

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 3 January 2024

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Serious Violence Duty

Report summary:

The Serious Violence Duty (the Duty) was introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022. The Duty requires specified authorities to work together and to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area. This report gives further background and proposes that the attached draft strategy is adopted by East Devon District Council in order to meet its legal obligations within the specified timescale.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

To give delegated authority to the Interim Chief Executive & Director of Housing, Health and Environment to sign the final version of the Devon Safety Partnership's Serious Violence Strategy on behalf of East Devon District Council

Reason for recommendation:

The draft Strategy must be approved by 30 January 2024 to meet timescales imposed by the Devon Safety Partnership/legal requirements.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Communications and Democracy
- Economy
- Finance and Assets
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Culture, Leisure, Sport and Tourism

Equalities impact Medium Impact

The equalities considerations are as set out in the report and the policy. The policy itself and processes that underpin the policy are an important way of reducing inequality and ensuring that vulnerable people are protected.

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; There is a risk that if the Devon Strategy is not agreed and published by the deadline of the 31st January 2024 all specified authorities would not be complying with the duty and funding may not be provided by the Home Office.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Draft Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

Links to background information

[Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://legislation.gov.uk)

Serious Violence Duty Statutory Guidance [Serious Violence Duty \(accessible\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
 - A greener East Devon
 - A resilient economy
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Report in full

1. Background

- 1.1. The Serious Violence Duty (the Duty) was introduced in the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (PCSC Act) and commenced on 31 January 2023. The Duty requires specified authorities to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence in the area 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.
- 1.2. Safer Devon Partnership's definition of violence is: The intentional use of physical, sexual or psychological force or power (including threats of violence and including coercive and controlling behaviour).
- 1.3. The core elements of the Duty are:
 - To establish a local serious violence Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA).
 - To prepare, publish and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.
 - To review and revise the strategy as required.
- 1.4. District Councils are named as specified authorities in the duty. There is a requirement for the area's strategy to be published by 31st January 2024.
- 1.5. The Mid and East Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a member of the Safer Devon Partnership who are leading the Strategy for Devon. They have worked closely with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to develop the governance framework for delivery of the duty.

2. Governance arrangements

- 2.1. In Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, a peninsula-wide partnership arrangement already exists to actively tackle serious violence. The Duty will strengthen the region's Serious Violence Prevention Programme (SVPP), mandating regional collaboration via multi-agency delivery. Community Safety Partnerships agreed a Serious Violence Prevention Coordination which sets out a shared commitment to collaborate, to prevent and reduce serious violence across the Peninsula.

- 2.2. Each of the CSPs have responded locally to serious violence, informed by the Peninsula Strategic Needs Assessment, local Strategic Needs Assessments, and other analytical products.
- 2.3. The delivery and decision-making associated with core elements of the Duty will be met through the upper-tier Community Safety Partnerships (Safer Devon Partnership) this will allow existing partnerships to tailor their response to serious violence to meet local need. Given the delivery of the Duty will be met by the upper-tier Community Safety Partnerships, the CSPs will report back to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) in line with their requirements and timetable. The OPCC will undertake the administration of official reporting, as per Home Office funding requirements.
- 2.4. Strategic overview and monitoring of the Duty at a Peninsula level will be provided by the 'Strategic Serious Violence Prevention Partnership'. This group will bring together representatives from across Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly to ensure that the strategic approach is sustainable, and evidence based, and also delivers the outcomes required to meet the needs of the regional community.
- 2.5. This group will be chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner as designated convener and serviced by the OPCC's Serious Violence Prevention Team, with specialist support from the office's Governance Team as required.
- 2.6. The purpose of the Strategic Group will be:
 - To facilitate and co-ordinate the overall strategic direction of serious violence prevention across the Peninsula; particularly to ensure consistency between the respective Community Safety Partnerships, in such a way that supports sustainability.
 - To provide strategic oversight of the core elements of the Duty, and assurance of CSP delivery against the Duty.
 - To identify opportunities for collaboration and enable these opportunities as far as possible.
 - To consider and manage strategic risks in relation to delivery of the Duty – and emerging gaps and threats.
 - To share best practice, both within and outside of Devon, Cornwall, and the Isles of Scilly
 - To encourage innovation and identify opportunities for pilots, test and learn projects, and evidence-based practice.
 - To identify and develop opportunities for improvements to data and information sharing across the Peninsula.
 - To align with contiguous Peninsular level portfolios (e.g., the Local Criminal Justice Board)
 - To identify and leverage additional funding opportunities, both regionally and nationally, through joint procurement, grant funding and other avenues.
- 2.7. In line with the Duty, the Strategic Serious Violence Prevention Partnership must have each of the specified authorities represented, in addition to the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Mid and East Devon CSP will be included in the membership and there are still discussions needed to identify the appropriate Local Authority representative for the peninsula.

3. Devon Preventing Serious Violence Strategy 2024-29

- 3.1. The Preventing Serious Violence Strategy outlines Safer Devon's framework for preventing and reducing serious violence in Devon. The strategy is grounded in a public health response to violence; recognising that addressing the root causes of violence is crucial for prevention. It outlines the overall vision, priorities and intended impacts for work to prevent

violence. A delivery plan exploring work towards these priorities and its impacts will sit underneath this strategy and provide details about specific actions and activities.

- 3.2. The defined 'focus areas' which are in keeping with the Serious Violence Duty's focus on 'public space youth violence' are weapons-related violence and drug related criminal activities and are reflective of the findings around serious violence identified in the local needs assessment.
- 3.3. The strategy vision is for:
 - People, family and communities in Devon to thrive, safe from the risk and experience of violence.
- 3.4. The priorities outline the overarching statements of intent which have been informed by the needs assessment. Each priority will be accompanied by an impact, outlining what change is anticipated in our communities as a result of delivering work against the priorities.
 - Priority 1 – We will shape a series of preventative responses to young people and adults who are at greatest risk of involvement in violence based on their individual needs and experiences, taking account of intersecting needs and the individual ways needs may present.
 - Priority 2 – strengthen our understanding and response to contextual harms, including risks from peer groups and from exploitation.
 - Priority 3 – We will strengthen our early years and early help targeted offer for families where risk and vulnerability factors in relation to violence are present.
 - Priority 4 – We will challenge the normalisation of violence, particularly in relation to young people - supporting them to develop healthy and respectful relationships, both intimate partner and peer to peer.
 - Priority 5 – We will work towards creating inclusive, supportive education environments where all young people can thrive, with a focus on strengthening their wellbeing, resilience and opportunities.
 - Priority 6 – We will work towards trauma-informed, shame-competent and neurodivergence-aware systems.
 - Priority 7 – We will strengthen our learning about serious violence, needs and drivers, and what works well as prevention.
- 3.5. Performance will be reported back to the Safer Devon Partnership who will formally report to the OPCC. The Mid and East CSP will continue to deliver work that will support the Devon Strategy.

4. Financial

- 4.1. The Home Office has provided funding for 23/24 and 24/25 to support specified authorities to prepare for; and deliver the Duty. As the 'local Policing Body', the OPCC receives the funding and is responsible for meeting the Home Office reporting and oversight responsibilities to ensure the funding is spent appropriately.
- 4.2. Funding associated with the Duty will be devolved to each upper-tier Community Safety Partnership (Safer Devon Partnership). Community Safety Partnerships are responsible for ensuring that specified authorities can access this funding to support them to meet the Duty. CSPs will be required to agree to the terms of a Grant Agreement with the OPCC.
- 4.3. Non-labour funding (for interventions) will be allocated by an agreed funding formula; labour funding (for staff to deliver the SV Duty) will be allocated equally between the four upper tier CSPs. Whilst this may be subject to refinement, the Home Office has provided indicative funding levels for 24/25, under a total of £657,300. This will be devolved as follows:

Community Safety Partnership	Non-labour funding (split by formula)		Labour funding
Safer Cornwall (including Safer Scilly)	25%	£125,804.25	£38,520
Safer Plymouth	26%	£130,836.42	£38,520
Safer Torbay	19%	£95,611.23	£38,520
Safer Devon	30%	£150,965.00	£38,520

- 4.4. As part of the Safer Devon Partnership our CSP Chair will be involved in agreeing the distribution of the Safer Devon element of the funding to the individual CSPs. The Labour Costs will be utilised at Safer Devon level to support the delivery of the Strategic needs assessment.
- 4.5. There is no allocation of funding from the Home Office post 2024/25. However, it is envisaged that ongoing work to meet the strategy at the East Devon District Council level will be able to be met within existing resources.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. In order to discharge our duties under the Duty we are required to agree governance arrangements and publish a strategy. The Devon Strategy has been developed by the Safer Devon Partnership and utilises a public health approach over the next five years to address the key areas identified through the Strategic Needs Assessment.

Financial implications:

There are no direct financial implications identified in the recommendations of this report.

Legal implications:

The legal issues are dealt with in the body of the report.