

Adults Safer City Scrutiny Panel

19 October 2021

Report title	Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Update	
Cabinet member with lead responsibility	Councillor Jasbir Jaspal Health and Wellbeing	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	John Denley, Director of Public Health	
Originating service	Communities	
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Report to be/has been considered by	Public Health Leadership Team	29 September 2021

Recommendations for action or decision:

The Scrutiny Panel is recommended to:

1. Provide feedback and scrutiny on the current activity of Safer Wolverhampton Partnership.
2. Provide feedback and scrutiny on current activity and future plans to address domestic abuse.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on current priorities of Safer Wolverhampton Partnership (SWP).
- 1.2 To outline current and proposed activity around SWPs response to domestic abuse.
- 1.3 To provide an overview of updated Channel guidance.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Safer Wolverhampton Partnership is Wolverhampton's Community Safety Partnership (CSP). The Crime and Disorder Act (1998) created CSP's in each local authority area to bring together key partners to work together to address crime and disorder.

3.0 Safer Wolverhampton Partnership Priorities

- 3.1 The SWP Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy (2020-2023) sets out the priorities of the partnership:
 - A. **Reducing Offending** - Preventing offending by identifying those at risk of criminality at the earliest stage and offering the appropriate intervention and support to deter criminality. Reducing reoffending by ensuring effective management of high-risk offenders and the provision of effective intervention to change behaviours and address causal factors linked to offending.
 - B. **Preventing Violence** - Identifying those in need of support at an early stage to prevent violence and escalations of violence. Ensuring a coordinated approach to ensure that appropriate intervention is offered at the earliest opportunity.
 - C. **Harm Reduction** - Reducing the harm caused by victimisation and repeat victimisation to ensure those who are most vulnerable are effectively safeguarded, supported and empowered.
 - D. **Building Community Capacity** – building trust and confidence with communities and supporting people to become active within their local area and co-produce solutions to local issues.
- 3.2 The main focus of SWP when delivering against priorities remains on collaborative working and influencing mainstream delivery of members of the partnership to ensure a coordinated approach to addressing crime and disorder.
- 3.3 In addition to its key role of embedding partnership responses to crime and harm reduction, SWP receives an annual grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to commission projects and interventions, supporting mainstream activity to deliver against strategic crime and community safety priorities.
- 3.4 SWP received a grant allocation of £150,000 for 2021-2022 and a breakdown of activity against this grant is broken down in Appendix One.

- 3.5 In addition to grant funded activity SWP also delivers against a number of statutory functions, including the completion of Domestic Homicide Reviews and overseeing Wolverhampton's response to the Prevent Duty.
- 3.6 As part of its statutory function SWP delivers Wolverhampton's Channel Panel, a multi-agency approach to identifying and supporting individuals at risk of being drawn into extremism. Refreshed Channel guidance was launched in November 2020 and aims to strengthen the quality and consistency of panels and the practice of panel members across England and Wales, more effectively managing the vulnerability of individuals at risk of being drawn into terrorism.
- 3.7 In order to display compliance with the new guidance, SWP have completed an annual assurance statement for the Home Office. A summary of key changes within the guidance can be found in Appendix two.

4.0 Domestic Abuse

- 4.1 Tackling domestic abuse is a key priority of SWP and activity is underpinned by SWP's Interpersonal Violence Strategy (2019-2022). Reports of domestic abuse have been increasing year on year as has associated demand on statutory agencies and specialist domestic abuse services.
- 4.2 Domestic abuse is an underreported crime and therefore a focus for SWP is raising awareness of domestic abuse, in order to ensure that professionals and communities are able to recognise the signs of abuse and victims are able to access the support which they need. The restrictions around Covid-19 heightened the need to reach out to victims who may have been at increased risk of abuse, particularly if they were living with their perpetrator.
- 4.3 The Domestic Abuse Act (2021) places a duty on local authorities to ensure that there is a partnership response to addressing domestic abuse. In addition, local authorities are required to commission support for victims of domestic abuse and their children within safe accommodation.
- 4.4 In order to respond to increasing and changing demands around domestic abuse and ensure a robust response to victims, as well as ensure compliance with the new duties set out in the Act, SWP has undertaken the following activity:
 - A. Multi-agency governance of the city response to domestic abuse has been reviewed. This resulted in the creation of an Interpersonal Violence Board to oversee delivery against the Interpersonal Violence Strategy as well as a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) and One Day One Conversation (ODOC) governance group to oversee the provision of support for victims and management of perpetrators in high-risk cases;
 - B. A domestic abuse needs assessment has been produced, this included extensive engagement with specialist domestic abuse organisations as well as statutory partners

to map the services available for victims of domestic abuse and their capacity. It also included engaging victims of domestic abuse in focus groups to ensure that their views were central to the report. The needs assessment is informing current commissioning around domestic abuse safe accommodation services and will be central to refreshing SWPs current strategy around Interpersonal Violence.

- C. As a partnership SWP understood that restrictions around Covid-19 would be particularly challenging for victims of domestic abuse, particularly those living with their abusers who may have had less opportunities to seek help, faced further isolation and have less contact with those who support them. In order to deliver key messages to victims and encourage them to seek support to remain safe SWP supported the development of a regional #NoExcuseForAbuse campaign led by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner, as well as successfully delivering a 16 day virtual 'Orange Wolves' campaign to deliver key messages to victims that they are not alone, support is available in Wolverhampton and lockdown restrictions do not apply to those at risk of domestic abuse.
 - D. SWP have worked closely with specialist domestic abuse services throughout the pandemic to ensure that victims and children living with domestic abuse can continue to get the support which they need. We maintained regular contact to understand any risks and challenges which they were facing and worked in partnership to mitigate against these so that they can continue to offer vital specialist support to victims.
 - E. SWP is working closely with other Community Safety Partnerships and partners across the region to ensure that we share best practice, are giving consistent messaging and there is a robust regional response to protecting victims and their families. We're also live to additional funding announced for services protecting victims of DA and support local providers to access this to increase capacity locally and regionally.
- 4.5 Domestic abuse continues to be a priority area for SWP and plans are in place to refresh the multi-agency Interpersonal Violence Strategy to ensure that it reflects findings from the above activity as well as recent themes and trends. The new strategy will be developed in partnership and launched in April 2022 following a full consultation.
- 4.6 The government announced in December 2019 that it would to bring forward legislation to create a new Serious Violence Duty. The Serious Violence Duty is expected to come into effect in 2022 to 2023. The exact date is dependent on the Parliamentary timetable.
- 4.7 The Serious Violence Duty will require local authorities, the police, fire and rescue authorities, specified criminal justice agencies and health authorities to work together to formulate an evidence based analysis of the problems associated with serious violence in a local area, and then produce and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those particular issues.

4.8 The Serious Violence Duty provides an opportunity to ensure that the Tackling Violence and Exploitation Strategy and Interpersonal Violence Strategy are closely aligned to ensure that there is a consistent and robust violence prevention offer within Wolverhampton. It also provides an opportunity to widen the focus of the current Interpersonal Violence Strategy to extend activity to promote the safety of women in public spaces, including the night time economy, building on existing work including the creation of Wolverhampton's 'Safe Haven'.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 Delivery of SWP priorities and activity is largely delivered through existing local authority and partner resources. Wolverhampton's Police and Crime Commissioner grant allocation of £150,000 in 2021-2022 is being used to fund specific activity to complement existing activity, a breakdown of which can be found in Appendix One.

5.2 In addition to local authority and partner resources and the annual grant from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, SWP oversee the implementation of additional relevant grant funded projects. For example, MHCLG grant funding around delivery of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021).

[LD/07102021/Q]

6.0 Legal implications

6.1 Sections five and six of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 require the Council and other responsible authorities to formulate and implement strategies to reduce crime and disorder in the area. Subsequent revisions to the Act (Police and Justice Act 2006) places a duty on Community Safety Partnerships to prepare strategic assessments with the purpose of informing the partnership plan revisions.

6.2 Section nine of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 places a statutory responsibility on Community Safety Partnerships to complete a Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) when a person has died from a domestic related death.

6.3 Additional statutory duties have been placed on the local authority as part of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021) and SWP hold strategic responsibility for implementation of this duty.

6.4 The Serious Violence Duty will place additional statutory responsibilities on SWP and section four of this report outlines proposals to ensure that the City of Wolverhampton Council are compliant with the new duty when the legislation is passed.

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7.0 Equalities implications

7.1 SWPs programme of delivery for 2021-2022 is based on an assessment of need and contributes towards implementation of the strategic priorities in the Community Safety and Harm Reduction Strategy 2020-2023. This results in SWP activity actively

addressing inequalities of individuals and communities which are disproportionately impacted by certain crimes on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality and disability. A full equality analysis has been undertaken on the strategy; there are no negative implications from its delivery.

8.0 Health and Wellbeing Implications

8.1 SWP are committed to taking a public health approach to crime and violence prevention, influencing whole systems to bring about change at a population level. Delivery against priorities outlined within this report impacts positively on the health and wellbeing of communities and reduces the physical and mental harm of becoming a victim of crime.

9.0 Covid Implications

9.1 The activity of Safer Wolverhampton Partnership supports the corporate priorities of 'Relighting Our City', particularly by supporting the most vulnerable residents as the city recovers from Covid-19.

9.2 The restrictions around Covid-19 have increased the risk to victims of domestic abuse, particularly those who live with their perpetrators. Reports of domestic abuse have increased throughout the pandemic, as has the demand on specialist services. Increasing the support which victims can access within domestic abuse safe accommodation services will contribute to the partnership response to reduce harm to these victims and ensure that they can access the support which they need.

10.0 Appendices

10.1 Appendix One – Breakdown of activity against SWP grant allocation.

10.2 Appendix Two – Summary of updated Channel Panel Guidance.

10.3 Appendix Three – Slide deck for presentation at Adults and Safer City Scrutiny Panel.