

Brighton & Hove City Council

Equalities, Community Safety and Human Rights Committee

Agenda Item 31

Subject: Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 23-26 update

Date of meeting: 25th March 2024

**Report of: Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and
Communities**

Contact Officer: Name: Jim Whitelegg

Email: Jim.whitelegg@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, there is a requirement for statutory and other partners to formulate a plan every three years to tackle crime and disorder and monitor progress. A new Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy was agreed by full council in 2023. The strategy has recently been refreshed with updated data, although the strategic priorities identified have not changed. This report provides an update on the work undertaken by the Community Safety Partnership in relation to the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That committee note and comment on the update on work being undertaken by the Safer Communities Team and partners in relation to the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2023-2026.

2.2 That committee give its continued support to the partnership work described in the report thereby contributing to the management of crime and community safety priorities for the city.

3. Context and background information

Overview of police recorded crimes and incidents

CAVEAT: It should be noted that police recorded crime statistics can be impacted by changes in reporting practices, recording practices and policing activity, as well as by the number of crimes actually taking place.

- 3.1 There were 28,758 crimes recorded by the police in Brighton & Hove in 2022/23. This is higher than 27,531 in 2021/22 and 24,604 in 2020/21 - when Covid had its greatest impact on people's lives - but lower than the 29,393 recorded in 2019/20.
- 3.2 In the first nine months of 2023/24 (to the end of December 2023) the number of total police recorded crimes is 3.6% higher than in the same period in 2022/23.
- 3.3 In 2022/23 there was an increase of 12% in the total number of police recorded crimes taking place in the city compared with 2021/22, when the Covid pandemic with its associated restrictions led to fewer crimes being committed.
- 3.4 Acquisitive crimes (including theft offences, burglaries and theft of/from vehicles) are 5% higher in total than at the same time in 2022/23. This has been driven largely by a significant increase in theft from the person offences, as well as shoplifting offences and residential burglary offences.
- 3.5 Public order offences decreased by 7.3% in Q3 of 2023/24 compared with the same period in 2022/23. Recorded sexual offences and domestic violence crimes also showed a decrease in this period (5.5% and 2.0% fewer respectively).

Priority Areas

Serious Violence, Drugs and Exploitation

- 3.6 Police recorded violence against the person crimes are 1.6% higher compared with the same period in 2022/23. This is driven largely by an increase in both violence without injury (up 10.5%) and violence with injury (up 4.5%) offences. Serious violent offences are 17% higher in this period compared to 2022/23; violent offences involving knives or sharp instruments are conversely 23% lower compared to those recorded in 2022/23 with between 8 to 14 offences per month, a much smaller range than in the previous year.
- 3.7 The Brighton & Hove Violence Reduction Partnership (BHVRP) funds a dispersed youthwork offering (Brighton Streets) which has proven to be responsive to contextual safeguarding concerns raised by the Joint Action Group and the community at large. BHVRP also funds a range of interventions aimed at children and young people who are either involved with or vulnerable to exploitation or serious violence. This includes music and sport-based interventions, as well as youthwork offerings based in schools and the local children's A&E department.
- 3.8 Operation Cuckoo has developed its preventative practice with those at risk of "cuckooing", including work with BHCC Housing and registered social landlords to publicise and encourage reporting, and resilience planning tools for those exiting the Op Cuckoo process and other vulnerable groups such as prison leavers. Attendance of the Op Cuckoo meeting itself was

expanded to include representatives from Mental Health and Safer Community's Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG) unit. A twice-yearly stakeholder meeting has also been established to discuss the analyst report produced by Sussex Police covering cases of "cuckooing" for the previous six months. This has been developed in collaboration with Police analysts to include more information (including tenure of properties). This has aided in discussion around demographics potentially at risk.

- 3.9 Forums such as the Adolescent Vulnerability Risk Meeting and Operation Headland deliver targeted safeguarding, risk assessment and management for individual children and young people who are known to be at risk of exploitation and/or involvement with serious violence and organised crime. BHCC Children's Services and Adult Services are working in partnership to develop a transitional safeguarding model to meet the safeguarding needs of vulnerable children during their transition to adulthood.
- 3.10 The BHCC Licensing team continue to work in partnership with Sussex Police and the local business community to prevent alcohol related crime and disorder, such as the "Sensible On Strength" programme, training regarding age-restricted products, test purchase activities and targeted enforcement visits.

Domestic Violence and abuse, Sexual Violence and Violence against women & girls

- 3.11 There were 2% fewer police recorded domestic violence incidents and crimes in this nine-month period in 2023/24 than in 2022/23. Recorded sexual offences were also 5.5% lower during this period compared to 2022/23, however since September 2023 the number of recorded offences has been higher in each month than in the same months in 2022.
- 3.12 Both the Adult Safeguarding and Housing Management services have reviewed policies and procedures to ensure alignment with the Domestic Abuse Act. The VAWG Unit has been guiding the mobilisation of the new services commissioned via the New Burdens funding allocation to enable BHCC to deliver on its new duty to provide support in safe accommodation. These services enhance the existing support commissioned by BHCC and provide wraparound support to survivors across all risk levels for those at risk of losing their accommodation, improve safety of victims and their families. These services have contributed to a reduction in high risk cases being referred to MARAC due to earlier intervention as evidenced in the reduction in number of high risk LGBTQ+ MARAC referrals since the introduction of the Switchboard LGBTQ+ Domestic Abuse and Housing Caseworker. More information on strategy and services linked to the council's VAWG team is reported elsewhere on the agenda.
- 3.13 Sussex Police have taken a proactive approach in holding perpetrators to account. This has included improving investigation processes for sexual violence cases. Sussex Police have also led on the introduction of MATAAC

(Multi Agency Tasking and Coordination) across Sussex to tackle persistent domestic abuse perpetrators.

- 3.14 Work to tackle VAWG in Public Spaces has continued with a strong focus on tackling sexual harassment which was identified in the 2022 Consultation on Safety in Public Spaces as the most prevalent form of VAWG experienced. This has included:
- Rewriting part of the Statement of Licensing Policy to reflect current examples of good practice of safeguarding initiatives in the night-time economy
 - Working with Brighton & Hove Buses and Sussex Police to improve safety on buses in relation to VAWG, including creating a wallet-sized card with information on how to respond to incidents of sexual harassment on buses
 - Developing a toolkit to be used in colleges for 16-18 year olds around sexual harassment in the night-time economy – including defining sexual harassment, promoting responsible behaviour, empowering bystanders, building confidence and assertiveness, and avenues for support.
 - Visiting pubs to survey staff on current sexual harassment policies/ procedures (including Ask for Angela), and whether they feel confident in responding to incidents of sexual harassment, with a view to developing guidance/ training (TBC) in conjunction with Police, BHCC Licensing, and the BCRP

Anti -social Behaviour

- 3.15 Following a significant decrease in the total number of recorded ASB incidents between 2021/22 and 2022/23 and a stabilisation in early 2023/24, the number of recorded incidents has risen steadily, increasing by 6.8% compared with Q3 2022/23. This has been driven primarily by a 7.3% increase in the number of recorded Nuisance ASB incidents – the most common type of ASB recorded – which since August have been consistently higher than in the same months in 2022.
- 3.16 Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership (BHCCSP) has reviewed and updated its ASB Case Review procedure, previously known as the Community Trigger, in line with update Home Office ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014 practitioners' guidance.
- 3.17 BHCC Housing are now using Community Protection Notices (CPNs) to address ASB by tenants, occupants, and visitors to its properties. BHCC has designated use of CPNs further to Registered Social Landlords and is piloting the use of CPNs to address ASB in and around supported accommodation.
- 3.18 Our Public Space Protection Orders (i.e. Alcohol Restriction, Dog Control and gating orders) were extended for a further three years from Nov 2023.

Hate Incidents/crimes

- 3.19 Following a steady decrease in the number of recorded hate crimes and incidents in the first six months of 2023/24 compared to 2022/23, numbers have increased during Q3 so that the year-to-date figure is now 1.1% higher in the nine-month period to 2023/24 compared to the previous year. The number of religiously motivated hate crimes and incidents has more than doubled (up 131%) to 99 cases in the nine-month period to December 2023, while all other forms of recorded hate crime and incidents have remained stable or decreased slightly.
- 3.20 Continued implementation of Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) graffiti strategy with offensive graffiti prioritised for removal irrespective of location, and joint work with Police to target perpetrators.
- 3.21 The Ledward Centre continues to engage across LGBTQ communities providing a safe fully inclusive space focused on health & wellbeing, social inclusion, and hate crime reporting/support along with cultural events and exhibitions. This is leading to stronger LGBTQ community resilience and the development of smaller support groups for multi-marginalised groups.
- 3.22 The Brighton and Hove Joint Action Group (JAG) continues to identify and respond to emerging Hate Incident concerns in geographical hotspots in the city, whilst the Hate and ASB Risk Assessment Conference (HASBRAC) assesses our high risk and complex Hate Incidents cases, ensuring a multi-agency plan is in place to address the Hate Incidents and reduce the harm caused.

Prevent

- 3.23 The UK terrorism threat level¹ remains unchanged at 'Substantial' – meaning 'an attack is likely' since 9th February 2022.
- 3.24 Work to understand the threat, risk and vulnerability picture for the city is carried out in partnership with our communities and statutory partners and a response is coordinated to manage those risks. The Prevent Board continued its quarterly meetings, understanding risks, the impact of work, and compliance with Prevent Duty.
- 3.25 Work to identify and support individuals from being drawn into or supporting terrorism has continued with innovative ideas. Channel Panel has continued to meet monthly, virtually, with good attendance from partners. We continue to receive high level of referrals in the region.

- 3.26 We continued to engage and work in partnership with our faith, BME, minority communities, and partners in response to various local and national issues and terrorism arrests in the city, to understand and respond to community concerns and support communities to counter some of the narratives/ grievances that could be exploited. We continue to facilitate the 'One Voice Partnership' and continue to engage to understand and respond to community sentiments, understand 'Prevent' concerns, and work to prevent escalation of any community tensions and to reassure communities.

4 Analysis and Consideration of Alternative Options

- 4.1 This report is intended to provide an update on current progress of the work carried out as part of the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy, so this section is not relevant. Ways of achieving the aims set out in the partnership strategy are considered based on the annual strategic assessment of crime and community safety.

5 Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The strategic assessment on which the strategy is based was carried out in October 2022 and included a consultation event on the findings and the proposed priorities for 2023-26. Invited participants included partners from the Community Safety Partnership Board, community and voluntary sector partners, including local action teams and communities of interest.
- 5.2 The draft strategy was also made available via the consultation portal for the wider public to comment on. The refreshed strategy has also been shared with key partners for comment. No major changes to the strategy were identified by partners.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This report is to provide an update on the work of the partnership Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2023-26 and invite comment.

7 Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. However, any work undertaken by the council as a result of this report will need to be met from within current budget resources.

Name of finance officer consulted: Mike Bentley
13/02/24

Date consulted :

8 Legal implications

As noted in the first paragraph of this Report, it is a legal requirement (pursuant to the Crime & Disorder Act 1998) that the Council work together with the other responsible authorities for the area to formulate a community safety and crime reduction strategy. Such a strategy for 2023-26 was formally approved by full Council in October 2023.

No other direct legal implications have been identified in this Report, which is for noting.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 16.02.24

9 Equalities implications

9.1 The Council must have regard to its public sector duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. The Community safety and Crime Reduction Strategy is subject to an ongoing and embedded equality impact assessment where specific actions and activities are assessed for equality impact.

10 Sustainability implications

10.1 None identified

11 Other Implications

11.1 Crime & disorder implications: These are contained within the body of the report.

11.2 Public health implications: There are none identified.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendix 1 Community safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2023-26

