



Report to the Transport, Environment and Communities Select Committee

Title:	Safer Bucks Plan 2017-20
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Author:	Cath Marriott
Contact officer:	Cath Marriott, 01296 383979 cmariott@buckscc.gov.uk
Cabinet Member sign-off:	Martin Phillips

Purpose of Agenda Item

This is a report to provide the Committee with information on the progress of developing the Safer Bucks Plan – crime & disorder priorities for the County Safer Communities team, 2017-20.

Background

Crime and disorder remain one of our residents' highest priorities, as reflected in the annual Residents' Survey. Buckinghamshire County Council are one of the "responsible authorities" under the Crime & Disorder Act and have a duty to work in partnership to reduce crime, tackle disorder, reduce re-offending and tackle substance misuse.

Funding for Community Safety work (in partnership) comes from the Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) and the work of the PCC is scrutinised by the Police & Crime Panel. Each agency also contributes resources, time and investment into this work, relevant to the agency's capacity and remit.

There is a statutory duty in two-tier areas to produce an annual Community Safety Agreement. This should identify what our priorities are and how we will work (with our partners) to address them. In Bucks it is called the Safer Bucks Plan and we reference local, district priorities as the plans will complement each other.

This document must be evidence based. We use a minimum of one year of crime and disorder data and information and look at trends, emerging areas, changing nature of crime etc. This evidence base is called the Partnership Strategic Assessment and is carefully written over approx. 3 months, culminating in a detailed analysis document looking at victims, offenders and locations of crime.

Summary

The Safer Bucks Plan is scheduled to be published in April 2017. While it is approved by an existing body called the Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board, each partner's views are important in order to shape the plan and ensure that it is owned by all. The membership of the Partnership Board is as follows:

- Bucks County Council Cabinet lead with responsibility for Community Safety
- Chair of Wycombe Community Safety Partnership (CSP)
- Chair of Aylesbury CSP
- Chair of Chiltern and South Bucks CSP
- Assistant Chief Constable with responsibility for Buckinghamshire
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Group Manager, Bucks Fire and Rescue Service
- Deputy Director for Public Health Buckinghamshire
- Director from Buckinghamshire CCGs
- Director of Communities, Bucks County Council
- Head of Operations Thames Valley Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
- Director for Bucks, National Probation Service
- Representative from the Voluntary Sector
- Chair of the Thames Valley Police and Crime Panel

The Strategic Assessment has analysed offending, victimisation, crime trends and vulnerable locations over the last 1-5 years and has identified areas which the Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board will need to consider. These include:

- 1 in 5 people have reported being re-victimised within 2 years
- 1 in 3 detected offenders re-offend within 5 years
- Communities feel safer (according to resident surveys) than in previous years
- There is a significant increase in cross-border and organised crime
- After consistent years of decline, the reporting of violence has increased and younger people are, more frequently, reporting being a victim
- Whilst the more serious kinds of stealing offences (e.g. burglary) have decreased over 5 years, shoplifting has increased with food and alcohol being stolen most often
- The reporting of sexual offences has increased, highlighting an increase in confidence to come forward, and must be followed by good services for those who do
- Both victims and offenders (and often people can be seen as both) are significantly affected by risk factors that make them more likely to be involved in crime. These include issues such as substance misuse, mental ill health, unsuitable accommodation, financial challenges, and lack of positive influential relationships (e.g. family, friends, and authority figures). Effective action must be taken to tackle issues further upstream (prevention).
- Exploitation of adults and children has become one of the council's and the partnerships most serious concerns. Lesser understood areas of crime such as modern slavery, human trafficking, mate crime, and other exploitation are increasing alongside better known crimes such as rogue trading and domestic abuse.
- Cybercrime (any crime using digital means) has opened up the scope of vulnerability to anyone with a computer, smart phone or email address. Young people and those less digitally savvy are all at risk.

Key issues

Deciding on the Partnership's priorities will be complex as the criminal landscape has changed dramatically over the last few years. One of the key challenges has been to understand what the precise role is of Safer Communities in high profile and emerging agendas, such as CSE, Terrorism, Serious Organised Crime and other forms of adult exploitation. In many areas, the responsibility is shared and, in some, the agenda is led by another group (e.g. Children's Safeguarding Board lead on CSE).

Modern Slavery, Gangs, Exploitation and Cyber (digital) Crime are some of the key areas of demand on the partnership and risk to our communities. These crimes do not always respect geographic boundaries and therefore Community Safety Partnerships must consider efforts that reach or join across borders.

It is also true that crime requires a medium to long term strategy (prevention and community development) rather than the better known short term tactics such as straight forward crime prevention advice. These MUST take into account the risk factors that increase vulnerability both to commit and become a victim of crime.

Buckinghamshire residents are not often aware of the picture of demand placed on our services and, with many of these crimes invisible to them. It is, therefore, a challenge to balance our resources against those areas which are visible but lower threat (e.g. noisy neighbours and public disorder) and invisible but deeply entrenched and nationally harmful (e.g. serious organised crime and exploitation of children or adults).

Resource implications

The Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board will use the information from the priorities discussion, along with public consultation, to identify the key work areas for 2017 onwards and this will influence the decisions that are made around the PCC Grant funding (grant amount not yet known at this stage).

The BCC budget for Safer Communities is not affected by this and no changes in funding levels are being suggested through this process.

Next steps

- ⇒ The Safer Bucks Plan is a Core Partnership Strategy led by the Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board, whose role it is to approve the Plan. As a key strategy for the County Council, Cabinet will be asked to endorse the Plan in March 2017.
- ⇒ The Safer Bucks Plan will be formally approved by the Safer & Stronger Bucks Partnership Board and then will be published by end April 2017

We are currently very early in the process and are identifying our priority areas of focus, based on the Strategic Assessment evidence, as summarised above. Public and stakeholder consultation will ensure that parties are informed of the emerging priorities and this information will help to inform the Safer Bucks Plan which will, for the first time, be a three year plan (reviewed annually).