

Central Bedfordshire Council

Sustainable Communities Overview & Scrutiny

24th January 2019

Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2019-21

Report of: Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Executive Member for Community Services, ian.dalgarno@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

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This report relates to a decision that is Key

Purpose of this report

1. This report informs Members of the two priorities and one knowledge gap that has been identified through the Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment. The priorities have been recommended by the Community Safety Partnership Executive and are subject to Member consultation.
2. The Committee is invited to consider and discuss the proposed priorities, and recommend they are adopted by the Council Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to:

1. **Recommend that the Committee support the two Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment Priorities and one 'Knowledge Gap' identified for Central Bedfordshire for 2019-2021**

Community Safety Partnership Strategy 2019-2021

3. The Community Safety Partnership (CSP), is a statutory partnership made up of five responsible authorities; Bedfordshire Police, Central Bedfordshire Council, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Services, National Probation Services and Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group. The CSP has a statutory responsibility for reducing crime and disorder, tackling substance misuse and reducing re-offending in Central Bedfordshire.
4. The CSP Strategy sets out the crime and disorder issues in Central Bedfordshire and identifies those priorities which the CSP should focus its efforts into addressing.
5. The strategy is for two years, so that in 2021 the three local authority areas in Bedfordshire can be on the same timeframe and look to produce an overarching Bedfordshire wide strategy.

Methodology

6. Beneath the CSP strategy there is a five-step process. The first step is horizon scanning, this is a method used to identify and determine future developments, legislation, trends, external drivers, risk and opportunities which may have an impact on Community Safety, both locally and nationally.
7. Step two is the completion of a risk matrix. The matrix provides an evidence-based method to identify the greatest demand or highest risk issues facing the CSP. It considers harm to individuals, the community, and the environment as well as the economic and financial implications. The likelihood and volume are also considered alongside our confidence in knowledge, capability and resource capacity. The risk matrix is scored by the Partnership Analyst alongside key individuals across the partnership.
8. Step three is the use of our residents' feedback. In late May 2018 the CSP published the Safer Central Community Survey, a simple, short survey which asks our residents a number of questions regarding community safety issues. At the point of analysing there had been just under 700 responses.
9. Step four is a Partnership Focus Group. At this meeting the results of the risk matrix and the survey were shared, and a multi-agency discussion took place where the priorities were collectively agreed.
10. The final step is the production of the CSP Strategic Assessment. This is an analytical document, which looks at multiple sources of data and information, across the partnership, to provide the evidence base which supports the suggest priorities.

Achievement Against our Priorities 2016 – 2019

11. Between April 2016 – March 2019 the CSP Priorities were:

Priority One – Protecting the Vulnerable
Priority Two – Dealing with Domestic Abuse
Priority Three – Protecting the Environment

12. Key achievements include:

- Modern Day Slavery training delivered to over 1000 frontline staff
- Established Operation Makesafe – raising awareness of child sexual exploitation with our local licensed premises, fast food outlets and taxi drivers
- Establishing a Serious Youth Violence Panel to coordinate multi-agency intervention for those at risk of involvement or directly affected by serious violence and gang related activity
- Established a multi-agency Prevent Group, which has created a Prevent Protocol, referral process and training programme
- A full review of all domestic abuse training courses
- The Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Partnership (BDAP) has been reviewed and updated
- A new voluntary domestic abuse perpetrator programme has been commissioned
- A successful bid to the Department of Communities and Local Government (now known as The Ministry of Housing, Communications and Local Government) has enabled specialist accommodation-based support to be provided to those who do not currently have access to refuge provision
- The Stepping Out Project was launched which provided face to face support, group work and local drop in sessions for those affected by domestic abuse.
- CBC and Bedfordshire Police obtained an injunction against seven persistent street drinkers in Leighton Buzzard
- The Best Bar None scheme grew, with it expanding to include Leighton Linlade as well as Houghton Regis and Dunstable.

Issues for Consideration 2016-2019

13. Sexual abuse – was identified as a potential emerging issue due to a concerning decrease in recorded offences. In 2018 a Sexual Abuse Profile was completed which aimed to improved knowledge and understanding of the nature and scale of the issue in Central Bedfordshire. A second phase of the profile is planned for 2019.

14. Cyber-crime – continues to be an issue of significant concern and an area which we still have little knowledge. Due to the sheer scale of all forms of cyber-crime, and that much goes undetected and unreported, there is no reliable data available to reveal the true extent of the crime. We will continue to work with Bedfordshire Police to improve our understanding of this issue.
15. Unauthorised encampments – in 2017 there was a large number of encampments in the south of the area, considerable work took place in vulnerable locations to reduce the ability for encampments to set up and so far in 2018 there has been a reduction in the number of unauthorised encampments. This year CBC has been successful in obtaining an injunction which prevents 11 named people and five families from setting up encampments within specified areas and protects 15 parcels of land for the next two years.

Community Safety Partnership Priorities 2019-2021

16. It is recommended that for the time frame of this strategy, April 2019 to March 2021 that the CSP has two priorities.

Priority One – Ending Exploitation

Priority Two – Tackling Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse

Priority One – Ending Exploitation

17. Both national and local awareness of the prevalence of exploitation has increased over the last three years. The number and variety of cases being identified has increased as a direct result of this improved awareness.
18. Exploitation is a cross-cutting issue, it encompasses county lines, knife crime, cuckooing, modern day slavery, trafficking, child sexual exploitation, serious youth violence and domestic extremism.
19. County Lines relates to the supply of drugs, from an urban hub into rural towns or country locations. This will be facilitated by a group who have developed networks across geographical boundaries to access and exploit existing drug markets.
20. Cuckooing involves forcing or coercing vulnerable people to allow their homes to be used for storing and/or selling drugs. Common vulnerabilities include those who misuse drugs or alcohol, elderly, those with mental health issues, disabilities or physical health problems.

21. Knife related incidents are strongly linked to County Lines, Organised Crime Groups, Serious Youth Violence and Child Sexual Exploitation.

Priority Two – Tackling Domestic & Sexual Abuse

22. One in four women will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, and 1 in 5 women aged 16-59 have experienced some form of sexual abuse since the aged of 16.
23. It is known nationally that both domestic and sexual abuse is difficult to accurately quantify. Both are largely hidden crimes, often occurring at home with numerous factors which can make seeking help difficult
24. Over the last three years there has been a 33% increase in the number of domestic abuse incidents in Central Bedfordshire and a 10% increase in repeat victims.

Knowledge Gap – Prevalence & Impact of Substance Misuse

25. Substance misuse is linked to a variety of community safety issues from the illegal use and supply of drugs, the committing of crime to fund drug or alcohol dependency through to behaviour seen on our streets by those under the influence.
26. The impact of substance misuse on community safety issues can be complex, given that it affects both victims and offenders, and some people may be both. Due to the complex nature of this subject it is not clear what direct impact substance misuse is having and, for this reason the partnership should focus its attention on increasing its knowledge and understanding.
27. The misuse of drugs and alcohol is linked to a number of community safety issue including anti-social behaviour, child sexual exploitation, modern day slavery, street drinking, homelessness and violent crime.
28. A significant number of people who are dependent on drugs or alcohol are not currently receiving any treatment or support.

Options for consideration

29. The two recommended CSP Priorities for 2019-2021.
30. The identified knowledge gap for 2019-2021.

Council Priorities

31. Protecting the vulnerable, improving wellbeing – The recommended priorities for the CSP for the next two years focus on the early identification and intervention with some of the most vulnerable residents in Central Bedfordshire.
32. Creating stronger communities – the CSP aims to work much closer with our residents in the next two years, using various tools and methods to ensure we listen and respond to our residents. The CSP will work with our residents to create stronger, safer and more resilient communities across Central Bedfordshire.

Corporate Implications

Legal Implications

33. 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 Act also places a statutory duty on the Council, along with other responsible authorities (Police, Clinical Commissioning Group, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service, Probation) to produce an annual Strategic Assessment which identifies crime and disorder priorities for the area.

Financial and Risk Implications

34. The majority of work is undertaken using existing resources within each partner's organisations. The PCC is responsible for the Grant Fund, previously known as the Community Safety Fund, across Bedfordshire and the Partnership can bid for funding to provide additional support to existing resources where suitable.
35. Financially the CSP saves on resources; by pulling together a number of agencies to work on priority areas that affect them all. If resources are required for projects, crime prevention initiatives or engagement events, the Partnership agrees, prior to commencing, the resources that can be committed.

Equalities Implications

36. 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.
37. Statistics and data have been used and analysed to identify the high-risk issues 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.
38. The impact of working on the proposed priorities will not discriminate against individuals or groups. In fact the work will support minority groups and individuals who may not have felt supported or previously engaged.

Conclusion and next Steps

39. Two priorities and one knowledge gap have been identified as the focus for the CSP for 2019-2021, these have been informed by robust analysis and an intelligence led approach through the production of the Strategic Assessment.
40. By working on these three areas, the CSP will contribute significantly to the achievement of the Council's plan for delivering its key priorities over the next two years.
41. The proposed CSP priorities will be taken forward to the Council Executive for recommendation and agreement.

Appendices

Appendix A: Community Safety Strategy

Background Papers

The following background papers, not previously available to the public, were taken into account and are available on the Council's website:

None

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