



SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 8 NOVEMBER 2023

LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL COMMUNITY SAFETY UPDATE

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the work being undertaken by the Council's Community Safety Team to deliver the Council's Community Safety Strategy 2022 – 2026, and in undertaking the duties placed on the local authority in relation to crime and disorder in partnership with other statutory responsible agencies. This report is presented to the Commission in its capacity as the County Council's designated crime and disorder committee.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

2. The latest iteration of the Community Safety Strategy was approved by full Council in December 2022 and forms part of the Council's Policy Framework as set out in Schedule 2 to the Articles (Part 2) of the County Council's Constitution.
3. Leicestershire County Council has in place a Domestic Abuse (DA) Reduction Strategy (2022 – 2025). This was approved by the Cabinet in December 2022 following consultation with the Scrutiny Commission in September 2022. This incorporates the duties in Part 4 of the DA Act 2021 and sets out the partnership approach to tackling DA up to 2025.
4. The County Council's Strategic Plan 2022-26 sets out an outcome-based approach with five strategic outcomes for good quality of life in Leicestershire. The outcomes include engendering 'Great Communities', 'Keeping people safe and well' and 'Improving Opportunities'. The Strategic Plan also covers matters such as promoting thriving and inclusive communities, in which the people of Leicestershire are safe and protected from harm, and have the opportunities and support needed to take control of their health and wellbeing and reach their full potential.
5. The Community Safety Strategy and the Domestic Abuse (DA) Reduction Strategy support the County Council's Strategic Plan, setting out the Council's responsibilities in relation to crime and disorder issues and priorities agreed by Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), the Police and Crime Commissioner, and other statutory agencies with whom the Council works.

Background

6. The Community Safety function within the Council was established in response to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, to ensure that the Council discharges its s17 duty, to consider the impact of all its functions and decisions on crime and disorder in the local area.
7. Subsequent legislation has added further duties over the years and forthcoming legislation will add more still as outlined below.

Community Safety Team

8. The Council's Community Safety Team does not have a front-line delivery function. The team has a number of roles in leading, co-ordinating and supporting the work of the complex multi agency partnership across LLR, sharing good practice to reduce duplication and promote economies of scale, as well working across the council to support staff and members. The team also ensure that the County Council discharges all statutory functions relating to Community Safety.
9. The Community Safety Team also leads and co-ordinates operational planning across the County on several areas linked to crime and disorder. This includes co-ordinating standards, commissioning, joint working arrangements, priority setting, data sharing, training, and joint working arrangements linked to anti-social behaviour, 'Prevent' activity (related to counter terrorism), hate crime, and domestic abuse.
10. The County Council's Community Safety Team has oversight and coordinates the work of the Leicestershire and Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board (LRSCSB) and the Leicestershire and Rutland Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board (LRDALPB) by providing the necessary background information and support for its meetings and through liaison with district councils and LLR partner agencies. It undertakes planning, gives support, and if required adopts work-streams arising from actions agreed by the Board.
11. An important part of the Team's work has been regular attendance at local CSP meetings. This includes providing support to enable CSPs to introduce a local plan to address crime and disorder. Importantly the Community Safety Team can ensure local strategic priorities take cognisance of and are linked to countywide, LRSCSB, Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) and PCC priorities.
12. In addition, the Team works with other responsible agencies across LLR to provide a coordinated response to emerging threats – for example, serious violence, 'County Lines' serious organised crime, exploitation of children, modern slavery, knife, and cyber-crime.

Key Achievements

13. Some key achievements and outcomes to date include
 - i) A corporate Hate Crime and Incident Reporting process for staff and members. Following a racist incident against a children's social worker, the team established a process to report, record and support victims of hate crimes and incidents when they occur during the course of an officer's business; this has been rolled across the organisation.

- ii) Ask for Angela across the County so people can ask for assistance in bars and restaurants if they feel unsafe. This project has been running for a number of years and continues to support people to feel safe when perhaps meeting someone for the first time.
 - iii) Hosting multi agency networking events for commissioned providers of DA services. These events ensure that services commissioned by the County Council through the DLUHC funding have an opportunity to meet together, share good practice, network, establish referral processes between different agencies and prevent duplication of effort.
 - iv) Hosting the home office and east midlands regional counter terrorism leads, demonstrating the Council's commitment to the Prevent agenda, networking and working across regional boundaries. As a result of this meeting a joint bid is being drawn up to apply for Home Office funding to support people with neurodiverse needs who may be susceptible to radicalisation. This is in partnership with Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.
 - v) A refreshed Strategy Statement for Tackling Hate (2023 – 2026). The community safety team has historically taken a lead across LLR on Hate Crime tying in with the Councils commitment of being an anti racist organisation.
 - vi) A review of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policies and processes and the development of a business case to consider a change in the ASB case management system across the LLR partnership, thus ensuring the Council and the LLR partnership is in a place of strength when the new ASB Action Plan is launched, vulnerable victims are supported and perpetrators managed appropriately.
 - vii) Discharging the new Protect Duty (Martyn's Law) across the authority and supporting districts with regards to venue hire by 2024.
 - viii) Discharging the new Serious Violence Duty by 2024.
 - ix) Delivering multi agency training across Leicestershire on various themes including DA, ASB, counter terrorism and hate crimes and incidents, including a programme for elected members.
 - x) Supporting local delivery of priorities enabling local solutions for local issues.
14. The County Council has a statutory responsibility under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to work with other named agencies to reduce crime and disorder. This work is carried out by the Council's Community Safety Team.
15. The Community Safety Team leads and co-ordinates operational planning across the County on several areas linked to crime and disorder. This includes co-ordinating standards, commissioning, joint working arrangements, priority setting, data sharing, training, and joint working arrangements linked to anti-social behaviour, 'Prevent' activity (related to counter terrorism), hate crime, and domestic abuse.
16. The Team also works with other responsible agencies across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) to provide a coordinated response to emerging threats, notably serious violence, 'County Lines' serious organised crime, exploitation of children, modern slavery, knife, and cyber-crime. The team also ensure that the County Council discharges all statutory functions relating to Community Safety.

The Community Safety Strategy for 2022 - 2026

17. The Community Safety Strategy sets out the County Council's approach to crime and disorder in line with its statutory duties which is based on, and aligned with, the

current approach and priorities introduced and overseen by partners through the Leicestershire and Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board.

18. Dealing effectively with crime and disorder matters requires a collaborative partnership approach and the Strategy details the County Councils responsibilities and approach in dealing with these matters within the context of a two-tier local authority arrangement.
19. The Strategy outlines the role of the Council's Community Safety Team, the local partnership framework for dealing with community safety matters, and the approach adopted to identify, manage, and monitor community safety matters, including scanning for new and emerging issues across Leicestershire. It also sets out the current shared crime and disorder priorities, as agreed by the LRSCSB, which are to:
 - Identify and protect the most vulnerable.
 - Reduce crime and the fear of crime.
 - Reduce the incidence and impact of anti-social behaviour (ASB).
 - Reduce the harm from alcohol and substance misuse.
 - Reduce risk of harm to young people from cybercrime and bullying.
 - Increase reporting of domestic abuse and protect the most vulnerable.
 - Increase confidence in reporting of hate incidents.
20. The Community Safety Team delivers these priorities through attending local CSP meetings and supporting local delivery, by establishing working groups to drive this work across LLR and leading the work to produce policies, procedures and operating models for delivery.

Leicestershire and Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board (LRSCSB)

21. In two-tier local authority areas, the duty to produce detailed locality-based plans to reduce crime and disorder sits with Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) at district council level. However, there is also a duty placed on responsible partners to co-ordinate priorities at a county level which in Leicestershire is undertaken through the Leicestershire and Rutland Safer Communities Strategy Board (LRSCSB). The Board which includes a representative from Rutland Council, the chairs from each of the Community Safety Partnerships, and other senior representatives from the responsible authorities (i.e. Leicestershire Police, Public Health, the Fire Authority, Leicestershire Fire and Rescue, the National Probation Service, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC)), is chaired by the County Council's Cabinet Lead Member for Community Safety, and supported by the Community Safety Team.
22. The role of the LRSCSB is to oversee and co-ordinate the implementation and delivery of Leicestershire Community Safety Partnership priorities including supporting the Police and Crime Plan. It does this by providing strategic leadership, developing joint approach and encouraging collaborating working across agencies and partnerships, and by facilitating greater alignment between CSPs and other bodies with community safety responsibilities.
23. The partnership priorities include reducing offending and re-offending, substance-related crime and disorder, protecting those considered to be most vulnerable in the

community, reducing anti-social behaviour and increasing public confidence in local crime and disorder services.

Domestic Abuse

24. The Domestic Abuse Act (DA Act) received royal assent in April 2021. The Act places a duty on tier one local authorities (in Leicestershire, the County Council) to provide accommodation-based support to victims of domestic abuse and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation and provides clarity over governance and accountability, requiring tier two councils (district councils) to co-operate with the lead local authority.
25. It should be noted that this new duty is separate to local authority housing duties under the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 and does not place a requirement on the County Council to provide domestic abuse victims with accommodation. Support under the Act might consist of advocacy support, domestic abuse prevention advice, or specialist support for victims with protected characteristics or with additional and /or complex needs.
26. These new duties are now also undertaken by the Community Safety Team which has:
 - i. Led and overseen arrangement to appoint a new multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board
 - ii. Undertaken a Needs Assessment to understand the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support in the area for all victims (and their children) who reside in relevant safe accommodation, including those who come from outside of their area.
 - iii. Prepared and published a strategy for the provision of such support to cover the Leicestershire area having regard to the needs assessment - the DA Reduction Strategy.
 - iv. Given effect to the Strategy (through commissioning / decommissioning decisions).
 - v. Begun to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategy and report back annually to central government.

Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

27. The Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board consists of key partners with an interest in tackling domestic abuse and supporting victims and their children. The Board, which meets quarterly, includes one or more representatives from the County, Rutland and district councils, adult and children victims of domestic abuse, charities and voluntary organisations that work with victims, health and police.
28. The Board carries out a monitoring and consultative role as it performs certain specified functions, including:
 - i. Assessing the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims
 - ii. Supporting the development and publication of the required Strategy
 - iii. Giving effect to the new Strategy (through monitoring commissioning / decommissioning needs)

- iv. Ensuring representation of marginalised groups and those who are underrepresented in local services.

29. As with the LRSCSB, the Community Safety Team lead and oversee the work of the Leicestershire and Rutland DA Local Partnership Board (LRDALPB).

Needs Assessment

- 30. The Safe Accommodation Needs Assessment is a comprehensive tool that enables the capture of data covering a range of themes relating to safe accommodation. The legislation requires the County Council to assess the need for accommodation-based domestic abuse support across Leicestershire for all victims. Led by the community safety team, this work has now been completed and data has been collated from numerous agencies. Engagement with victims and survivors of DA is, however, still ongoing to collate more information about their experiences.
- 31. The national DA charity SafeLives assisted the Community Safety Team with this Needs Assessment which has been used to inform the development of the DA Reduction Strategy for the provision of support in Leicestershire:
<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2022/1/6/domestic-abuse-reduction-strategy-2022-2025.pdf>
- 32. The Needs Assessment has also informed the commissioning decisions for the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) funding to date as outlined in the table further below.
- 33. A regular review of the Needs Assessment is undertaken by officers within the Community Safety Team to ensure commissioning decisions are founded on evidence-based data and intelligence. This information is presented to and monitored by the DALPB along with monitoring and evaluation information from all commissioned services.

The DA Reduction Strategy

- 34. The County Council's Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-2025, includes the following five priorities identified through engagement with stakeholders and partners, analysing known gaps in provision and the statutory duty:
 - i. Early Intervention and Prevention
 - ii. Targeted Support
 - iii. Reachable Services
 - iv. DA Act (Part 4) - Safe Accommodation
 - v. Strong Partnerships
- 35. An implementation plan was completed by the County Council with key partners in January 2022. This live document sets out how the priorities identified in the Strategy will be delivered through the lifetime of the three year Strategy, responding to changing needs as these needs are reviewed annually. Progress against the implementation plan will be monitored within the Authority by the Director of Children and Family Services and the Children and Family Services Domestic Abuse Strategy Planning Meeting, Chaired by the Assistant Director for Targeted Early Help and

Social Care and the DA Local Partnership Board. Progress information will also be shared with partners and key stakeholders to ensure alignment across the system.

36. An annual report must be submitted to DLUHC to inform on progress of the Strategy (via a portal); the first report was submitted the end of June 2022, the third report will be submitted in December 2023.

Funding

37. The County Council has received £1,127,205 funding from DLUHC in year one (2021 – 2022), £1,130,326 in year two (2022 – 2023) and £1,152,936 in year three (2023 – 2024), in addition, each district council has received approximately £33,000 from DLUHC to support this work. The County Council funding is within the Children and Family Services directorate budget overseen by the Director of Children and Family Services and the DA Locality Partnership Board which will continue to monitor outcomes against the use of these funds.
38. A DA Act Officer and a Commissioning Officer have been recruited within the Community Safety Team to drive this work forward and a DA Act Working Group has been convened by the County Council to support the response across Leicestershire. The Working Group membership includes all district councils, County Council Departments (Children and Family Services, Adult Social Care and Public Health), Police and DA service providers. It will ensure the response to this work is embedded at locality, within the districts.
39. The corporate DA Strategy Group, chaired by the Assistant Director, Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care, governs the corporate approach to this work, signing off commissioning decisions before they are presented to the DA Locality Partnership Board.
40. Tier one authorities are waiting to be informed whether any grant funding will be received for year four; indications are that the County Council may be allocated £1,174,689.

Spend Plan

41. The spend plan was drafted and agreed at the Domestic Abuse Strategy Group (Chaired by the Assistant Director, Targeted Early Help and Children's Social Care) before being signed off at the DALPB (Chaired by the Lead Member for Safer Communities).
42. Year 1, 2 and 3 Funding Spend Plan:

<u>Support service</u>	<u>Service provider</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Time period</u>
Domestic Abuse Act Coordinator	Leicestershire County Council	£95,062	2 years fixed term
Commissioning officer	Leicestershire County Council	£88,234	2 years fixed term
Substance misuse specialist	Turning Point	£80,000	2 years (+1 year extension)
Gypsy Roma and Traveller specialist	Leicestershire Gate	£60,000	2 years (+1 year extension)

Specialist DA Support LGBT+ Victims	Leicester LGBT service	£56,000	2 years (+1 year extension)
Outreach support for male victims	Women's Aid Leicestershire	£97,054	2 years (+1 year extension)
Helpline support for male victims	FreeVa	£76,544	2 years (+1 year extension)
BAME advisor	FreeVa	£76,544	2 years (+1 year extension)
Counselling service for adults	FreeVa	£42,982	1 year
Counselling service for children	FreeVa	£42,982	1 year
Children support service	JADA+ via Women's Aid	£123,550	1 year
Outreach worker x2	Living without Abuse	£148,000	2 years (+1 year extension)
County Family service: x2 family workers	Living without Abuse	£148,000	2 years (+1 year extension)
1 part time young person's IDVA	Living without Abuse	£54,000	2 years (+1 year extension)
Contribution to MARAC manager and Administrator costs	MARAC	£18,000	2 years (+1 year extension)
DA Team	Leicestershire County Council	£504,074	2 years
Refuge and Dispersed Accommodation	Procurement Process in Progress	£250,000	2 years (+1 year extension)

Serious Violence Duty

43. A new Serious Violence Duty was imposed on specified authorities (unitary, upper tier and district councils), including the County Council, from 31 January 2023. the County Council is required by 31 January 2024 to produce a Strategic Needs Assessment and Serious Violence Reduction Strategy.
44. The Duty requires specified authorities, for one or more local government areas, to work together and plan to prevent and reduce Serious Violence (SV), including identifying the kinds of SV in the area, the causes of that violence and to prepare and implement a shared strategy for preventing and reducing SV (Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act Ch1 Part 2). Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act requires CSPs to have SV as an explicit priority in their strategies and plans.
45. The local definition of SV includes serious violence in public places, domestic abuse related serious violence and sexual violence.
46. The Community Safety Team is leading on this work through the Strategic Partnership Board Executive, chaired by the Director of Children and Family Services and the CSPs. A self-assessment tool has been developed by the Violence

Reduction Network (VRN) to enable the County Council and other partners across LLR, to identify strengths and areas requiring strengthening over the next 12 months.

47. This work is very much still in development and will be reported in more detail to the Commission in due course. The Violence Reduction Strategy will also be presented to the Scrutiny Commission for comment in advance approval by the Cabinet.

Police and Crime Commissioners

48. 2012 saw the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners who have responsibility for oversight of the local police force and introducing 'force-wide' (LLR) Police and Crime Plans focused on reducing crime and disorder in their region. Oversight of the PCC lies with the Police and Crime Panel, a joint committee which includes a 'County' representative along with a representative of each district council who can raise Leicestershire-related issues. The current County Council representative on the Panel is the Cabinet Lead Member for Children and Family Services and Community Safety, who also chairs the LSCSB.
49. Recognising that there may be some crossover in the role of PCCs and County Councils in two-tier arrangements, the Crime and Disorder (Formulation and Implementation of Strategy) Regulations 2012 introduced a requirement for county-level strategy groups such as the LSCSB to introduce a Community Safety Agreement (CSA) and a partnership plan.
50. In Leicestershire the community safety team introduced a web-based plan through the LRSCSB. The CSA identifies common themes and priorities and provides links to the PCC and CSP plans and to related national crime and disorder strategies. The planning cycle linked to the local community safety agreement has been developed by the LRSCSB
51. The Government is launching a new National ASB Action Plan in 2024 with dedicated funding to support Police and Crime Commissioners, working with councils and others, to target enforcement in the areas where anti-social behaviour is most prevalent in their communities. The Community Safety Team is leading the response across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) on this Action Plan through chairing of the LLR Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Strategy Group and ASB Delivery Group.

Resource Implications

52. The DA services to be commissioned are therapeutic and advocacy support services as per the grant conditions and not for accommodation itself (which would create a longer-term funding risk). It is intended to fund these fully within the DLUHC grant so no further funding is requested from the County Council at this time other than internal resources to administer the grant and duties (which will be absorbed within existing staff resources).
53. As this funding is time limited there is some financial risk of the Authority needing to provide additional future funding. However, the Government has advised the

intention of future funding with reference to: “In the spirit of the New Burdens Doctrine, the duty will be funded in future years”.

54. The Director of Corporate Resources and Director of Law and Governance have been consulted on the content of this report.

Conclusions

55. In two tier Local Authority arrangements the statutory duties placed on District CSPs and Responsible agencies to work together and identify priorities are relatively complex and require the production of a Community Safety Agreement to identify shared priorities. To inform the Scrutiny Commission the report details the work of the Council’s Community Safety in meeting the duties placed on the Authority by relevant legislation and provides background information concerning the role of the Police Crime Commissioner and Leicestershire Safer communities Strategy Group (LSCSB) and the critical role of the Team in ensuring a joined up approach across the County and Rutland
56. The Scrutiny Commission is asked to note and comment on the work of the Community Safety Team in discharging the duties placed on the County Council and the delivery of its community safety priorities.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

57. None.

Equality Implications

58. There are no identified direct equality implications for the County Council as a partner agency within broader crime and disorder arrangements.
59. In developing all Strategies, a full Equality Human Rights Impact Assessment was undertaken to identify equality and human rights issues that needed to be incorporated within the Strategy.

Human Rights Implications

60. There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

Leicestershire County Council Strategic Plan 2022-26

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2021/10/29/Draft-Strategic-Plan-2022-26.pdf>

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/17/contents/enacted>

Leicestershire Domestic Abuse Reduction Strategy 2022-2025:

<https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/field/pdf/2022/1/6/domestic-abuse-reduction-strategy-2022-2025.pdf>

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