



# Report to Cabinet

**Date:** 12 December 2023

**Title:** Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26

**Cabinet Member(s):** Cllr A Hussain, Cllr T Broom

**Contact officer:** Gideon Springer

**Ward(s) affected:** All

## Recommendations:

- ***Approve the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26***
- ***Note the next steps:***
  - ***Publication of the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26 and submission to the Home Office***
  - ***Development of detailed delivery plan***

## Reason for recommendation:

The production of a Serious Violence Strategy is a statutory requirement of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022

## 1. Executive summary

- 1.1 In line with the statutory requirements of the Serious Violence Duty, the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26 has been produced.
- 1.2 The Strategy outlines five priorities and a multi-agency Serious Violence Reduction delivery Plan will be produced to support the delivery of the priorities over the next three years.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Within Buckinghamshire we have adopted the definition of serious violence as agreed by Community Safety Managers across the Thames Valley:

*“Serious Violence includes specific types of recorded crime, such as homicide, grievous bodily harm, incidents that involve a knife, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent, such as in county lines drug dealing.”*

- 2.2 Following public consultation in July 2019, the Government announced that it would bring forward legislation introducing a new Serious Violence Duty on a range of specified authorities. The aim of the Duty is to ensure relevant services work together to share information and allow them to target their interventions, collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities.
- 2.3 The Duty covers the requirements set out in Chapter 1 of Part 2 of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. It requires specified authorities for a local government area to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, including identifying the kinds of serious violence that occur in the area, the causes of that violence (so far as it is possible to do so), and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing, and reducing serious violence in the area.
- 2.4 The Serious Violence Duty also set out a requirement that a Serious Violence Needs Assessment (SVNA) be completed. The SVNA is a comprehensive evidence-based data analysis conducted by Buckinghamshire Council to provide valuable insights to support the development of strategies and activities to address Serious Violence issues.
- 2.5 This SVNA will also indicate key factors of likely causes and trends of serious violence across the Buckinghamshire area.
- 2.6 Local areas’ multi-agency responses to serious youth violence will be the focus of upcoming thematic Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) carried out by Ofsted, the CQC, HMICFRS and HMIP starting in September 2023. The inspections will focus on how the police, children’s social care, education, youth offending services and relevant health services work together to address and prevent Serious Youth Violence.
- 2.7 The inspectorates will use the scope set out in the government’s Serious Violence Strategy, which includes homicide and knife and gun crime, as well as emerging threats, such as the use of corrosive substances as weapons.
- 2.8 The targeted inspections will evaluate how effectively the local partnership strategic arrangements are working to address and prevent serious youth violence, including looking at the role of the Community Safety Partnership, the VRU and where relevant other multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- 2.9 This Strategy will provide evidence of the multi-agency commitment within Buckinghamshire to make a real difference to the safety and well-being of children.

### **3. Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26**

- 3.1 Taking the Strategic Assessment and feedback from partners and Councillors and other known insights into account, the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26 has been produced in line with the Government's Serious Violence Duty guidance.
- 3.2 The Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26 priorities are:
- **Priority 1** – Raises awareness of serious violence through communication, education and training.
  - **Priority 2** – Support early intervention for vulnerable young people and those becoming at risk.
  - **Priority 3** – Develop awareness of, and embed, the Serious Violence Agenda, and Duty requirements amongst the partnership.
  - **Priority 4** – Enhance appropriate support for those who are released from custody who are most risk of reoffending.
  - **Priority 5** – Undertake a proactive partnership response to cohorts and locations vulnerable to serious violence.

### **4. Delivery Plans**

- 4.1 A multi-agency Serious Violence Reduction delivery plan is being developed to tackle these priorities, setting out clear measures so that we can track the impact and outcome of our actions. The plan will seek to tackle each of the priorities by taking a whole-system public health approach to address the underlying factors that will be drawn out of the SVNA in order to provide the maximum benefit to help keep safer our local communities.
- 4.2 The delivery plan will be overseen by the multi-agency Serious Violence Reduction Delivery Group, with updates going to the Safer Buckinghamshire Board on a quarterly basis.

### **5. Legal and financial implications**

- 5.1 The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 sets out the Serious Violence Duty for specified authorities which includes the requirement to produce and implement a Serious Violence Strategy.
- 5.2 The Government has also announced an amendment to the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that Serious Violence is a priority for Community Safety Partnerships and ensure they have a Serious Violence Strategy in place.
- 5.3 Tackling serious violence is one of the priorities within the Safer Buckinghamshire Partnership Strategy, and the Safer Buckinghamshire Board will oversee the implementation of the Serious Violence Strategy and Delivery Plan.

- 5.4 Buckinghamshire Council receives very little dedicated funding to support our serious violence work. 2023/2024 is the last year that Buckinghamshire Council will receive £30k from the Home Office, which is used to support early intervention projects.
- 5.5 At present, all Community Safety Partnerships receive a Community Safety Grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which is to be used to fund projects which will assist with the delivery of their community safety strategies. The Safer Buckinghamshire Board, in conjunction with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), manage the Community Safety Grant, which for 2023/24 is £486k. This can be used to support the five priorities outlined in the Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy. At present £373k has already been allocated to local projects, which leaves £113k for any of the Safer Buckinghamshire Board subgroups to submit application. Obviously, not all of this would be available to support serious violence work, however the Serious Violence Reduction Delivery Group can apply for funding from this grant to support the implementation of the Serious Violence Response Strategy.
- 5.6 If the decision was made by the PCC that the funding for the Community Safety Partnership was to be reduced, or managed differently by the OPCC, this could impact on the delivery of the Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26 and therefore the Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26 and Delivery Plan.
- 5.7 Projects can be delivered within the existing funding received and expected in budgetary terms. However, there are continued resource constraints on both the Council and our community safety partners which could see an impact on our delivery.

#### **5a Director of Legal and Democratic Services comment**

- 5a.1 The Director has read and approved the report.

#### **5b Section 151 Officer comment**

- 5b.1 The Officer has read, advised on any amendments and approved the report

### **6. Corporate implications**

- 6.1 The Serious Violence Response Strategy 2023-26 and the implementation of the Delivery Plan will contribute towards the Buckinghamshire Council Corporate Plan through the following key priorities:
- Strengthening our communities
  - Protecting the vulnerable

## **7. Local councillors and community boards**

- 7.1 Two Members Briefing Sessions took place in July, where approximately 50 councillors attended.
- 7.2 Members recognised the importance of the Strategy and supported the priorities set out within the document. The links to domestic abuse and violence against women and girls were flagged during the sessions, and it was explained that there is a separate Domestic Abuse Strategy that links with this Strategy.
- 7.3 Members also raised the importance of early intervention with young people within the county – and this is one of the five priorities within the new Strategy.

## **8. Communication, engagement and further consultation**

- 8.1 As set out in the Serious Violence Duty, the below statutory agencies were consulted via face-to-face discussions as well as a survey and their views regarding the 2023-26 priorities were incorporated into this Strategy:
- Thames Valley Police
  - Education
  - National Probation Service
  - Bucks Fire and Rescue Service
  - Local Prisons
  - Youth Offending Service
  - Public Health
- 8.2 The responses obtained have assisted in ensuring our priorities align with their organisation and will assist in creating the Serious Violence Reduction Delivery Plan to ensure the 2023-26 Serious Violence priorities are delivered effectively.

## **9. Next steps and review**

- 9.1 The Serious Violence Strategy will be published on the Buckinghamshire Council website.
- 9.2 In line with the Government's Serious Violence Duty guidance, the Serious Violence Response Strategy will be submitted to the Home Office by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.
- 9.3 The Serious Violence Reduction Delivery Group will finalise the Delivery Plan which tackles the 2023-2026 priorities.
- 9.4 The Annual report on the work of the Safer Buckinghamshire Board will be produced in February/March 2024.

## **10. Background papers**

*Serious Violence Needs Assessment 2023*

*Safer Buckinghamshire Strategy 2023-26*

*Serious Violence Delivery Plan 2023-26*

