

REPORT TO: CABINET

DATE: 15 SEPTEMBER 2022

TITLE: COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY

PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR JOEL CHARLES, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

LEAD OFFICER: JANE GREER, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT (01279) 446406

CONTRIBUTING OFFICER: CHRISTINE HOWARD, YOUTH AND CITIZENSHIP MANAGER (01279) 446192

This is a Key Decision
It is on the Forward Plan as Decision Number I012875
Call-in Procedures may apply
This decision will affect no ward specifically.

RECOMMENDED that:

- A** The Community Safety Strategy 2021/22 – 2024/25 is approved, subject to consultation, to support and strengthen the council’s work with statutory and non-statutory partners to identify and tackle: all forms of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime; help reduce reoffending; increase visibility and engagement with residents; and support victims of crime.
- B** Cabinet authorises that consultation be undertaken on this draft for a period of six weeks. Minor amendments will be submitted to the Director of Communities and Environment who will, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Community Resilience, develop the final version of the strategy following the conclusion of the consultation period.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** Implementation of the strategy will inform the council’s work with partners, residents and businesses to; address community safety priorities; ensure resources are deployed when and where they will have the most community benefit; contribute to a reduction in ASB and crime across all areas of the town; and help make Harlow a safer place in which to live, work and visit.

BACKGROUND

1. The council is committed to strengthening its work with partners, businesses and residents to address issues impacting on; the safety of the town’s streets by working even more closely with statutory and non-statutory partners to identify

and address the root causes of ASB and crime; reduce incidences of all crime types; ensure victims of crime are well supported; and help reduce reoffending by working collaboratively with local policing leads and criminal justice partners.

2. The council's Community Safety Team plays an important role in identifying, tackling and reducing ASB and crime across all areas of the town. Council officers support the work of the Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP) to ensure the council's community safety objectives are being met through robust partnership working arrangements and joint operations and campaigns.
3. The Responsible Authorities Group is Chaired by the council's Director for Communities and Environment and the Full Safer Harlow Partnership Board is Chaired by the council's Chief Executive Officer. This arrangement ensures that, in its role as a community leader, the council can influence how, when and where its own and partner's resources are deployed to ensure maximum benefit to the community. In addition, each of the themed priority subgroups are supported by a lead officer from the council ensuring that action plans are implemented, and outcomes monitored and reported back to the SHP Board.
4. The most recent local police data indicates that whilst the number of ASB incidences has reduced significantly since June 2021, many other crime types have seen an increase in the number of incidences reported. It is important for the council to do more to increase visibility in the community and deliver targeted action to reduce opportunities for, and actual incidences of, crime and ASB. The latest police data can be seen on page 13 and 14 of the draft strategy, which is set out in Appendix A to this report.
5. This strategy is driven by three overarching objectives that act as foundation statements upon which efforts will be made to build and strengthen the work the council undertakes with partner agencies and the local community to achieve its community safety objectives. These are:
 - a) Strengthening engagement with residents
 - b) Implementing a renewed and more proactive approach to community safety
 - c) Adopting a zero-tolerance approach to crime and ASB.
6. It is clear that in its role as a community leader, the council needs to better understand issues that affect residents and businesses if more progress is to be achieved to ensure people feel, and indeed are safe at home, at work and in the community. The commitment to increasing community engagement opportunities and undertaking a public perception survey will help the council to understand what makes people feel safe so that their concerns are more appropriately and effectively dealt with.
7. This strategy includes a key commitment for the council to work with partners to establish a Community Safety Hub in the town. This approach will: strengthen collaborative working; increase opportunities for effective information and intelligence sharing; support the pooling and sharing of resources; and provide increased visibility of community safety partners in the community.

8. There is a clear commitment in the strategy to review the way in which the council responds to ASB reports to ensure a timely and appropriate response that residents will appreciate and value. Increasing the visibility and availability of Community Safety Officers and Community Rangers in the town will play a key part in this work and help increase confidence in the council's community safety service.
9. The impact that ASB and crime can have on the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and whole communities can be devastating. The council is currently in the process of developing a new Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which will link directly to the Community Safety Strategy as the council and its partners begin to take a more public health focussed approach to community safety issues. This strategy will also link to other council strategies, including the Community Engagement Strategy, Community Resilience Strategy and the Town Plan, for example.
10. Implementation of the Community Safety Strategy will be delivered alongside: the delivery of the Community Safety Team Plan; SHP priority subgroup action plans; and the Full SHP Board's high level strategic action plan. This will ensure the council can achieve its community safety objectives for the period 2021/22 – 2024/25. The strategy and linked action plans are designed to be both targeted to meet current identified need, yet fluid enough to be responsive to new and emerging threats, risks and trends.
11. Delivery of the SHP priority subgroup action plans and the Full SHP Board's high level strategic action plan, and the outcomes from each of these, will be reviewed twice yearly by the SHP Partnership Board. The Community Safety Team Plan will be regularly reviewed and updated by Community Safety Team leaders. This approach will ensure that community safety objectives are being met and where necessary, and appropriate, remedial action can be taken.
12. The draft Community Safety Strategy 2021/22 – 2024/25 is set out in Appendix A to the report.

IMPLICATIONS

Strategic Growth and Regeneration

The delivery of the Community Safety vision will support the Council's Regeneration activities. The creation of a safer Harlow will encourage more economic activity and prevent barriers to investment.

Author: Andrew Bramidge, Director of Strategic Growth and Regeneration

Finance

None specific.

Author: Simon Freeman, Deputy to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance

Housing

Anti-social behaviour is a key issue highlighted within the Government Social Housing White Paper – Charter for Social Housing residents and this strategy will

support and complement the Housing Service which is responsible for addressing anti-social behaviour involving Council tenants and leaseholders across the town.

Author: Andrew Murray, Director of Housing

Communities and Environment

As contained in the report.

Author: Jane Greer, Director of Communities and Environment

Governance and Corporate Services

An Equalities Impact Assessment should be completed prior to implementation to identify whether or not there are likely to be any adverse impacts upon specific sections of the community.

Author: Simon Hill, Director of Governance and Corporate Services

Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Community Safety Strategy

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used

ASB – Anti-social behaviour

SHP - Safer Harlow Partnership