

# Safer Harlow Partnership Funding



<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	12 June 2025
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	Councillor Joel Charles, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Becca Farrant, Assistant Director – Community and Corporate Services
<b>Contributing Officers:</b>	Christine Howard, Strategic Manager – Community Safety, Youth and Engagement
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Forward Plan:</b>	Forward Plan number I018532
<b>Call In:</b>	This item is subject to call in procedures
<b>Corporate Mission:</b>	Protect our communities
<b>Wards Affected:</b>	None specifically

## Executive Summary:

- A** In respect of the council’s corporate mission to ‘protect our communities’, the Building Harlow’s Future plan states that this year the council will *“revitalise the Safer Harlow Partnership”* in order to *“establish a more strategic, action-oriented force for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour, and community safety”*.
- B** In line with that stated outcome, this report proposes that £80,000 is allocated to the Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP) to support projects that align with its strategic priorities. Funding will be earmarked for use by the partnership and released when assessed projects meet a specific criteria set out under the three priority themes covered in this report. The Cabinet is asked to approve the allocation of funding from the discretionary services fund. This is about enabling the SHP to demonstrate it can further support the prevention of anti-social behaviour (ASB) and crime in the town.

## Recommended that Cabinet:

- A** Approves the allocation of earmarked reserves to deliver projects against the priorities of the Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP).

- B** Delegates authority to the co-chair of the SHP (Julie Ellis, Executive Director of the council) to allocate funding in line with the criteria contained within this report.
- C** Receives an annual report on the activities of the Safer Harlow Partnership in line with the outcome to revitalise the partnership.

### **Reason for decision**

- A** In respect of the council's corporate mission to 'protect our communities', the Building Harlow's Future plan states that this year the council will *"revitalise the Safer Harlow Partnership"* in order to *"establish a more strategic, action-oriented force for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour, and community safety"*.
- B** To enable partners in Harlow to deliver initiatives that support ASB reduction and crime prevention priorities identified in the 2024 community safety strategic intelligence assessment (SIA).
- C** The fund is also being set up in anticipation of local government reorganisation as part of early work to prepare for a period of significant change at a district and county level. Council funding is being deployed to maintain and strengthen partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour and crime. This is about providing an additional layer of continuity.

### **Other Options**

- A** The council could choose not to provide financial support to the SHP, but it appreciates that tackling anti-social behaviour, crime and disorder requires a multi-agency approach. Furthermore, it would not support the delivery of the stated outcome in the Building Harlow's Future plan. Funding will be awarded to projects with outcomes that contribute to the priorities arising from the SIA.

### **Background**

1. In respect of the council's corporate mission to 'protect our communities', the Building Harlow's Future plan states that this year the council will *"revitalise the Safer Harlow Partnership"* in order to *"establish a more strategic, action-oriented force for tackling crime, anti-social behaviour, and community safety"*.
2. The SHP is the Community Safety Partnership for Harlow. This is a statutory partnership of agencies and groups working together to reduce and prevent ASB, crime and disorder to help improve the lives of people who live in, work in and visit the town.
3. The partnership is led by the responsible authorities (Harlow Council, Essex Police, Essex County Council, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Partnership and the Probation Service), but also includes other local private, community and voluntary sector organisations.

4. Each year, the SHP is awarded a Community Safety Partnership Grant by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex (PFCC) to fund activity to address identified priorities. Local priority issues are identified by the annual community safety SIA and by working together with the council's partners and residents to find out what matters most to them.
5. Statutory, non-statutory, community and voluntary groups can apply to the SHP for up to £3,000 of PFCC funding per application if they can demonstrate how their application supports the partnership's current priorities.
6. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places responsibility on the Community Safety Partnership to annually review levels and patterns of crime and disorder. The community safety SIA takes data from Essex Police's crime recording system, Athena, the force's incident reporting system, STORM, and the Home Office web-based data tool service, iQuanta, along with partner contributions. Maintaining an evidence-led approach to community safety remains a key focus of the partnership.
7. Workstreams arising from the assessment support local communities to counter the perception, threat, and consequence of certain actions by striving to reduce ASB, crime and the fear of it, and to reduce reoffending. The practical function of community safety also encompasses addressing disorder and the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and other substances.

## **Issues/Proposals**

8. The most recent strategic assessment has identified the following priorities for 2025/26:
  - a) acquisitive crimes;
  - b) county lines;
  - c) serious violence; and
  - d) violence against women and girls and domestic abuse.
9. Although modest funding is available via existing sources, the SHP has identified a need for focused action in the key areas of early interventions, pilots for technological innovation and responding to hotspot areas where spikes in ASB occur and rapid community engagement is required for reassurance, and to mitigate the risk of further escalation. Senior officers from Essex Police have also provided the council with operational insights to help inform what the priorities should be. There is a shared view that additional funding would be the best way to support operational need and the establishment of more locally focused prevention initiatives.
10. It is proposed to utilise the council's discretionary services reserve to support initiatives that meet these criteria and invite all SHP partners to submit bids for project funding accordingly.
11. The priorities that will be used to assess such bids are set out below:

### **a) Early interventions**

- i) Initiatives which aim to work with first-time offenders to encourage behaviour change.
- ii) Projects which provide education to prevent first offences.
- iii) Targeted programmes that look to divert young people away from gang culture or other influences that encourage criminal behaviour.

### **b) Technological innovation**

- i) Projects which utilise technology not already routinely used within Harlow for crime prevention.
- ii) Fund projects that use technology to bring together the work of two or more partners.
- iii) Support requests for specific technology to deliver blue light operational requirements.

### **c) Responding to hotspot areas**

- i) Projects which provide quick intervention where ASB or crime increases.
- ii) Targeted funding to respond to issues that could increase community tensions, including incidents involving places of worship or in locations where different cultural groups meet.
- iii) Supporting multi-agency action days focused on community engagement and public reassurance, two examples being where a pattern of serious violence or shoplifting has occurred in a certain part of the town.

12. Projects should be outcome focused and contribute to one or more of the SIA priorities for 2025/26. There will be scope to fund projects that potentially crossover between one or more priority areas if it can be demonstrated that additional positive impact will be achieved.
13. It will be a requirement that the approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of each project is made clear at the outset to enable the allocation of funding. This will include a commitment to provide anonymised case studies that clearly evidence positive outcomes for the individuals, families and communities that make up the town.
14. Organisations will be provided funding in advance and will be required to report to the SHP board on how that financial support has been used and what has been achieved during the allocation period. Should there be any unexpected delays or failures in achieving agreed outcomes, organisations will be challenged constructively and required to justify any identified under-performance. The SHP will provide a summary of funding allocations at future board meetings, and the council reserves the right to

seek the return of any unspent or unallocated funds by the end of the municipal year if necessary.

## **Implications**

### **Equalities and Diversity:**

The Strategic Intelligence Assessment gives regard to specific make up of the local community and work of the partnership is committed to ensuring protected groups are not disadvantaged or likely to be victims or perpetrators of crime due to their protected characteristics.

### **Finance:**

The report proposes £80,000 is allocated to the Safer Harlow Partnership (SHP) and is funded by drawing down from earmarked reserves for use by the partnership and released when assessed projects meet a specific criteria set out under the three priority themes covered in this report.

Author: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director – Finance and Section 151 Officer

### **Governance:**

As with all grant-funded initiatives, it is important to ensure that compliance with grant funding objectives and outcomes can be demonstrated, through the way in which the scheme is administered. This will include a fair, prudent and transparent process for accessing and awarding funds and monitoring how funds are spent and the extent to which the expenditure achieved the intended outcomes.

Author: Daniel Dickinson, Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services (Interim) and Monitoring Officer

### **Appendices:**

None

### **Background Papers:**

Building Harlow's Future plan

### **Glossary of terms/abbreviations used:**

ASB – Anti-Social Behaviour

PFCC – Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner

SHP – Safer Harlow Partnership

SIA – Strategic Intelligence Assessment