

CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL	Agenda Item No. 7
20th September 2023	Public Report

Report of Police and Crime Commissioner for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel (the “Panel”) with details of the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (the “Commissioner”) approach to supporting partners in delivering against the statutory Serious Violence Duty.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Panel is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 3.1 Item 6 – to review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, by the Police and Crime Commissioner in connection with the discharge of the Commissioner’s functions.

Item 8 - To support the effective exercise of the functions of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 (the “Act”) the Panel has a role in scrutinising the Police and Crime Commissioner’s (the “Commissioner”) in the exercise of his statutory functions.
- 4.2 As well as the Commissioner’s duties for holding the Chief Constable to account, the Act places wide-ranging statutory duties and powers on Commissioners relating to working in co-operation with community safety partners.
- 4.3 Increasingly, the Government is also placing a convening role with Commissioners across a wide range of issues (including the Serious Violence Duty), sometimes with a role in allocating national funding locally.
- 4.4 The levers in the partnership arena are different from policing. The legislation does not provide a holding to account role, rather reciprocal duties and powers for co-operation instead. This includes:
- Mutual duties for co-operative working.
 - Having regard to respective priorities.
 - PCC powers to convene community safety and criminal justice partners and ask for reports.

- PCC power to make grants.

The landscape is complex with a wide range of partners, each with specific duties. Good partnership working is, therefore, key. The PCC and the OPCC are uniquely placed to provide system leadership, facilitating and enabling these agencies to work effectively together.

- 4.5 The Commissioner is required to produce a Police and Crime Plan (“the Plan”) which sets out how he will deliver against his statutory role set out in the Act. At the heart of the Plan for 2021-24 is the Commissioner’s role in preventing and reducing crime, as well as his expectations of robust enforcement.

5. SERIOUS VIOLENCE DUTY

- 5.1 Serious violence has devastating impacts on victims and their families, instils a culture of fear within communities and is exceptionally costly to society. To address the national increase in public space violence, particularly among young people, the Government published the Serious Violence Strategy in 2018. The strategy sets out the Government’s response to serious violence and the increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide across England and Wales since 2014.
- 5.2 Between the year to June 2014 and the year to June 2020, offences involving a knife or sharp instrument increased by 84% in England and Wales. Within this context of increased violence, the Serious Violence Duty (the “Duty”), a statutory duty, was introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Duty, which came into effect on 31st January 2023, places a requirement on organisations to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local area through the adoption of a public health approach. This means taking a whole-system, multi-agency approach to preventing serious violence, implementing interventions across all levels, from the individual through to communities.
- 5.3 As part of the Duty, agencies are obliged to share data and information, identify the types of serious violence that occur locally, and determine what is causing that violence. Named organisations must work collaboratively to produce an evidence-informed Strategic Needs Assessment, publish a Local Serious Violence Response Strategy, and engage in impact evaluation and monitoring.
- 5.4 The Duty states that the following “specified authorities” within an area are required to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence:
- Police
 - Probation
 - Youth Offending Teams
 - Fire and Rescue
 - Local Authorities
 - Integrated Care Boards (Health)
- 5.5 It also requires the following “relevant authorities” to be consulted by the specified authorities in the preparation of the strategy, and their involvement is requested:
- Prison
 - Youth Custody
 - Education
- 5.6 The Home Office has set three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence, which are:
- 1) A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object.
 - 2) A reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the Police.
 - 3) A reduction in homicides recorded by the Police.

6. THE ROLE OF THE PCC

- 6.1 Although PCCs themselves are not subject to the Duty, they have been given convening powers to assist the Duty holders (by arranging meetings) and monitoring how duty holders carry out those functions. Through this central convening role, the PCC is responsible for administering national grant funding and monitoring progress through submitting quarterly monitoring reports to the Home Office.
- 6.2 The Serious Violence Duty Home Office grant funding is intended to enable the OPCC to assist the specified and relevant authorities in delivering the Duty. The Home Office has allocated grant funding to each police force area to cover the work required for partners to fulfil the core requirements of the Duty, and to support the delivery of serious violence reduction strategies. The Home Office have provided provisional funding allocations until March 2025. This amounts to nearly £1m across just over two years.
- 6.3 Serious Violence Duty Home Office grant funding is provided and split by the Home Office to cover the 'labour' and 'non-labour' costs associated with delivering the Duty.
- **Labour costs** broadly include those associated with preparing and developing the Strategic Needs Assessment and Local Serious Violence Response Strategy, including familiarisations costs, training, meeting costs, analysis, and strategy development.
 - **Non-labour costs** include those associated with implementing interventions to reduce serious violence in accordance with the local strategy.
- 6.4 Progress against the Serious Violence Duty is being monitored through the Countywide High Harms Board. All funding allocations are formally agreed by the specified authorities (a requirement of the Duty) at the Board.

7. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 7.1 Since the Duty came into effect, extensive progress has been made in relation to the initial needs assessment, the Serious Violence Youth Listening Project, and the Cambridgeshire Partnership Serious Violence Duty Partnership Workshop, supported by the national funding. Crest Advisory (an organisation of crime and justice specialists) were commissioned by the Home Office to work with Duty holders and local partners to provide tailored support to develop their delivery against and compliance with the Duty. Local partners have been able to join sessions run by Crest to support them in relation to understanding the duty, evidence gathering, data sharing, strategy, and evaluation. Tailored support is being provided locally to assist with the development of the Strategic Needs Assessment through a data, information sharing and analysis workshop.
- 7.2 **Initial Needs Assessment**
In preparation for the Duty, Cambridgeshire Constabulary conducted an initial Serious Violence Needs Assessment, which drew upon police data, as well as (some partner-held) information such as ambulance and A&E data. This analysis provided a baseline assessment of serious violence across the county and was a useful starting point to help identify both data and knowledge gaps. Going forwards, a more comprehensive Strategic Needs Assessment will be completed, along with the Local Serious Violence Strategy. Both documents are core requirements of the Duty, and first iterations will be completed by the partnership by January 2024.
- 7.3 **Serious Violence Youth Listening Project**
The Serious Violence Youth Listening Project was commissioned as part of the initial evidence base. The aim of the project was to capture the perspectives of and produce analysis on young peoples' views around how safe they feel in their local areas. While safety was discussed in a general sense, issues relating to knife crime, drugs and gang

violence were covered. More than 1,700 young people aged 11 to 18 from across the six Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas engaged with the project. The voice of young people is crucial, and the findings of the Youth Listening Project will help to shape and influence some of youth-focused interventions that will be introduced as part of the Duty, as well as the broader local strategy.

7.4 Cambridgeshire Partnership Serious Violence Duty Workshop

In March 2023, the OPCC held the Cambridgeshire Partnership Serious Violence Duty Workshop, which brought more than 50 local partners together, with all the specified and relevant authorities represented. The workshop provided the opportunity for presentations about the Duty and Duty funding, as well as interactive discussion about what Duty means in practice locally. Partners also heard about lessons learned from another area which had already established a Violence Reduction Unit with Home Office funding. Gap analysis was also conducted to identify where the gaps exist in current service provision. The findings from the gap analysis, along with wider discussions with partners, have helped to inform the interventions that will be introduced across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough as part of the Duty.

8. INTERVENTIONS

8.1 The national Serious Violence Duty grant funding will support a variety of interventions over the next two years. Intensive work is currently underway with partners to agree the funding plans. Interventions that have been already agreed by the specified authorities at the Countywide High Harms Board include (but are not limited to):

- Key Stage 2 County Lines video
- Hotspot detached youth work and primary school outreach and engagement
- Knife crime awareness-raising
- Night-time economy hotspot policing

8.2 Key Stage 2 County Lines videos

Building on the success of the County Lines video aimed at secondary school aged students, partners identified that there is a lack of age-appropriate educational content and resources for end of primary school/Key Stage 2 children on issues such as County Lines, grooming/ exploitation, knife crime and violence. This lack of knowledge/understanding leaves children vulnerable to exploitation and presents a significant safeguarding issue. To address this concern, three educational videos about County Lines and associated topics are being developed specifically for primary age pupils (in years 5 and 6) across the county. In addition, lesson plans and other resources will also be provided to allow teachers to incorporate the videos into a classroom learning session. Cambridge CSP are leading this work.

8.3 Hotspot detached youth work

Hotspot detached youth work is a form of youth outreach that involves engaging with young people in the spaces they choose to meet. This programme intends to work with select groups of young people in specific localities that have been identified as hotspots for problematic/risky behaviour and/or youth-related violence. There will also be some provision for some one-to-one work. This builds on existing youth work provision to support a younger age group and therefore act more preventatively. The project for Cambridgeshire is going live for the start of the new school year. A separate Peterborough offer is also being discussed.

8.4 Knife crime awareness-raising

This intervention aims to increase awareness of the risks associated with carrying knives among young people, their parents, and the wider community. A launch event was hosted

in Peterborough on Saturday 15th July 2023 at which local community groups and youth groups could sign up for pop-up knife awareness sessions. The pop-up events will be delivered at local community centres and youth clubs across Peterborough between July and December 2023. Peterborough City Council is working with partners, including community groups and the police, on this initiative.

8.5 **Night-time economy hotspot policing**

To prevent and reduce violence in night-time economy locations and the surrounding area, additional policing resource will be delivered in identified violent crime hotspot areas.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-duty>

Police and Crime Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan 2021 – 2024

<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/police-crime-plan/>

Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/13/contents>

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