the high risk identified priorities is not undertaken. The two priorities have scored highest in the risk matrix, been highlighted through public consultation, and are known to affect Public Confidence and Fear of Crime (Appendix 1).

**Staffing (including Trades Unions):**

9. None

### **Equalities/Human Rights:**

10. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.  
  
By working on the two priorities and emerging issues, there will not be unlawful discrimination or contradictions under the European Convention of Human Rights.
11. Statistics and data have been used and analysed to identify the high risk issue to the CSP and our communities. All members of our communities have been taken into account, and there have been no groups omitted from the process.
12. The impact of working on the proposed priorities will not discriminate against individuals or groups. In fact the work around Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Hate Crime will support minority groups and individuals who may not have felt supported, or engaged.
13. An Equality Impact Assessment has highlighted areas of concern due to low level reporting of Domestic Abuse, Sexual Abuse and Hate Crime by vulnerable groups. By recommending the two priorities the CSP we will also be addressing high risk areas identified in the Equality Impact Assessment.

### **Public Health:**

14. The work of the CSP contributes to making Central Bedfordshire a safer place to work and live. Work on the two priorities will help support victims and lower the number of abuse incidents they have, support their wellbeing, and in turn support the local and national economy.

### **Community Safety:**

15. Reducing harm to those who are suffering and given them the increased confidence to report crimes that are hidden in our community will enable the right level of care and support to be provided to our vulnerable victims.
16. The detrimental impact that abuse causes has continued to be a key concern for local residents. In agreeing this as a priority to be worked on by the partnership, it should help improve the quality of life for our communities; help reduce crime, the fear of crime and the consequences of abuse itself.
17. Fear of crime is raised by local residents as a concern, and working on crimes that impact the most, in terms of victims and community impact, will support our co-ordinated approach to decrease fear in the community. Abuse and hate incidents, together with becoming a repeat victim, have a significantly negative impact on our residents.

**Sustainability:**

18. The prevention and enforcement work that will be undertaken on the two priorities, can make a significant contribution to the quality of the physical environment, tackle those responsible for crime, disorder and prevent some offences in Central Bedfordshire.

**Procurement:**

19. The CSP follows the Procurement Procedure Rules for Central Bedfordshire Council when procuring services and goods. The governance for commissioning of funds is set out within the Terms of Reference for the CSP.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **That the Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Executive support of the two Partnership Strategic Assessment Priorities identified for 2015 - 2016. These Community Safety priorities are:**
  - (a) **Reducing harm to vulnerable victims and increasing their confidence to report domestic abuse, sexual abuse and hate crime**
  - (b) **To understand the complex needs of those with substance misuse and mental health issues and to work with partners across these two issues**

**Summary****Performance Review 2014 - 2015**

20. As part of the strategic assessment process the CSP has assessed performance over the past 12 months. Key points to note are detailed below.
21. Between October 2013 – September 2014 there were 238 more crimes recorded in Central Bedfordshire when compared to the same period the previous year.
22. Serious Acquisitive Crime<sup>1</sup> offences have increased by 4.5% with a slight increase in domestic burglary (6%)
23. Between October 2013 – September 2014 there were 6,922 Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents reported in Central Bedfordshire, this is an average of 577 incidents per month. This is a 7% decrease from the previous 12 months.

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<sup>1</sup> Serious acquisitive crime consist of robbery, domestic burglary, theft of motor vehicle and theft from motor vehicle

## **Continuing Community Safety Work**

24. This year the CSP has agreed an approach to look at priorities on the 'hidden harms' that affect our residents and our communities.

The term "hidden harm" describes the experiences of people affected by substance misuse, abuse, modern day slavery and hate crime. People will often suffer in silence; their circumstances are often not known to services. They often do not know where to turn for help and the impact of their experience can have a deep and long-lasting impact on their lives. These impacts can include physical harm, impaired patterns of parental care, higher risk of emotional and physical neglect or abuse, poverty and material deprivation, inappropriate substitute caring roles, and exposure to drug and alcohol using culture.

25. The CSP is committed to supporting not only an increase in understanding and awareness of the hidden harms our communities face, but encouraging those who are suffering to have the confidence to come forward and seek help from the Partnership and our services.
26. The CSP has built up a strong base to support crime reduction, and offers crime prevention and reassurance in the community via awareness raising events, survey's, email alerts, magazine articles and attending vulnerable locations with partners. This will continue.

The CSP will continue to monitor burglary offences and offending series at the monthly CSP Tasking meeting. Community Safety officers are also standing members of Bedfordshire Police's fortnightly Force Intelligence Meeting where crime series are discussed and actions agreed.

Current risks within Central Bedfordshire do not come from traditional crimes, but from hidden harms as described above. By working together we will ensure a better support structure and positive environment is in place for our communities.

## **Reducing harm to vulnerable victims and increasing their confidence to report domestic abuse, sexual abuse and hate crime**

27. In Central Bedfordshire between October 2013 – September 2014 20% of victims reporting a domestic abuse incident to Bedfordshire Police were male. This number is significantly lower than the national levels<sup>2</sup> which may indicate a level of under reporting of male victim abuse locally.
28. Locally 92% of victims are recorded as white and 8% from a black minority ethnic (BME) group, this shows some possible under reporting within the BME community as 10.3% of Central Bedfordshire's population is from a BME community.

The CSP Executive will agree an approach to the options available to raise awareness within the male community and engagement work within our BME communities to increase support to victims and encourage the reporting of domestic abuse.

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<sup>2</sup> Nationally it is claimed that one in six men will be a victim of domestic abuse and 35% of victims are male.

29. In January 2014 a survey was carried out with Gypsies and Travellers both on local authority sites and those in local authority houses. 83% of those surveyed advised that domestic abuse was an issue in their community with 25% knowing someone who was a victim.

The CSP is currently working closely with a number of partners and have created an action plan which aims to increase confidence in services and reporting of incidents from the Gypsy and Travelling community. The plan has recognised the need to improve front line officers understanding of this community and their culture.

30. Central Bedfordshire Council's Domestic Abuse Plan has been developed to ensure that the Council takes a cross-directorate approach to the provision of services. There is a range of statutory and voluntary sector partners working with the Council on domestic abuse and a number of boards and Partnerships who have a responsibility for ensuring that domestic abuse is tackled within Central Bedfordshire, which includes the CSP.

The aim of the plan is to inform Partners and Boards about the work which is already being carried out by the Council but also to capture the work streams that the council are working on in order to improve its response to domestic abuse.

The CSP will support and assist in the implementation of the Domestic Abuse Plan and received regular updates as to its progress.

31. Between October 2013 – September 2014 there were 170 sexual offences in Central Bedfordshire. This is a 143% increase on the previous 12 months. 37% of offences reported in the 12 months period were cases of historical abuse.

In Central Bedfordshire 87% of all sexual offences reported involved a female victim. Of those offences reported 38% were aged under 16 years. The second highest age group was those who were 18-24 years (13%).

The CSP will work with partners towards a sexual abuse awareness targeting those groups who have an increased risk of becoming victims.

32. Between October 2013 – September 2014 there were 142 hate crime incidents reported in Central Bedfordshire, this is a 5% increase on the same time period in the previous 12 months. 85% of all hate crime incidents reported was reported of hate crime linked to the victim's race.

The true figures of hate crime and hate incidents are far higher than those reported, with studies showing that hate crimes are under reported by a factor of four. Research commissions by the CSP in 2013 showed that hate crime is a hidden issue in Central Bedfordshire and it confirmed that under reporting is a major problem and that a number of organisations that support minority groups know of disclosed incidents that were either not reported at all or only reported to advocacy organisations.

In August 2013 a Central Bedfordshire multi-agency Hate Crime Task and Finish Group was established and in October 2013 it was agreed that the group would widen to a Bedfordshire Hate Crime Group. Having a Bedfordshire wide group provides a more effective response to hate crime, and ensures effective use of resources and a more positive impact on the local community; it is a true partnership approach to a Bedfordshire issue. The CSP will continue to support this group over the coming 12 months.

The CSP will explore opportunities to reduce the barriers to victims, particularly those who are vulnerable, for sexual abuse, domestic abuse and hate crime over the next 12 months.

**To understand the complex needs of those with substance misuse and mental health issues and to work with partners across these two issues.**

33. Drug and alcohol misuse is a complex issue, the number of people with a serious issue in Central Bedfordshire is relatively small but their abuse affects everyone around them including their family, friends and the local community.

Central Bedfordshire has a significantly lower than average rate than England as a whole for drug misuse, but drug users have a substantial impact on crime, health and associated social care needs.

Drug related incidents cost Bedfordshire Police £18 million per year<sup>3</sup>. Although the use of heroin has decreased over the past few years there is still a hard core group of users who do not respond to treatment and who are caught in the cycle of offending to feed their habit. Younger offenders who use the proceeds of crime to feed habits have shown a trend to move away from Class A drug use apart from cocaine and are commonly using methadone and cannabis.

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<sup>3</sup> Bedfordshire Police Force Drugs Strategy 2013-14

34. Alcohol also is a significant factor in violent crime. In 47%<sup>4</sup> of all violent crimes reported the victim believes that the offender(s) were under the influence of alcohol and in 23% of crimes the victim believed the offender(s) to be under the influence of drugs.

We understand that victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse, sexual abuse and hate crime being more likely to use substances to deal with their trauma and for victims also to be more likely to suffer with mental health issues.

35. Within Central Bedfordshire there are a number of pieces of work which are currently taking place regarding substance misuse and it is essential that the CSP plays a key part in these due to having an understanding of the impact these issues have within the community of Central Bedfordshire.

36. Public Health is currently in the process of re-tendering the drug and alcohol treatment service and due to the length of time it takes to embed a treatment programme they are looking to provide a contract for up to five years. The CSP will ensure that they are fully informed and engaged with the process in the early stages so that an effective treatment programme is designed and one which has a positive impact on the community and that provides suitable treatment for all, particularly for those more vulnerable clients such as those who abuse substances due to other complex issues such as abuse or mental health issues.

37. The CSP's knowledge of the levels of mental health issues in Central Bedfordshire alongside the impact of these issues on the wider community is very limited. Although the SARAC, MARAC and ASBRAC<sup>5</sup> all report that a significant percentage of referrals received have victims with known mental health issues.

The Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group is currently re-tendering for mental health service provision. It is essential that the CSP engages with the new provider and ensures that links are established with the new providers and the current processes in place dealing with high risk victims of abuse.

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<sup>4</sup> Crime Survey for England and Wales 2012/13 – [www.ons.gov.uk](http://www.ons.gov.uk)

<sup>5</sup> SARAC is the Sexual Abuse Risk Assessment Conference, MARAC is the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference, ASBRAC is the Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference.



### **High Risk Issue – Child Sexual Exploitation**

38. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a hidden crime. Young people often trust their abuser and do not understand that they are being abuse. They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

The true extent of CSE is not known. CSE is not a separate category of abuse in child protection procedures and this means that data is often missing or incomplete, concealed in other crime categories or is unreported. In law, there is no specific crime of CSE; offenders are often convicted for associated offences such as sexual activity with a child. Therefore it is not possible to obtain figures from police statistics of sexual exploitation offences.

39. There is very limited knowledge of the true extent of CSE in Central Bedfordshire. It is essential that in the forthcoming year that work is carried out to understand the nature and extent of CSE in Central Bedfordshire and to ensure that there is a strategic response.

40. The CSP is working with other areas of the council to identify the extent of CSE in Central Bedfordshire. This will lead to a local action plan and support for children and young people in our communities.

### **Emerging Issue**

41. The CSP relies on data, intelligence and information from a range of partners to understand key issues and risks for our communities. Not all issues can be fully understood until additional research has been completed to gain a better understanding of the problem. Once research has been completed the CSP can work together to mitigate identified risks and support the community in the most appropriate way.

There are a number of emerging issues that could impact and influence the work of the CSP during 2015-2016, which we need to gain a better understanding of. These issues will be considered and worked on by the CSP.

#### 42. **Terrorism**

Terrorist and Extremist groups seek to cause widespread disruption, fear and intimidation. They use violence or the threat of violence as a means of publicising their causes, motivating those who might be sympathetic to them and intimidating those who do not sympathise. They often aim to influence government policies and they often reject existing democratic processes, or even democracy itself, as a means of achieving their objectives.

It is very important to preventing people from becoming radicalised for violent extremism. The joint protective services Counter Terrorism and Domestic Extremism Unit has produced a 'prevent' tactical delivery plan, which outlines how the police will work to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism. There is also a specific Prevent Joint Group that manages activity within Bedfordshire.

The threat of terrorism, extremism and radicalisation in Central Bedfordshire is low. However it is acknowledged that there are locations in Bedfordshire that are high risk and receive greater interaction with specialist terrorism resources and the Prevent Joint Group as a result.

The Central Bedfordshire CSP will work with the Prevent Coordinator of Bedfordshire Police to ensure levels of risk are understood. The CSP will ensure that support is given at appropriate stages of police operations and that any information and intelligence regarding suspects, vulnerable persons or vulnerable places is shared.

#### 43. **Organised Crime Groups (OCG)**

The definition of OCGs is where individuals working together, with the capacity and capability to commit serious crime on a continuing basis, which includes elements of planning, control and coordination and benefits those involved.

The overall estimated cost to the UK of OCGs is £20-£40 billion a year, with 5,300 identified OCGs and 35,000 criminals involved. In Bedfordshire there are 55<sup>6</sup> OCGs which include 351 criminals.

The CSP has linked with Bedfordshire Police and provide partnership support to the OCG Crime Group Management Panel. The CSP includes OCG management within the monthly Partnership Tasking Group and a CSP representative attends each OCG Management Panel.

#### **Implementation & Review**

44. In considering the report, the two priorities identified, and the key emerging issues, the Committee should note that the partnership will target its work towards these. A review of outcomes will take place after six months. This review will monitor progress, the partnership work taking place and it will consider if there are any other community safety risks that need to be addressed. This update report is used to inform the Partnership and at the end of the year it informs the next Strategic Assessment.

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<sup>6</sup> Tackling Organised Crime in Partnership – DCI Shane Roberts – Bedfordshire Police

45. Performance reporting is in place for the CSP against these priorities, and plans are outcome focussed. Performance management is undertaken via the CSP Executive Group, which considers overall performance, the Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan, and ensures that the CSP complies with statutory requirements and adopts best practice.
46. The CSP Steering Group takes a co-ordinated, problem solving approach to identifying, planning and implementing approved outcomes to support the priorities in the Partnership Plan. Partners will inform the group of the progress in their areas, the progress towards their action plans and their outcomes. The Steering Group is also required to make recommendations to the CSP Executive on various aspects of the partnership work.
47. Specific delivery groups then look at individual priorities, which have actions / delivery plans, and deliver the tactical activity required to reduce risk and improve performance.

### **Consultation**

48. The two priorities are going out to public consultation via our social media sites and email alerts.

Each of the statutory partners has engaged in the prioritisation matrix and in the discussions to recommend the priorities for 2015 -2016.

Central Bedfordshire Members have been consulted via the members bulletin dated 9<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and have been invited to comment on them.

### **Conclusion**

49. It is essential that Central Bedfordshire CSP has an agreed set of priorities and identified emerging issues which have been informed by the Partnership Strategic Assessment.
50. The two priorities proposed are based on a robust assessment of the key community safety issues in Central Bedfordshire.
51. By working on the two priorities, and conducting research on our emerging issues, the CSP will contribute significantly to the achievements of the Council's plan for delivering its key priorities over the next three years.

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1 – Risk Matrix for the Partnership Strategic Assessment

Appendix 2 – Executive Summary of the Partnership Strategic Assessment

Appendix 3 – Glossary of Terms

## Appendix 3:

### Glossary of Terms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Definition</b>
ASB	Anti-Social Behaviour
ASBRAC	Anti-Social Behaviour Risk Assessment Conference
BME	British Minority Ethnic
CBC	Central Bedfordshire Council
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSP	Community Safety Partnership
MARAC	Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference
OCG	Organised Crime Group
PCC	Police & Crime Commissioner
SARAC	Sexual Abuse Risk Assessment Conference