

## INTRODUCTION

The North Devon & Torridge Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory body set up under sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. It is made up of representatives from several agencies involved with crime, disorder, and community safety. There is a joint CSP board between North Devon and Torridge which meets on a quarterly basis. The current Chair of the board is Superintendent Toby Davies of Devon and Cornwall Police. Meetings are attended by the following agencies:

- Torridge District Council
- North Devon District Council
- Devon and Cornwall Police
- Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue
- Police and Crime Commissioner representative
- DCC Public health
- Together (drug and alcohol support services)
- Leesar (domestic and sexual violence support services)
- Probation services
- TTVS/NDVS (voluntary services)
- North Devon Healthcare Trust
- Elected members from TDC, ND and DCC

The current priorities of the CSP are:

### ***Priority one: Serious violence and Violence Against Women and Girls***

The first of our priorities focusses on the CSP's work with our statutory partners to reduce all crime including serious violence, this includes knife violence / crime, sexual violence, domestic violence and abuse, and will include violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Following the publication of the Serious Violence Strategy, the Serious Violence Bill was announced in December 2019 and enacted on 16 December 2022. Specified Authorities have until January 2024 to put their plans in place.

Officers attend Devon level working groups where this project is developed – it is likely that the focus will be on trauma and interventions to address this and prevent later violence.

Discussions are being held at a county level with regards how the HM Government funding will be distributed to CSP areas. It is anticipated that funding will be held at a county level to commission county wide activities (Safer Devon Partnership), with smaller pots of funding coming to each CSP.

Our CSP recognises that domestic abuse, drug supply and early intervention of youth should be areas of focus to reduce the risk of Serious Violence

### ***Priority two: Safer Streets & Anti-Social Behaviour***

We continue to monitor, identify, and address the anti-social behaviour issues impacting our communities and seek to identify and support local preventive projects- with an ASB Steering Group. We co-ordinate responses to community level anti-social behaviour by using innovative ways to work with our partners to build and sustain community resilience.

One of the most significant projects relates to the Safer Streets funding for Barnstaple Town Centre ward which has led to significant reductions in crime and disorder across the reporting year.

Anti-social behaviour patrols continue across both districts and individuals are escalated through Anti-Social Behaviour process in a prompt manner, often resulting in court appearances and prosecutions.

We are continuing to seek opportunities to work with the health sector to actively address and monitor risks and changes relating to substance misuse locally. We promote and utilise a partnership approach to identify, support and tackle alcohol and drug related issues within our communities. By working in partnership with specialist drug and alcohol agencies (both commissioned and voluntary), service users and their families receive a range of options to help reduce dependency, harm and support their recovery.

### ***Priority Three: Emerging threats.***

To allow the CSP to respond quickly and effectively to new concerns, we review emerging issues in our communities and where necessary, set up a specialist group from within our partners to work on a specific problem.

We continue to deliver key messages through partnership communications to focus on community tensions, extremism, the online space, modern slavery, and human trafficking.

At the Community Safety Partnership Meeting on 9 November 2023, it was agreed that **Hate Crime** will be a CSP priority for the next year. This is against a backdrop of an increase in offences and incidents such as the distribution of racist material in our area. A working group will be established to formulate an action plan. It is anticipated that a focus of this work will be to increase awareness and reporting amongst the public in general and to more diverse communities.

Any of our partners can bring matters to the board for consideration and action. Our CSP is represented on the Safer Devon Partnership Executive Management Group through our Chair. Some statutory functions of the CSP are delivered at regional level, such as the production of a Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment, regional reoffending strategy development, and the management of Domestic Homicide Reviews. At a local level, the role of the board consists of setting and monitoring local priorities and maintaining an overview of issues affecting community safety in both districts.

## **2. REPORT**

The Community Safety Partnership has been very active since our last report to the Scrutiny Committee and the following provides an outline of activities carried out:

- A significant focus of the partnership and local policing looks at identifying and analysing activities related to organised crime groups. We continue to promote the sharing of vital intelligence with our policing colleagues through the Devon & Cornwall Police's Partner Agency Information Sharing Form. In this regard North Devon & Torridge Community Safety Partnership continues to be the top partnership for all intelligence submissions to the Police's Force Intelligence Unit which evidences how well we promote community safety as a partnership.
- We have continued to focus on our trauma informed vision for Torridge and North Devon. The CSP is now actively involved in a 'Devon Trauma Network' which has been set up across Devon to share best practice and promote consistency in its application. Members of our CSP have also delivered presentations at the Trauma Network on 'Trauma Informed Practice in Northern Devon'
- High Flow is a partnership initiative across all services with the CSP working in conjunction with One Northern Devon. All partner agencies identified and agreed the top 13 individuals putting most demand on our services and then sought to find a way to break that cycle. It leads to a High Flow casework providing additional support and putting a 'Team around the Person' to avoid the silo approach of agencies working alone. It has also seen dramatic reductions in demand and some outstanding stories of individuals turning their lives around, whilst also providing learning on how we can deal better with others in the future.
- Northern Devon Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse Forum – This forum consists of wide representation from the CSP, wider partners and the local community. Our work continues to focus on raising awareness of domestic abuse in the workplace, introducing community and youth bystander projects, working together to support safety campaigns, focusing on young people, and promoting healthy relationships in schools. We are supporting and link in with the Domestic Abuse Act, via the Devon Domestic Abuse Partnership Board to support our work locally and thus providing strategic direction with a grass roots focus on preventing sexual violence and domestic abuse in our local communities. Both the Devon service, Fearfree, and local provider, North Devon Against Domestic Abuse, regularly attend and contribute to CSP board meetings and sub-groups.
- Our joint ASB Steering Group continues to develop and focus on ASB prevention and addressing local ASB issues across Northern Devon. The multi-agency meetings take place monthly and look in detail at individuals and areas of reported issues, with an emphasis on hotspots and emerging issues. This approach has been particularly well received in relation to the street drinking issues in Bideford and Barnstaple. The terms of reference of this group has recently been reviewed, membership has been extended to a wider

diversity of statutory partners including elected members at district and town levels. This diversity adds value through much more representative conversation around this key CSP priority. Member involvement also brings a really useful community perspective.

- In North Devon, an increased Officer presence has been introduced to address and prevent Anti-Social Behaviour. The Council's ASB Officer has a daily presence in the town centre and issues advice, warnings and notices when required. A security operative is available should the Officer require additional assistance. The team work closely with the Barnstaple CCTV room and are linked by radio, allowing prompt action when required.
- Street Marshals continue to be active in Barnstaple following funding being agreed with North Devon Council. The marshals, provided by a local security company, are patrolling the town on a daily basis. They helped to increase feelings of reassurance amongst both the public and businesses and dealt with incidents as and when they occurred. A similar scheme has been introduced in Ilfracombe and preparations are being made in Bideford for a similar scheme during the Christmas period.
- The CSP played a significant role in Barnstaple's successful bid to HM Government's Safer Streets Fund. The Town Team consisting of Street Marshals, antisocial behaviour (ASB) and CCTV officers, CEOs and the Police neighbourhood team provided public reassurance and de-escalated situations that could lead to anti-social behaviour, leading to increased public reassurance. Additionally, a Safe Space has been established in Barnstaple Town Centre, providing a base for agencies to offer help, advice and support.
- The Safer Streets initiative also provided for interventions in local schools. This included activities including a theatrical production and self-defence lessons for students.
- The CSP engaged with a local training provider to develop and provide training to 8 local primary schools to increase resilience in their pupils - topics included relationships, social media, dealing with emotional development and confrontation. The course provided an improved understanding of self, self-management strategies, better relationships, recognition of impact of behaviour and self and others.
- North Devon CSP took part in a Barnstaple action days as part of the ongoing effort to address Anti-Social Behaviour. Action included visits to businesses to offer reassurance, engagement with the public and a general clean-up of the town.
- In Torrridge officers have continued to enforce the Public Spaces Protection order in the town to tackle antisocial behaviour associated with the consumption of alcohol or other intoxicating substances. These patrols are carried out in partnership with the local Neighbourhood Policing Team at Bideford. To further assist TDC officers are authorised under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS). Authorised Local Authority Officers are

focussed on engagement, education, and enforcement of our PSPO. We were able to challenge and disrupt street drinking in Bideford town centre and provided high visibility assurance to our community and local businesses.

- Torrridge have been working jointly with the local neighbourhood policing team to tackle anti-social behaviour in Jubilee Square. To help achieve this objective Torrridge have offered the police free use of office space on Jubilee Square. The local neighbourhood policing team are keen to utilise this space and it is currently with police estates for consideration. The use of this space has recently received verbal support from the acting Chief Constable during his visit to Bideford on 15 November 2023.
- In North Devon, Public Space Protection Orders have been renewed and two small areas that have been subject to Anti-Social Behaviour have been added to the map due to an increase in incidents. The new order will be effective from January 2024.
- Community Safety at Torrridge have just taken over the running of the towns CCTV system. This move is going to further strengthen the PSPO and help to reduce ASB within the town by more closely linking the means to identify those responsible and the Community Safety team. Those identified will be escalated under ASB legislation and the CCTV evidence will support this.
- The Public Spaces Protection Order is due to be renewed in the spring of 2024, prior to this it will go out for consultation. Torrridge and the police will be recommending the dispersal time will be extended to 24hrs to bring it in line with ND and other local authorities across the County.
- Our CSP has representation on the Devon Suicide Prevention Strategic Group. Devon has adopted the Preventing Suicide in England – National Strategy which outlines two principal objectives: to reduce the suicide rate in the general population and to provide better support for those bereaved or affected by suicide.
- CSP representation on the Devon Anti-Slavery Partnership (DASP) and continued contribution to and monitoring of intelligence relating to local modern slavery concerns and practices across both districts. Involvement in partnership action against local businesses implicated in modern slavery practices.
- CSP representation on both the Devon and Torbay Prevent Partnership and the Prevent and Education group, as well as individual representation of both districts on 'Channel panels' on cases within our own communities. Channel is a multi-agency programme which identifies and supports individuals at risk of radicalisation and extremism, and which delivers the strategic aim of the Prevent programme. Having identified an individual at risk, the Channel panel will assess the nature and extent of the risk, and subsequently develop the most appropriate support plan for the individual concerned. The standing inclusion of District Council representatives on this panel is a new requirement.

- We continue to work with our local Devon & Somerset Fire and Rescue Community Safety and Engagement Teams to promote and raise awareness of free Home Fire Safety Visit Programmes to support some of the most vulnerable individuals within our community.
- Police Officers continue to be embedded in North Devon Council Offices, an arrangement unique to when compared with other peninsula CSPs

At The CSP Board Meeting on 9 November 2023 it was agreed that the chairing arrangements of the partnership will change. Responsibility will revert to both Local Authorities after a successful period of police chairmanship by Superintendent Toby Davies. This change brings our CSP in to line with the other Devon partnerships who all have non-police chairs.

Over the last year there have been significant staff changes at both local authorities and the police. These new appointments offer new perspectives to the work of the CSP and will bring fresh impetus to our work.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

The CSP area remains as one of the safest areas in the UK. Crime per head of population remains very low. That said there are still areas within our CSP that experience higher levels of crime and disorder, and themes we are keen to address. The CSP remains committed to work with communities, other partners, and elected members in helping to identify and target those community issues.

The reporting year has seen a significant turnover in Local Authority Community Safety leads- a completely new team within TDC and new faces on the NDDC side too; as well as new Police Community Safety supervisors and officers. That transition did lead to a missed CSP meeting (July 2023) and understandably it has taken a little time for new staff to bed in. The good news is that each area now have community safety staff fully in place, and a clear structure of administration and leadership for the next reporting year.

The North Devon & Torridge Community Safety Partnership remains active and committed to monitoring, supporting, and promoting activities in a wide range of areas that impact on community safety in our districts. This is against a backdrop of dealing with the loss of valuable annual funding from the OPCC and the ever-reducing resources across all agencies as well as managing the changing threats and issues faced by our communities.

However, these challenges empower the partnership to maintain our work in an efficient and effective joined up manner. The CSP provides a basis for this approach, and this is pivotal for community safety across Northern Devon.