

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 148

Subject: Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026-2029

Date of meeting: Thursday, 19 March 2026

Report of: Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services

Lead Officer: Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing

Contact Officer: Richard Tuset

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Ward(s) affected: (All Wards);

Key Decision: Yes

Reason(s) Key: Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions (wards).

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval for the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029, the statutory three-year strategy required under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. The Strategy sets out the city's multi-agency approach to reducing crime, tackling harm, supporting victims, and strengthening safety and cohesion across Brighton & Hove.
- 1.2 The Strategy aligns directly with the Council Plan 2023–2027, in particular commitments to creating a fairer and more inclusive city and a city where people feel safe and welcome, by:
 - Improving safety, community wellbeing and trust;
 - Tackling violence against women and girls;
 - Adopting a learning, evidence-led, prevention-focused approach; and
 - Strengthening community cohesion and resilience.
- 1.3 The Strategy has been shaped by:
 - 2025 Strategic Assessment of Crime & Community Safety;
 - Extensive partnership input;
 - The online public consultation;
 - National policy and legislative changes, including the Crime & Policing Bill and the Violence Against Women & Girls Strategy; and
 - Evolving governance landscape, including devolution proposals and Local Government Reorganisation.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Recommends to Full Council that it approves the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029, attached in Appendix 1.

That Full Council:

- 2.2 Approves the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029, attached in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 Agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services and the Community Safety Partnership, to make minor amendments required to ensure alignment with any relevant new legislation (e.g., Crime & Policing Bill) and devolution-related governance, that may come into force during the lifetime of this strategy.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026 - 2029 sets out the Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) statutory plan for reducing crime, disorder, anti-social behaviour, reoffending, and risks to local communities. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, all responsible authorities - including the Council, Sussex Police, Fire & Rescue, Probation, and Health - must work together through the CSP to prepare, publish and oversee a three-year strategy addressing local community safety priorities.
- 3.2 Ownership of the Strategy rests collectively with the Community Safety Partnership Board, which provides strategic oversight, ensures compliance with statutory duties, and monitors delivery through partnership subgroups. The Strategy therefore represents not only a Council-authored document but a fully shared partnership plan reflecting the responsibilities and capabilities of the whole system. The Strategy appended to this report fulfils these statutory requirements and sets the direction for partnership activity from April 2026 to March 2029.
- 3.3 The development of the Strategy followed the nationally recognised, evidence-led cycle of Strategic Assessment → Drafting → Consultation → Revision → CSP approval. The starting point was the 2025 Strategic Assessment (Appendix 2), which analysed crime trends, vulnerability profiles, community tensions, service demand, demographic change and emerging risks. This Assessment produced a clear set of evidence-based recommendations and identified priority themes requiring a coordinated multi-agency response. The draft Strategy was then prepared using this analysis, together with policy updates and learning from a range of sources including Prevent Learning Reviews, safeguarding findings, and practitioner insight.

- 3.4 A dedicated multi-agency workshop, facilitated by the CSP, brought together statutory partners, commissioned services, voluntary and community sector organisations, education, youth services, health and community representatives. Additional engagement took place through thematic networks and meetings, including Prevent, VAWG, ASB, Adolescent Services and community forums. Alongside partnership engagement, the draft Strategy was opened to the public through an online consultation. This generated rich qualitative information about community experience, perceptions of safety, and expectations of statutory services. The Strategy was then amended to reflect this feedback before being presented to the Community Safety Partnership Board for formal review and approval in early March 2026.
- 3.5 The Strategy has been developed during a period of rapid and significant change, both locally and nationally. Brighton & Hove continues to experience rising pressures associated with poverty, housing insecurity, mental and physical ill-health, and substance misuse, all of which shape patterns of vulnerability and compound risks across communities. The city's distinctive demographic profile - including a young adult population, high levels of inequality, and increasing complexity of need - means that individuals often experience multiple overlapping risks requiring integrated responses.
- 3.6 National policy shifts have also created a more complex landscape for community safety partnerships. The Crime and Policing Bill introduces new offences, stronger enforcement tools, extended safeguarding responsibilities and expectations linked to the Serious Violence Duty, requiring local services to adapt quickly to heightened statutory obligations. Alongside this, Prevent delivery is undergoing significant reform following the Prevent Learning Reviews, with increased scrutiny on how the system engages individuals with multiple and compound needs. National priorities around Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) have also expanded, with the Government's VAWG Strategy setting a clearer expectation that local areas adopt whole-system, trauma-informed approaches which strengthen early intervention, perpetrator accountability, public space safety and cross-agency safeguarding.
- 3.7 In parallel, the national focus on community cohesion, and the Local Government Association's Common Ground guidance on building cohesive communities, has sharpened expectations that local authorities take an active role in addressing polarisation, tackling harmful narratives, and strengthening trust and belonging. This is particularly relevant in Brighton & Hove, where the Council's own Community Cohesion work and the development of a city-wide Cohesion Roadmap emphasise visible leadership, partnership-led responses, and the need to proactively support communities affected by tension, misinformation and global events.
- 3.8 Global instability, including the ongoing Israel/Palestine conflict, has had a pronounced local effect, fuelling fear among affected communities, driving increases in hate incidents, and contributing to polarisation and elevated community tensions. Online spaces have further amplified harms:

misinformation, extremism, online exploitation and bullying increasingly underpin both the perception and the lived experience of safety in the city.

- 3.9 Overlaying these pressures are changes to governance arising from devolution and local government reform, which create uncertainty about future structures, accountability and resource distribution. The Strategy has therefore been designed to be flexible and resilient, capable of withstanding organisational shifts while maintaining a strong, locally grounded partnership response.
- 3.10 Despite these challenges, the 2025 Strategic Assessment highlights areas of strength: robust multi-agency structures, strong collaboration between statutory and voluntary sectors, innovative work across VAWG, ASB, Prevent and adolescent safeguarding, and resilience in responding to fast-moving community tensions. These foundations underpin the Strategy's approach.
- 3.11 In response to evidence, consultation and statutory requirements, the Strategy sets out a delivery model centred on early intervention, evidence-led practice, prevention, and strong partnership coordination. It emphasises the importance of learning - both from national reviews and local practice - and the need for approaches that are trauma-informed, inclusive, and responsive to community voice and lived experience. The Strategy retains the five established strategic priority areas, updated to reflect the current landscape:
- Serious violence, drugs and exploitation
 - Domestic abuse, sexual violence and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Hate incidents and hate crime
 - Prevent (terrorism and extremism)

Within each priority, the Strategy outlines how partners will work together to prevent harm, disrupt offending, support victims and communities, and identify and respond to vulnerability. It also sets expectations for improved data-sharing, joint tasking, place-based interventions, and hotspot-focused work.

- 3.12 Cross-cutting CSP delivery principles developed in the strategy include:
- Acting early to prevent harm;
 - Tackling issues with the greatest impact on vulnerable residents and high-harm locations;
 - Strengthening trust and confidence in statutory agencies;
 - Aligning enforcement and support;
 - Addressing the underlying drivers of crime and harm, including inequality, disadvantage and exclusion;
 - Addressing community tensions and promoting cohesion;
 - Learning continuously from evidence, lived experience and national practice.

- 3.13 The Community Safety Partnership Board has reviewed and approved the plan at its March 2026 meeting, and will oversee its implementation through annual action plans, performance monitoring and partnership governance arrangements.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 **Option 1** – Approve the Strategy (recommended). This enables statutory compliance, provides strategic clarity, strengthens partnership governance, and ensures a coherent citywide approach to crime reduction and safety.
- 4.2 **Option 2** – Do not approve the Strategy. This would place the Council in breach of statutory duties and risk fragmented partnership working, reduced community confidence, and loss of strategic coherence.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 A dedicated multi-agency workshop was held in November 2025, facilitated by the CSP, that brought together statutory partners, commissioned services, voluntary and community sector organisations, education, youth services, health and community representatives. Additional engagement took place through thematic networks and meetings, including Prevent, VAWG, ASB, adolescent services and community forums.
- 5.2 Alongside partnership engagement, the draft Strategy was opened to the public through an online consultation which received 147 responses - almost double the volume of the 2023 consultation. This generated rich qualitative information about community experience, perceptions of safety, and expectations of statutory services.
- 5.3 The consultation received a broad range of responses from residents, community groups, statutory partners, and businesses. Across all priority areas, respondents overwhelmingly agreed with the overall aims and plans, but raised significant concerns about implementation, enforcement and resourcing. See Appendix 3 for more details. A number of cross cutting themes we identified including:
- **Visible policing & enforcement** - increased police responsiveness.
 - **Addressing root causes:**
 - Poverty reduction
 - Youth provision
 - Housing and homelessness support
 - Mental health and substance-misuse services
 - Place-based work / tackling geographical city centre hotspots
 - **Communication and reporting** – improved ways to report crime/ASB
 - **Community tensions around Israel/Palestine:**
 - Both Jewish and Palestinian communities expressing fear
 - Confusion and disagreement about what constitutes hate crime
 - Concerns about protest rights, safety, and approaches to policing

- 5.4 This feedback has been used to amend the strategy before being presented to the Community Safety Partnership Board and Cabinet for formal review and approval.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The council's costs associated with delivering the Community Safety Strategy are planned for and met through the council's established annual budgeting processes and medium-term financial planning. Delivery of the Strategy is aligned to existing corporate priorities and is managed within agreed financial resources, ensuring appropriate financial governance and value for money.
- 6.2 Alongside this, the council makes targeted investment in partnership working and the resourcing of services that contribute to improved community safety outcomes. This includes funding and commissioning arrangements with statutory partners, as well as grant funding and commissioned activity delivered through the community and voluntary sector. These investments are focused on addressing the underlying causes of community safety issues, including poverty, homelessness, mental health needs and substance misuse.
- 6.3 Preventative and early-intervention activity in the city is supported through specific programmes and commissioning arrangements, including the council's community and voluntary sector grant funding programmes. This approach supports sustainable reductions in harm and helps manage future demand on statutory services, contributing to longer-term financial sustainability.

Name of finance officer consulted: David Ellis Date consulted (09/02/26):

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 There is a statutory requirement for this strategy, as set out at 3.1 above. The consultation requirements are met. There are no other legal comments save to mention the public sector equality duty is a relevant issue and is referred to below. There is also the requirement under the Children's Act to take into account the welfare and well being of children in decision making.

Name of lawyer consulted: Simon Court Date consulted 12.02.2025.

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 Key risks identified through the strategy development process include:
- Increasing demand & complexity outpacing capacity.
 - Community tensions exacerbated by political or international events.
 - Data-sharing limitations undermining evidence-led intervention.

- Devolution/LGR changes creating uncertainty in governance and service boundaries.
 - Legislative changes (e.g., Crime & Policing Bill) requiring rapid local adaptation.
- 8.2 Mitigations include strengthened multi-agency governance, quarterly monitoring, annual review, and contingency planning for devolution and LGR.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 The 2026–2029 Strategy is accompanied by a full Equality Impact Assessment (see Appendix 4). Key themes include:
- Disproportionate experiences of harm among disabled residents, Black and Racially Minoritised communities, Trans, Non-Binary, and Intersex, young people, women, looked after children and care leavers and those in poverty;
 - Barriers to reporting for marginalised communities;
 - Increased risk of hate incidents linked to geopolitical tensions;
 - Underreporting of incidents affecting TNBI communities.-reporting of incidents affecting TNBI communities
- 9.2 The Strategy seeks to directly addresses these inequalities through interventions, improved reporting pathways, inclusive communication, and commitments to anti-racist and trauma-informed practice.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 There are no sustainability implications relating to this report.
- 10.2 Community safety work contributes positively to sustainability through:
- Reducing crime and ASB that cause environmental damage (e.g., arson, waste, vandalism);
 - Supporting safer movement around the city, aligning with sustainable transport goals;
 - Enhancing resilience of communities affected by overlapping socio-economic vulnerabilities.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:

- 11.1 Crime, fear of crime, exploitation, and ASB significantly affect mental and physical health. The Strategy improves health outcomes through:
- Trauma-informed approaches;
 - Early intervention around substance misuse;
 - Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults;
 - Reducing violence and exploitation;
 - Strengthening community belonging and cohesion.

Other Implications

12. Procurement implications

12.1 There are no procurement implications relating to this report.

13. Crime & disorder implications:

13.1 Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must consider crime and disorder impacts in all decisions. This Strategy is the primary mechanism through which the city fulfils this duty. It sets out clear partnership plans to reduce:

- Serious violence;
- Exploitation;
- Domestic abuse and VAWG;
- Anti-social behaviour;
- Hate incidents and hate crime;
- Risks of terrorism and extremism.

14. Conclusion

14.1 The Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029 provides a clear, evidence-based, partnership-driven framework to reduce crime, prevent harm, strengthen cohesion, and improve safety across Brighton & Hove. It is shaped by community and stakeholder input, informed by the Strategic Assessment, and aligned with national developments and local priorities. Cabinet approval will ensure statutory compliance and enable delivery to begin immediately.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

Appendix 1: Community Safety & Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029

Appendix 2: Summary of Online Consultation Feedback

Appendix 3: Strategic Assessment of Crime and Community Safety 2025

Appendix 4: Equality Impact Assessment

2. Background documents

- BHCC VAWG Strategy
- National VAWG Strategy
- Crime & Policing Bill
- LGA Common Ground guidance.