

Cabinet 3 March 2021	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Denise Radley, Corporate Director Health Adults & Community	Classification: Unrestricted
Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-2024	

Lead Member	Councillor Sirajul Islam, Deputy Mayor for Community Safety, Faith and Equalities Housing
Originating Officer(s)	Ann Corbett – Divisional Director, Community Safety Jack Kerr – Strategy and Policy Manager Leo Hutchinson – Community Safety Commissioning Manager
Wards affected	All wards
Key Decision?	No
Forward Plan Notice Published	12 November 2020
Reason for Key Decision	Impact on Wards
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	2. A borough that our residents are proud of and love to live in

Executive Summary

Working to make Tower Hamlets a safer place for our residents and communities is a key priority in Tower Hamlets. Feeling or being unsafe can manifest in a number of ways, from anti-social behaviour (ASB) to serious violence to exploitation and can happen in both public and private spaces. We know that the impact can be devastating for both victims and perpetrators, and residents continually highlight crime and ASB as a priority issue they want to see improve.

Tower Hamlets has specific challenges and strengths when it comes to crime and ASB. We have high levels of deprivation, high levels of substance misuse and high population density; all of which have implications for community safety. Our strengths are in our diverse and active communities and in our strong record of effective partnership working.

Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic has had and will have a significant impact on crime, ASB and its root causes. We know, for example, that ASB demand has risen significantly since March 2020; and whilst levels of domestic abuse locally have not risen to the extent feared at the start of the pandemic, it remains a key area of concern given some victims will have gone into lockdown with their abusers. Going forward, we will need to understand the longer-term impacts of the pandemic and

what this means for community safety. As well as challenges, there may be opportunities to further utilise resident empowerment and community mobilisation to help prevent and tackle crime and ASB.

Overall then, our 2021 Community Safety Partnership Plan aims to tackle crime and disorder whilst simultaneously addressing their root causes. It has been developed with an awareness of our challenges and it aims to build on our strengths, setting out our priorities over the next three years and the action we will take to achieve them.

The four priorities in the plan can be summarised as follows:

- Tackling neighbourhood crime and ASB
- Tackling hate crime, community tensions and extremism
- Reducing reoffending and tackling the drivers of crime
- Violence reduction: safeguarding those at risk of violence and exploitation

Six key principles are embedded with the plan to define the partnership's approach to these priorities. These are:

- Early help and prevention
- Public health approach to violence
- Contextual safeguarding
- Resident involvement
- Collaboration
- Supporting victims

Finally, it is recognised that people's experience of crime, disorder, safety and services is not the same. Being a woman, being of a Black, Asian and minority ethnic background, being LGBTQIA, being disabled, having different gender to the one assigned at birth, being older or younger – for example - all has an impact. We are clear in the CSP plan that we will continue to tackle inequality in relation to this as part of our borough-wide commitment to tackle inequality in all its forms.

The new CSP plan is supported by a comprehensive strategic assessment that draws on data from across the partnership to identify trends, patterns, and drivers of crime and anti-social behaviour. It has also been informed by extensive consultation and engagement with various partners: with community groups and Tower Hamlets residents consulted as part of the engagement process.

The draft CSP Plan is attached to this report as Appendix A. Please note, following agreement at full council the document will be professionally designed by the Councils design team, and communicated to partners and residents.

Recommendations:

The cabinet is recommended to:

1. Recommend that Full Council approve the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-24, as per the Council Constitution.

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Community Safety Partnerships are required under the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) to ensure a strategic plan is in place to address crime and disorder locally. The current plan ends on 31st March 2021 and a new plan is being developed for 2021-2024. As the Community Safety plan is a partnership document listed in the Constitution, it is reserved for final decision by full Council subject to prior approval by Cabinet.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The content of the plan can be amended in line with feedback. There is a statutory responsibility for Community Safety Partnerships to produce a Community Safety Partnership Plan, detailing how crime and disorder will be addressed locally. Under the Council Constitution, it is the role of Full Council to ratify that plan.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

Context and background

- 3.1 Crime, disorder and ASB has a major impact on residents' sense of wellbeing and tackling the interlinked issues of violence, exploitation, ASB and drugs and alcohol is a significant challenge.
- 3.2 The context for Tower Hamlets includes that we are a borough that:
- Is comparatively young and diverse
 - Is densely populated and growing quickly
 - Has high but improving levels of deprivation
 - Has some of the toughest health inequalities in the UK caused by deprivation and related housing and employment needs
 - Has comparatively high levels of substance misuse issues.
- 3.3 This context has and will be shaped by the seismic changes brought in with the Covid-19 pandemic. We know, for example, that the wider economic impacts of the pandemic have been devastating for many, and this has and will have knock-on impacts for crime and safety.
- 3.4 The direct impact of Covid-19 on crime and ASB can be summarised as follows:
- Broadly speaking, the first lockdown in spring 2020 caused an overall reduction in crimes including burglary, robbery and violence with injury (non-domestic abuse) although these subsequently increased as lockdown restrictions lifted.
 - ASB reports increased significantly with lockdown and this trend remains: It is at least partially thought to be due to noise complaints, friction between neighbours and concerns about non-adherence to social distancing restrictions.

- Levels of domestic abuse reports locally have not risen to the extent feared at the start of the pandemic however it remains a key area of concern given some victims will have gone into lockdown with their abusers.
- The nature of lockdown may have made abuse, neglect and exploitation more hidden; and some crime methods will have evolved and adapted – a key challenge for all partners going forward.

3.5 Finally, the last 12 months has brought a welcome focus on the inequalities and discrimination facing people of Black and Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds following the death of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement. This focus continues into our Community Safety Partnership Plan with commitments to tackle in inequalities facing our communities in relation to this.

Developing the plan

3.6 The 2021-24 Community Safety Partnership Plan represents a significant commitment from the statutory partners of the Community Safety Partnership: including the Council, Police, Fire Service, National Probation Service and Health authorities. In addition, non-statutory partners and local voluntary groups are also committed to working together to improve the lives of Tower Hamlets residents. The plan presents the Community Safety Partnership's (CSP) priorities and approach to tackling crime and disorder in Tower Hamlets in light of the context, challenges and opportunities we face.

3.7 The plan is supported by a detailed strategic assessment that draws on data from across the partnership to identify trends, patterns, and drivers of crime and anti-social behaviour.

3.8 The plan is also informed by a wide-ranging consultation and engagement with partners that was carried out over July-December, and with community groups and Tower Hamlets residents. The consultation was carried out in accordance with social distancing guidelines and included the following activity:

- Individual interviews with Community Safety Partnership organisations
- Four steering group meetings with Community Safety Partnership organisations
- An engagement event with the Young Mayor and his Cabinet
- Workshop with the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panel Chairs
- Engagement with Tower Hamlets Inter Faith Forum
- An online resident survey that received 224 responses
- Reference to consultation and engagement carried out to develop Tower Hamlets Violence, Vulnerabilities and Exploitation Strategy 2021-24
- Reference to consultation and engagement carried out to develop Tower Hamlets Substance Misuse Strategy 2020-2025.
- Reference to consultation and engagement carried out to develop Tower Hamlets Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2019-24

The priority areas and the outcomes that the Community Safety Partnership seeks to achieve, through the delivery of this plan, are a reflection both of the data and what our partners and residents told us through the engagement activity.

Community Safety Partnership Plan Priorities 2021-2024

- 3.9 The new Community Safety Partnership plan has the following four priorities. (Please refer to the presentation of the Plan attached as appendix A to this report for more detail on each of the priorities)
- Tackling Neighbourhood Crime and ASB:
This priority places a focus on ASB (including Nitrous Oxide use), the use of ASB tools and powers, Community Triggers to tackle repeat ASB, Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO), CCTV, targeting problem locations in partnership, designing out crime, fire related ASB and tackling high volume neighbourhood offences such as burglary.
 - Tackling Hate Crime, Community Tensions and Extremism:
This priority places a focus on Hate Crime, Community Cohesion and Extremism. They have been grouped together as one priority due to the links between the three. This priority also includes the important statutory work that the partnership carry out under the Prevent Strategy.
 - Reducing Reoffending and Tackling the Drivers of Crime:
This priority focuses on the cohort of offenders who re-offend and are responsible for a disproportionately large number of offences in the borough. In addition, this priority also puts a focus on targeting some of the key drivers of crime. This includes Serious Organised Crime, drug supply, substance misuse and rough sleeping. Drug dealing and substance misuse remains a concern for our residents. The Community Safety Partnership plan will align with the Substance Misuse Strategy 2020-2025 approach to tackling drugs and substance misuse. Similarly, there is also alignment with Tower Hamlets Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-2023.
 - Violence Reduction: Safeguarding Those at Risk of Violence and Exploitation
This priority focuses on violence reduction, adopting a public health approach to tackling violence locally. The priority area will include Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), child criminal exploitation (CCE), child sexual exploitation (CSE), safeguarding children, street violence (including knife and gun crime), modern slavery, repeat victimisation and the physical and mental health impacts that violence can have. The Community Safety Partnership plan will align its approach to tackling these issues with the Violence, Vulnerabilities and Exploitation (VVE) Strategy 2021-24. Similarly, the plan is also in alignment with Tower Hamlets Violence against Women and Girls Strategy 2019-2024.

- 3.10 Our local policing priorities, set out by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), are also a key feature within this plan. These are personal robbery, burglary and anti-social behaviour. Working in partnership to address these issues, the Community Safety Partnership will also ensure it monitors and responds to other 'volume' crime types that pose an ongoing problem in the borough. It is anticipated that MOPAC will release a new Police and Crime Plan next year following the elections. As a result, this Community Safety Partnership plan will be updated to reflect the new local police priorities.
- 3.11 This plan places 'improving public confidence and trust' at the heart of its delivery model: with the partnership aiming to do this through delivering the four strategic priorities. It is a cross cutting theme that each of the four priorities listed in paragraph 3.4 will feed into. The plan sets out four ambitious intentions to improve public confidence and trust. These are:
- Improving ways of reporting crimes and ASB
 - Further improving our community engagement
 - Ensuring victims of crimes are at the heart of our response
 - Improving the interaction between the police and the community
- 3.12 The new Community Safety Partnership Plan highlights the drivers of local crime and some of the underlying issues that contribute to criminality and reoffending, as listed below. These are again issues that have been and will be influenced by the wider impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic:
- Drugs Market: A substantial proportion of local crime is driven by substance misuse and an active drugs market: resulting in acquisitive crimes and serious violent offending. We know that substance misuse levels are high in the borough, making it a key driver to be addressed both through this plan and our Substance Misuse strategy.
 - Mental Health: Some of those in contact with the criminal justice system suffer from mental health problems, with people particularly at risk during and after contact with criminal justice system. By identifying and addressing mental ill health at the earliest opportunity we can aim for the best outcomes for those people experiencing mental health issues and provide holistic support for people with complex and challenging needs. Again, we know that the number of people with mental health issues is comparatively high in Tower Hamlets and our commitments on this issue are articulated in our Substance Misuse Strategy.
 - Community Cohesion: A thriving, cohesive and well-integrated community can help to reduce the risk of hate crime and the risk of extremism taking root. Tackling racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia and indeed all forms of discrimination is a key commitment in Tower Hamlets that is reflected in this plan and the borough's Community Cohesion Plan.

These will be addressed within each of the priority areas stated in paragraph 3.4 and will be cross thematic. The new Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Organised Crime Profile will play a key role in addressing the health-related implications associated with crime and drug supply respectively.

3.13 We know that our strong record of partnership working is one of our key strengths, as are our diverse and active communities. We have therefore proposed a number of key principles are embedded within this new plan to define the partnership's approach to tackling the key priorities identified in this plan. These include:

- Early Help and Prevention
Focus on early intervention and prevention and the wider determinants of crime and community safety, including social inequalities, employment, skills, health, housing and environment
- Public Health approach to violence:
Focus on defining and measuring the issues contributing to violent offending and making use of existing resources, available funding and innovative projects to tackle it.
- Contextual Safeguarding:
Focus on contextual safeguarding, taking a whole-family approach and accounting for every context and environment that adolescents encounter beyond their family. This involves adopting a trauma informed approach, using a local understanding of the impact of adverse childhood experiences have on involvement in crime and ASB
- Resident involvement:
Coproducting solutions with our local community to understand local priorities and develop an approach that is responsive and effective in increasing feelings of safety.
- Collaboration:
Share data and intelligence and work across agencies to facilitate an efficient and effective approach and better targeted interventions.
- Supporting victims:
Ensure a focus on victims and strengthen local systems to support victims, reduce repeat victimisation, and recognise that perpetrators of violence can often be victims too.

How the Plan will be delivered

3.14 The Community Safety Partnership Board has the responsibility to deliver the priorities that are set out within this plan. This requires partner organisations to work together to share skills, knowledge and resource in order to effectively

deliver a service that achieves our ambitions and makes Tower Hamlets a safer place to live in, work in and visit.

- 3.15 Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership Board has 7 strategic subgroups to drive the operational delivery. These are:
- Neighbourhood Crime and ASB Board
 - Drugs and Alcohol Action Team Management Board
 - Reducing Reoffending Board
 - No Place for Hate Forum
 - CONTEST Board
 - VAWG and Domestic Abuse Strategy Group
 - Youth Justice Management Board
- 3.16 The subgroups of the Community Safety Partnership produce their own action plans. These detail how they will address the relevant Community Safety Partnership priorities, setting ambitious targets that are reported into the CSP quarterly. Each subgroup action plan will be monitored at both the individual subgroup level and through priority performance indicators at Community Safety Partnership level.
- 3.17 The Safer Neighbourhood Board operates alongside Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership Board, ensuring that our local community has a voice and can contribute when making strategic decision.
- 3.18 Tower Hamlets Community Safety Partnership is one of a number of statutory partnerships operating across the borough. Some of the others include the Health and Wellbeing Board, Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children's Partnership Board, and Safeguarding Adult's Board. Each partnership board has its own strategic priorities but there are many overlapping agendas. These include safeguarding, reoffending, young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time (First Time Entrants) and the associated social and health related challenges that impact on the level of crime, such as substance misuse and poor mental health. The Community Safety Partnership Board will therefore work with the other partnerships to ensure a joined-up approach is adopted.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 People's experience of crime, disorder, safety and services is not the same: Being a woman, being of a Black, Asian or minority ethnic background, being LGBTQIA, being disabled, having different gender to the one assigned at birth, being older or younger – for example - all has an impact. Some of these impacts are described below. We are clear in the CSP plan that we will continue to tackle inequality in relation to this as part of our borough-wide commitment to tackle inequality in all its forms.
- 4.2 Anyone can be a victim of domestic abuse, however 95% of perpetrators are men. Women are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse and other

forms of VAWG. Gender inequality is understood to be an underlying factor in violence against women and girls. In addition, women are generally less likely to report they feel safe in public spaces compared to men.

- 4.3 People of a Black ethnic background are overrepresented in the criminal justice system and the plan incorporates the Mayor of London's 'Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing Action Plan' principles around better use of police powers, working together to make black [and minority ethnic] communities safer; and a police service that better represents and understands black [and minority ethnic] communities. There is often a disproportionate impact of crime on BAME communities.
- 4.4 Around 3 in 10 of all victims and all suspects, in recently recorded street-based knife crime, are aged between 19 and 25 years. The partnership's understanding of which children and young people are vulnerable to harm will continue to be developed with equality monitoring and analysis considered annually. (Tower Hamlets Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy 2021-2024)
- 4.5 Hate crime can impact all protected characteristics, with 'racist' hate crime being the most prevalent in the borough, and 'homophobic' and 'transgender' hate crime being the fastest growing category. Issues including Brexit have had and might continue to have impacts on hate crime trends. The Community Safety Partnership aims to make Tower Hamlets a safer place to live, work, study and visit. The work of the No Place for Hate Forum contributes to ensuring Tower Hamlets represents a fair and equal society where those who do perpetrate hate are educated and or enforced against.
- 4.6 Further, the Tensions Monitoring Group (TMG) and the CONTEST Board aim to address community tensions and provide a strategic lead in addressing London's threat, risks and vulnerabilities in relation to counter-terrorism respectively. Hate Crime, Community Cohesion and Extremism remains high priority for the partnership. Please refer to Priority 2 in the CSP Plan attached to this report as appendix A for further details.
- 4.7 People who are homeless are at increased risk of substance misuse and mental ill health is associated with homelessness, both as a cause and a consequence. (Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2019) Drug-related harms in homeless populations and how they can be reduced)
- 4.8 Tower Hamlets is the 5th most deprived area in London, with crime and substance misuse often clustered in areas of high social deprivation. This deprivation is likely to be a key driver behind health inequalities and the prevalence of smoking and drug and alcohol use in Tower Hamlets. (Substance Misuse Strategy 2020-2025)
- 4.9 Finally, there is a sense that whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has shone a light on existing inequalities, there is a risk that these may be further exacerbated going forward. This is an issue for the Community Safety Partnership Plan as

it is for all our strategies and plans, and we are committed to tackling this through our priorities and actions.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:

- Best Value Implications,
- Consultations,
- Environmental (including air quality),
- Risk Management,
- Crime Reduction,
- Safeguarding.
- Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

Best Value Implications

5.2 Through the new Community Safety Partnership Plan, the CSP will continue to scrutinise existing investment/resources and how it delivers services within the multi-agency context that it works within.

5.3 There are potentially significant efficiency gains from working in partnership to reduce crime and disorder in the borough. The Community Safety Plan 2021-24 is a partnership document and brings together key crime and disorder reduction agencies to work together and share resources.

5.4 There are also further efficiencies from addressing local problems before they escalate. This is intended to result in less resource being required to respond to local crime and disorder due to prevention and intervention before more serious problems at a later stage. These efficiencies would be spread across the Council and key partner agencies.

Environmental (including air quality)

5.5 Implementation of the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-23 is expected to have a positive effect on the environment, helping to reduce 'enviro-crime' (environmental crime) related anti-social behaviour. The plan will look to address criminal damage, graffiti, fly-tipping, fly-posting and other environmental crimes in the borough.

Risk Management

5.6 The Community Safety Plan sets out an overarching structure and framework of priorities within which management of risks will take place. There are no particular risk management implications attached to the plan itself.

5.7 There are risks associated with the harm caused by anti-social behaviour, crime and substance misuse in terms of the quality of life, health and

wellbeing of residents. This includes mental health and wellbeing. These risks are increased for vulnerable victims.

Crime Reduction

- 5.8 The Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-24 will seek to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse and re-offending. It will also address the London Mayor's strategic priorities whilst reducing fear of crime, improving community cohesion and contributing to relevant community plan commitments.

Safeguarding

- 5.9 Tackling crime, anti-social behaviour and substance misuse has a significant link to safeguarding both vulnerable adults and children. Vulnerable adults and young people can be both victims and perpetrators of crime. The Plan, and subsequent delivery plans, place vulnerable adults and children at the heart of the priorities and aim to ensure that they are identified as well as offered the appropriate support needed to keep them and the rest of the community safe.
- 5.10 Effective prevention can reduce the likelihood of young people becoming involved in gangs, group offending, carrying knives and otherwise becoming involved in the criminal justice system. This Plan has been developed with partners in both Adults and Children's Safeguarding Boards as well as colleagues in Children's Services. It will contribute to improving and delivering effective safeguarding practice alongside other strategies such as the Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Strategy.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.1 Any financial implications arising from the plan will be contained within existing financial resources and as such there are no financial implications for the revenue budget.

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

- 7.1 The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 makes it a statutory requirement for the Council and the other responsible authorities in Tower Hamlets (e.g. the Chief Officer of Police) to formulate and implement strategies for: the reduction of crime and disorder; combating the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances; and the reduction of re-offending. In formulating and implementing such, regard must be had to the police and crime objectives set out in the police and crime plan for the relevant area. This has been taken into account in preparing this plan and will be updated to reflect any new local police priorities introduced following the Mayoral election in 2021.
- 7.2 The Community Safety Partnership Plan forms part of the Council's Budget Policy Framework and therefore its adoption is for Council in accordance with

the Council's Constitution. The Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules require that the Mayor as the Executive has responsibility for preparing the draft plan for submission to the Council. Therefore, for this plan to be adopted, the Mayor in Cabinet must recommend it to Council.

- 7.3 Before adopting the Community Safety Partnership Plan, the Council must have due regard to its public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate unlawful conduct, the need to advance equality of opportunity and the need to foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
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Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- NONE.

Appendices

- Appendix A: Draft Community Safety Plan
- Appendix B: Community Safety partnership Plan 2021-24: *Comments from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 1st March 2021*

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE.

Officer contact details for documents:

N/A