



**City of Westminster**

# Cabinet Member Report

<b>Date:</b>	<b>12 January 2024</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>General Release</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy 2024-27 Report</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Environment, Climate &amp; Public Protection</b>
<b>Cabinet Member Portfolio:</b>	<b>Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Policy Context:</b>	<b>Statutory duty to publish a strategy to prevent crime, disorder &amp; substance misuse, and to tackle serious violence.</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Financial Summary:</b>	<b>The report does not have any direct financial implications for the council but sets out a framework within which the Safer Westminster Partnership would allocate future funding such as the London Crime Prevention Fund and other external grants and contributions.</b>

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 The report seeks approval to adopt the proposed Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy for 2024-27, providing an overview of the issues impacting upon communities in the borough and setting out how the Council and partner agencies seeks to resolve them.
- 1.2 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 (“the Act”) imposed a duty on certain key public sector organisations to work together to make places safer. The Act created Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (now known as Community Safety Partnerships or CSPs), which brought together the police, local authority, fire and rescue services, health, and probation to formulate strategies for the reduction of crime & disorder. In Westminster, this is the Safer Westminster Partnership (SWP).
- 1.3 The strategy sets out an overarching framework for the Safer Westminster Partnership to reduce crime & disorder in the coming years. Upon approval of the strategy, an annual Safer Westminster Partnership action plan will be produced and overseen by the partnership to drive focussed action and resource deployment for the coming year.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the cabinet member:
  - Notes the content of the report and the ongoing contribution of the Safer Westminster Partnership to crime and disorder issues in the borough and the overarching themes and priorities for the partnership.
  - Recommend to Council that the proposed Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy for 2024-27 be approved.

## **3. Reasons for Decision**

- 3.1 The Fairer Westminster Strategy sets out the outcomes and key ambitions which inform decisions at the Council; delivering safer streets is one of these but we cannot achieve this on our own. The Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy seeks to ensure the Council and partner agencies work together to make Westminster safer for everyone who lives, works, and visits the borough.
- 3.2 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 sets out the requirement for responsible agencies, including Westminster City Council, to work together in formulating a strategy to reduce crime and disorder in an area.
- 3.3 Additionally, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, placed a duty on specified authorities to work together and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area. The Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy is the means through which we are discharging that duty.
- 3.4 The proposed strategy will replace the existing strategy (2020-23) with a clearer focus on a smaller number of priority areas, and a greater emphasis on

engaging with and ensuring local communities have a voice in tackling crime and disorder priorities in their area.

#### **4. Background**

4.1 The Safer Westminster Partnership is made up of a range of services and agencies committed to the reduction of crime and disorder in the borough. Chaired by the Executive Director for Environment, Climate & Public Protection, the partnership meets quarterly to review and assess issues across the borough, identify strategic actions and allocate resources accordingly.

4.2 Agencies engaged with the partnership include:

- Westminster City Council
- Metropolitan Police
- London Fire Brigade
- Integrated Care Board
- Probation Service
- Mayor's Office for Policing & Crime
- Business Improvement Districts

4.3 The Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy 2024-27 represents a significant commitment by partners to working together to increase safety and improve the lives of everyone who lives, works, and visits the city.

4.4 Every three years the Safer Westminster Partnership is required to publish a crime and disorder reduction strategy and the new strategy has been written to create an overarching framework within which the work of the various operational and delivery groups that sit under the SWP can sit.

4.5 The plan is based upon a wide range of data and information, from public consultation to crime and disorder information that are brought together in our annual strategic assessment published in January 2023. The Act requires all CSPs to produce regular [strategic assessments](#) which draw on data from a variety of sources to establish a robust evidence base and highlight the key crime and safety issues and risks that affect local communities.

#### **4.6 Safer Westminster Partnership Priorities**

4.6.1 The strategic assessment, alongside public consultation, and stakeholder workshops provided clear direction to focus the partnership's efforts on three priority areas (see section 5 for details):

##### **West End & Night-time Economy**

4.6.2 Westminster is unique in the extent to which crime is concentrated in a small geographic area of the West End, with 65% of the almost 80,000 offences per year occurring in West End and St James wards. Following the pandemic this pattern has only become more pronounced driven by increases in theft offences. If the West End is to remain the safe, vibrant, cultural hub of the city, the partnership needs to focus its efforts on this area. While the West

End warrants a specific focus given it's contribution to the volume and level of harm from a crime and disorder perspective, effective collaboration between partners at a local level will also be a focus in the rest of the city (see 4.7).

### **Neighbourhoods**

- 4.7 Despite the high volume of crime in the borough, driven by offences in the West End, Westminster is overwhelmingly a safe place with 96% of residents in the borough feeling safe in the area in which they live. However, this experience is not shared by everyone and there are areas where people feel less safe and have less trust and confidence in the partnership. Ensuring communities have a say in tackling crime and disorder in their local area through well resourced, intelligence and a community led neighbourhoods' approach to community safety is a key priority for the partnership.

### **Serious Violence & Exploitation**

- 4.8 While lower in volume than other offences, violent crime has the biggest impact on victims and has a disproportionate impact on community fears and concerns. Tackling serious violence and exploitation in all its forms, including youth violence, violence against women and girls, and modern slavery and exploitation, must be a key area of focus. This priority will also meet the requirements in the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act, 2022 to develop strategies for preventing people from becoming involved in serious violence, and reducing instances of serious violence in the area, rather than having to create a separate strategy.

- 4.9 Running through each of these priorities, the strategy proposes five cross-cutting themes to ensure a holistic response:
- Target high harm and repeat offenders.
  - Support victims and reduce repeat victimisation.
  - Intervene early to detect and prevent crime and disorder.
  - Give local communities a voice and improve confidence; and
  - Share information and work effectively together.

### **4.10 Links to Council Priorities**

- 4.11 Although the SWP Strategy is a partnership document, there are strong links to several Council and Fairer Westminster policies and priorities.

### **West End & Night-time Economy**

- 4.12 The bulk of the SWP Strategy was drafted before the launch of **Westminster After Dark**, but the clear focus on the West End and night-time Economy provides a vehicle through which any community safety related concerns that arise out of the consultation process can be delivered. It is likely that this will play a key role in the development of the annual action plan for the partnership.

- 4.13 The West End Crime Reduction Board has already played a key role in the development of the **Women's Night Safety programme** and associated elements such as the Night Stars, Safe Havens, and Business Accreditation,

and this will continue to be a key pillar of the Partnership's delivery in the West End.

- 4.14 Westminster's **licensing and environmental health teams** will continue to play a critical role in preventing crime & disorder through their vital regulatory role in the West End.

#### **Serious Violence & Exploitation**

- 4.15 Tackling **Serious Youth Violence** is a key component of the violence & exploitation priority. The partnership contributes a significant proportion of the funding that goes towards the **Integrated Gangs & Exploitation Unit (IGXU)** which, together with the **Youth Justice Service**, brings together agencies from across the borough to support vulnerable children & young people.
- 4.16 **Ending Violence Against Women & Girls** has been a longstanding council priority and is an integral part of the strategy, including the use of partnership funding to enable the council to procure support for survivors of domestic abuse through the **Angelou Partnership**.

#### **Neighbourhoods**

- 4.17 Public Protection & Licensing has always been central to the partnership approach to promoting safer neighbourhoods in Westminster; **Neighbourhood Coordinators** act as a focal point for the local partnerships between council services, housing providers, business improvement districts and police, to work together with the community via **Local Problem-Solving Meetings** to target the issues that matter to local people. This is amplified further by corporate initiatives such as the **North Paddington Project**.
- 4.18 The strategy encourages greater collaboration between the **Housing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team**, and **ASB Officers** in Public Protection, to take action to tackle ASB issues that are of greatest risk to residents and the wider community.
- 4.19 The Safer Westminster Partnership also supports the strategic priorities of other statutory partnerships including the **Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership**, **Safeguarding Adults Executive**, and the **Health & Wellbeing Board**, to prevent crime & disorder and reduce harm. The Safer Westminster Partnership also supports the **Combating Drugs Partnership** in public health to tackle the exploitation and crime associated with substance misuse in the borough.

### **5. Consultation**

#### **Residents' Panel**

- 5.1 A consultation took place with Westminster's residents' panel in June 2023, surveying over 150 residents to gather more detailed information on community safety issues and concerns.
- 5.2 The strategic assessment also includes data taken from the City Survey, which includes questions relating to crime, safety and anti-social behaviour.

### **Stakeholder Workshops**

- 5.3 A workshop was held in July 2023 with all community safety partners including council service leads, partner agencies, businesses and third sector organisations, to share the results of the strategic assessment and residents' panel consultation.
- 5.4 The priorities and overall approach were developed from this initial workshop and further consultation sessions were held on each of the priority areas to work these up in more detail and get partner buy-in

### **Community Safety Partnership**

- 5.5 The Safer Westminster Partnership met in November to review the draft priorities and the proposed strategy circulated for further comment in November and December 2023. The partnership will meet again in February 2024 to approve the strategy in full and commence work on the annual action plan.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## **7. Legal Implications**

- 7.1 The legal implications are outlined in the body of the report.

## **8. Ward Members Comments**

- 8.1 As this report relates to all wards, no Ward Member consultation was required.

## **9. Outstanding Issues**

- 9.1 There are no outstanding issues.

## **10. Appendices**

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Proposed Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy 2024-27

## **11. Background Papers**

- 11.1 [Safer Westminster Partnership Strategic Assessment 2023](#)

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS REPORT PLEASE CONTACT  
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**APPENDIX 1 – Proposed Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy 2024-27**