

<b>CAMBRIDGESHIRE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL</b>	<b>Agenda Item No. 7</b>
<b>13<sup>th</sup> March 2024</b>	<b>Public Report</b>

**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”) role in supporting partners in delivering against the statutory Serious Violence Duty, along with a brief overview of the serious violence strategy and strategic needs assessment which have been developed by the local partnership.

**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 the lives of victims, their families, and the wider community. Between June 2014 and June 2020, offences involving a knife or sharp instrument increased by 84% in England and Wales. Within this context of increased violence, particularly among young people, the Serious Violence Duty (the “Duty”) was introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022.

- 5.2 The Duty, which came into effect on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2023, requires organisations to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in their local area through the adoption of a public health approach. This involves taking a whole-system, multi-agency approach to preventing serious violence and implementing interventions across all levels (from the individual through to communities) to help prevent and reduce serious violence.

- 5.3 The Duty states that the following “specified authorities” are required to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence:

- Fire and Rescue
- Integrated Care Boards (Health)
- Local Authorities
- Police
- Probation
- Youth Offending Teams

- 5.4 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:

- Education
- Prison
- Youth Custody

- 5.5 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 Police.
- 3) A reduction in homicides recorded by Police.

## **6. LOCAL FUNDING ALLOCATION**

- 6.1 The Home Office has allocated grant funding to each police force area to enable 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 – locally, this amounts to nearly £1m across just over two years.
- 6.2 The Serious Violence Funding Awards for 2022-23 and 2023-24 (links can be found at the end of this paper) provide a summary of the spending to date. All funding allocations are formally agreed by the specified authorities (a requirement of the Duty) at the Countywide High Harms Board, the forum through the which progress against the Duty is monitored and overseen at the strategic level.

## **7. THE ROLE OF THE PCC**

- 7.1 While PCCs themselves are not subject to the main Duty, they have been given relevant powers and are expected to:
- 1) Perform a central convening role, bringing key partners/agencies named in the Duty together through arranging meetings and facilitate cross-partnership working.
  - 2) Administer national grant funding to the specified authorities as labour (training, familiarisation, analysis and strategy development costs) or non-labour (intervention) funding.
  - 3) Monitor progress made against the Duty through submitting quarterly monitoring reports to the Home Office.

7.2 The 'Understand, Plan, Do, Review' graphic below provides a snapshot of what the OPCC has done to date, and what continues to be done in relation to the Serious Violence Duty.

### Serious Violence Duty



## **8. STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 As part of the Duty, agencies must work collaboratively to produce an evidence-informed Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA). The SNA provides an understanding of the local serious violence landscape and how it affects local communities. Its four core aims are to:
- 1) Increase understanding of the types, distribution, and extent of serious violence within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
  - 2) Identify opportunities for prevention and early intervention at the individual, family, community, and society levels.
  - 3) Further understand the underlying inequalities and risk factors for serious violence within our local communities.
  - 4) Assist local partners in identifying who is most vulnerable to being or becoming a victim or perpetrator of serious violence.
- 8.2 The SNA draws upon a wide range of data sources at the national and local partnership level including recorded crime data, offending data, hospital and A&E admissions for serious violence-related injuries, substance and alcohol misuse data, education data including exclusions and absenteeism, children's social care data and demographic data from the Census. Through pulling a range of data sources from across the partnership together, the most comprehensive assessment of local serious violence threat, risk and harm can be established. The SNA is an iterative product that will be refreshed annually. This will ensure that understanding is reflective of the current local serious violence landscape and enable emerging threats and risk factors to be accounted for.

## **9. SERIOUS VIOLENCE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY**

- 9.1 The Serious Violence Partnership Strategy is another core requirement of the Duty, which formalises how local partners will work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It provides a framework for understanding the risk factors that drive serious violence locally, and the protective factors that prevent it.
- 9.2 The overall aim of the strategy which has been developed by the partnership is to reduce the risk of people being drawn into serious violence (either as a victim, offender, or witness) and protecting communities from the wider impacts of it. The strategy outlines three objectives that will help it fulfil this aim:
- 1) To raise awareness and understanding of serious violence and its associated risks at the individual, community, service and partnership levels.
  - 2) To ensure that individuals, communities, services, and the wider partnership work collaboratively to prevent and reduce serious violence locally.
  - 3) Engage in early intervention to prevent and reduce serious violence from occurring locally, particularly among young people and at-risk groups.

## **10. SUPPORT FROM THE PANEL**

- 10.1 Both the Strategic Needs Assessment and the Serious Violence Partnership Strategy identify that a collaborative, cross-partnership, public-health approach is needed to prevent and reduce serious violence in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Going forwards, therefore, the Serious Violence Duty needs to be embedded as 'business as usual' across all local authority committees to identify where links across the wider system can be made.
- 10.2 Issues such as school exclusion and absenteeism rates, or the provision of youth facilities and youth work, for instance, feed into the serious violence agenda and cut across Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council and District Council responsibilities. As such, all areas are encouraged to think about how such issues feed into and affect serious violence locally.

## 11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance

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

Serious Violence Partnership Strategy

<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/cambs-pcc/commissioning-and-grants/community-safety/svd-partnership-strategy-document-final---jan-2024.pdf>

Serious Violence Duty Funding Awards, 2022-2023

<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/cambs-pcc/commissioning-and-grants/community-safety/serious-violence-fund-awards-22-23.pdf>

Serious Violence Duty Funding Awards, 2023-2024

<https://www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/cambs-pcc/commissioning-and-grants/community-safety/serious-violence-fund-awards-23-24-january-update.pdf>