



City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	September 2020
Classification:	General Release
Title:	The Safer Westminster Partnership
Report of:	Annette Acik
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Public Protection and Licensing
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Community Safety
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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Safer Westminster Partnership, an overview of the 2020/23 Strategy and some of the challenges faced.

2 Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 Committee to discuss with officers how best can we communicate with our residents on how to keep safe within Westminster.

3 Community Safety Partnership

- 3.1 Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) were set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and are made up of representatives from the 'responsible authorities' which are:
- Police Service (Metropolitan Police Service);
 - Police & Crime Commissioner (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime or MOPAC);
 - Local Authority (Westminster City Council);
 - Fire and Rescue Service (London Fire Brigade);
 - Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG);
 - National Probation Service (NPS) and
 - Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC).
- 3.2 The Police and Justice Act (2006) brought in new statutory requirements for CSPs and have been updated by subsequent legislation until the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2011. These include the duties;
- Produce yearly Strategic Assessments and partnership plans;

- Share information and have an Information Sharing Protocol;
- Report on work and progress on a yearly basis;
- Formulate and implement a strategy to reduce reoffending;
- Conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews in relation to incidents of domestic homicide.

3.3 In Westminster the Community Safety Partnership is called the Safer Westminster Partnership and its aim is to ensure the responsible authorities work together to create strategies and practical interventions to reduce crime and disorder in Westminster.

3.4 The Safer Westminster Partnership is chaired by Helen Harper the Borough Commander for Central West area and meets two to three times per year.

4 Strategic Assessment and 2020/23 Strategy

4.1 A strategic assessment is produced annually as a requirement of the Police and Justice Act 2006 on behalf of the responsible authorities for the Safer Westminster Partnership (SWP). The latest Strategic Assessment was produced in September 2019 a copy of which is attached in the Background Papers.

4.2 The Strategic Assessment is the evidence base for the partnership and aims to identify the key crime and anti-social behaviour issues affecting the borough and to make recommendations on SWP priorities for the following year.

4.3 The 2019 Strategic Assessment was used as the evidence base for the 2020/23 Safer Westminster Partnership strategy.

4.4 A workshop was held on 29 January for partners to help develop the 2020/23 Safer Westminster Partnership strategy. The workshop covered three thematic areas: Victims, Offenders and the West End.

4.5 The 2020/23 Strategy was produced and approved by the Safer Westminster Partnership on 8 July.

4.6 The vision of the SWP remains *'Making Westminster safer by working in partnership to reduce the risk and harm of crime and ASB, focusing on protecting the most vulnerable within our communities'*. This highlights the priority of the SWP to focus resources towards protecting the most vulnerable within Westminster.

4.7 Underpinning this vision are two cross cutting principles: -

4.7.1 Intervening early with families and young people to reduce their risk of victimisation and prevent offending.

4.7.2 Working in collaboration with partners to focus on the key contributing factors that reduce victimisation and offending

- 4.8 The 2020/23 Strategy aims to deliver five strategic objectives;
- 4.8.1 Protecting the most vulnerable in Westminster from becoming victims or offenders of violence or exploitation.
- 4.8.2 Working with the most problematic offenders to reduce their re-offending.
- 4.8.3 Making the West End a safer place for visitors, residents and businesses.
- 4.8.4 Enhancing the partnership response to countering terrorism.
- 4.8.5 Focusing on what matters most to residents, businesses and visitors.
- 4.9 **Protecting the most vulnerable in Westminster from becoming victims or offenders.** Although most people are not victims of crime, those who are victimised consistently face the highest risk of being victimised again. 20% of victims who were Westminster residents, were repeat victims. If we concentrate resource on the most disproportionately victimised cohorts, we aim to break the cycle that sees these vulnerable people becoming victims of crime time and time again. To have the greatest impact upon protecting the most vulnerable in Westminster from becoming victims or offenders we will:-
- Provide bespoke support to those most at risk of violence and exploitation;
 - Prevent and reduce young people (10-24) from involvement in violence and exploitation;
 - Enhance support in the locations with the highest levels of vulnerability, i.e. Church Street;
 - Work with the most vulnerable older adults to prevent them from becoming victims of fraud and exploitation.
- 4.10 **Working with the most problematic offenders to reduce their re-offending.** Half of all crime is committed by people who have been through the criminal justice system and a small proportion of these offenders are responsible for a significant volume of crime. Concentrating resources on these offenders will have the greatest impact upon reducing re-offending. We will do this by:-
- Tackling the drivers of crime, particularly substance misuse, employment and accommodation;
 - Working in partnership to ensure the Integrated Offender Management scheme works effectively to support and reduce re-offending of the most recidivist offenders;
 - Develop a strategic approach to the issue of cross border offenders;
 - Recognise the distinct needs of 18-25 year old offenders to reduce their re-offending.
- 4.11 **Making the West End a safer place for visitors, residents and businesses.** 58% of all crime in Westminster occurred in just two of its twenty wards, the West End and St James's. These are not just hotspots of crime and disorder for Westminster but for London. This is also true of data from other emergency services such as British Transport Police, London Ambulance Service and the Fire Brigade.
- 4.11.1 Crime occurs where there is an opportunity, namely where there are more people and more places to commit crime, so we would expect the West End to have the greatest volume of crime. However, crime became more concentrated in a small area of the West End and increased by 49% compared with a 28% increase across the borough.
- 4.11.2 60% of crime in this area occurred between 6pm to 6am, meaning we need to develop a co-ordinated approach so that the West End has a safe and thriving night time economy.

This area is the heart of businesses in the borough so joint working and a shared approach to reduce crime is crucial to this success.

- 4.12 **Counter Terrorism – Enhancing the partnership response to countering terrorism.** The UK security national threat level at the time of writing was substantial meaning an attack is likely. The local delivery of counter-terrorism activity follow CONTEST, the Government's counter terrorism strategy and is based on four areas of work.
- Prevent: to stop people becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism;
 - Pursue: to stop terrorist attacks;
 - Protect: to strengthen our protection against a terrorist attack;
 - Prepare: to mitigate the impact of a terrorist attack.
- 4.13 **Focusing on what matters most to residents, businesses and visitors.** We want to capture the voices of our communities to understand what matters most to them to keep themselves and Westminster safe. We want to develop consistent cohesive campaigns that educate and encourage the community to adopt safe measures in their daily lives. So that people know where to access help and support and how to reduce their risk of becoming a victim of crime. We will do this by building in mechanisms for pro-actively listening and responding to our communities. This will enable us as a partnership to respond better to community tensions and concerns to build a safer cohesive Westminster.
- 4.14 The Safer Westminster Partnership Executive Group is the driving force to delivering these priorities. This group meets quarterly and is responsible for analysing trends and making recommendations to the SWP regarding refocused activity. They will be next meeting on 27 October and will review the first six months progress towards delivering the new strategy.
- 4.15 Work on the next strategic assessment will commence next month and scheduled to be complete by February 2021. This will review data from October 2019 to September 2020 and will consider the impact Covid-19 has had on crime and disorder in the borough.
- 4.16 Any significant new findings in this evidence base may be used to amend the 2020/23 Strategic Priorities.
- 4.17 The Safer Westminster Partnership will next be meeting on 18 November and the meeting will focus on our violence reduction plans.

5 Key deliverables

- 5.1 The Serious Youth Violence Task Group has prioritised Church Street ward to pilot a public health approach to serious youth violence, with a view to taking these lessons and seeing what can be adapted on a wider scale across Westminster. Youth clubs, schools and local voluntary sector organisations have been working together to deliver a programme of activity to work with young people in years 5 and 6 in primary schools in the Church Street area during their transition to secondary school. Positive diversionary activities aim to keep young people safe and off the streets, as well as building resilience and maintaining their health and wellbeing to help prepare them for secondary school. 33 young boys have been worked with through the programme, and despite COVID challenges, a summer programme was delivered with a mix of in-person and virtual activities. Work is underway to explore whether the programme can be replicated in other primary schools in the borough.
- 5.2 A parenting toolkit has been produced and provides a glossary of facts, practical advice to look for signs of your child's involvement in youth violence, as well as tips on how to speak to your child and how you can seek further help or support. It is being circulated to parenting groups, libraries, GP surgeries, youth clubs, Family Hub, other voluntary sector groups,

business owners and supermarkets in the local area. Other boroughs have expressed an interest in replicating the booklet for their own areas.

- 5.3 The Serious Youth Violence Community Engagement Officer has continued to deliver a range of community engagement activities, adapting to the challenges of COVID restrictions. She has supported Public Health in providing outreach sessions for a range of community networks, worked with local communities following serious youth violence incidents in the borough, and produced a parenting handout for “how to talk to your children about violent incidents.”
- 5.4 £200k for this financial year and the same for 2020/21 has been granted from MOPAC to further develop our work to tackle youth violence. It is being used to uplift and add to existing projects working with young people to prevent and reduce violence this year and expand the work of the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) as well as develop new initiatives, such as Serious Youth Violence training offer for schools.
- 5.5 A joint vulnerable adult’s task and finish group with the Safeguarding Adults Executive Group has been set up with key partners to address the increased victimisation risk older residents face, in particular to becoming victims of financial abuse. The group is looking to raise awareness and training of frauds and scams across the partnership, particularly as the incidence has grown in volume and severity since Covid-19. The group has been reviewing the partnership approach to ‘cuckooing’ and is looking to develop policy and guidance which is currently lacking.
- 5.6 The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team work with high recidivist offenders in the borough to reduce their re-offending. Quantitative evidence has shown that the cost of crime and number of offences has decreased after involvement with the IOM and the interval between offending has increased. Evidence on 65 offenders worked with since April 2017 is estimated to have made over £1m in savings by preventing reoffending.
- 5.7 Contracts for specialist services to support victims of domestic violence and abuse are in the process of being re-commissioned across Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. This will include specialist front line support to victims and a coordination service to manage the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) working with high risk victims of domestic abuse and the Dedicated Domestic Violence Count at Westminster Magistrates Court.
- 5.8 The Prevent Team successfully applied to the Home Office for the largest funding pot, across both staff and projects, that Westminster has ever received. A range of Prevent projects have been commissioned for this financial year, working with educational institutions, parents and young people.

6 Challenges

- 6.1 Covid-19 has had a significant impact upon crime levels in the borough, particularly in reducing crime in the West End as the opportunities have diminished. Conversely the most vulnerable in our communities have become at increased risk of domestic abuse, child exploitation and the elderly to fraud and scams.
- 6.2 With the increased government scrutiny on violent crime has come funding opportunities. These are sporadic and often at very short notice and usually limited to a maximum of two years. This makes commissioning sustainable provision challenging. Funding is often limited to just tackling violent crime meaning other borough priorities attract little funding.
- 6.3 All our funded Community Safety and Prevent commissioned services have agreed funding until March 2021. We are expecting some decision on some of our funding this month, but

this is expected to only be for one further year due to the delay in Mayoral elections. Prevent funding is only restricted to a single financial year.

- 6.4 A key risk in our response to counter terrorism is the capacity to respond to the increasing demands and risks. Robust plans and agreement on priorities and coordination of partnership response are key to ensure demands are met.
- 6.5 At present Offender Management is carried out either by the National Probation Service or by the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). From April 2021 Offender Management will be unified within the National Probation Service (NPS). The contracts nationally awarded to the CRCs will terminate.
- 6.6 The unification will be a major undertaking, at least as significant as the split in 2014. Across the country the CRCs have introduced different hierarchies and pay structures, and some have moved to newer and more innovative IT systems. All of this will have to be consolidated under one NPS structure. It is likely that existing NPS structures will prevail but resolving the issues associated with this is going to be challenging and time consuming.
- 6.7 65% of those accused of crime in Westminster were not residents. Most services are available to residents only, making it difficult to successfully reduce reoffending unless we improve cross border working and services.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the
Background Papers please contact Report Author 07971024133
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Safer Westminster Partnership Strategic Assessment 2019

Safer Westminster Partnership Strategy 2020/23