

Scrutiny Report for the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee to be held on Monday 13 February 2023

Outline/ Brief:

To consider the effectiveness of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) in improving community safety in Herefordshire, including matters relating to: the latest statistics and trends in local crime; how each of the responsible authorities engages with and contributes resources to the work of the CSP; the effectiveness of leadership and partnership arrangements; how the responsible authorities produce and share key data; how the local community is involved in the work of the CSP; and how the CSP compares to other CSPs in the region and similar areas.

1. Introduction

This is a briefing paper for the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee to be held on Monday 13 February 2023. The paper summarises the strategy and objectives of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership (hereafter referred to as HCSP), Herefordshire crime and offence statistics, and will provide information to address the questions posed by the scrutiny committee.

2. Briefing on Scrutiny Process

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 determines the overarching statutory legislation to Community Safety Partnerships (CSP). Provision for the scrutiny of Community Safety Partnerships sits with the local authority, in Herefordshire that is the Unitary Council.

Crime and Disorder Act 1998

[Chapter 37, Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 5 — Crime & Disorder Act 1998](#)

(a) may require the councils for the local government areas to appoint a“joint crime and disorder committee” and to arrange for crime and disorder scrutiny functions
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For the purposes of the Herefordshire Council and HCSP the Connected Communities Scrutiny Committee delivers the crime and disorder scrutiny function.

NB The CSP scrutiny requirement should not be confused with the Police & Crime Panel which is the Police & Crime Commissioner scrutiny panel, facilitated in West Mercia by Worcestershire County Council. Herefordshire has two Councillor representatives on that Panel.

3. Background to Scrutiny

The General Overview and Scrutiny Committee met in January 2017 to carry out the scrutiny function for Herefordshire. There has not been a crime and disorder scrutiny meeting since; albeit an update from the Police and Crime Commissioner was considered in November 2021 ([link](#)). This is undoubtedly too long since a scrutiny

function was carried out however mitigating factors including a busy scrutiny programme, prior to and post covid 19 pandemic have contributed to the delay. There does not appear to be a mandatory time scale for scrutiny but a requirement to effectively facilitate that requirement. The recommendation is that the next council (May 2023 onwards), the committee, as part of its work programming, allocate scrutiny resources to overview the performance of the HCSP.

4. Briefing Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent related legislation and amendments provides the overarching statutory legalisation for the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership.

The HCSP has five responsible authorities; Herefordshire Council (local authority), West Mercia Police, National Probation Service, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board* (ICB) (*health representative).

The legislation places a duty on the five responsible authorities to form a strategic group and invite other agencies to that group including the Police and Crime Commissioner.

There is a requirement for the HCSP to:

- Undertake and be responsible for preparing and implementing a strategic assessment and Community Safety Partnership plan for Herefordshire.
- Ensure all five of the responsible authorities are represented on the HCSP Board and hold a senior position within their home organisation.
- Invite the elected member responsible for community safety on Herefordshire Council to be a member of the HCSP Board. The Herefordshire Cabinet member responsible for Community Safety is the Chair of the HCSP with the police lead (the Superintendent) for Herefordshire the Vice Chair.
- Have an information-sharing protocol in place, The Herefordshire Overarching Information Sharing Protocol, signed by all responsible authorities.
- The HCSP Board is responsible for the implementation of the partnership plan.
- Take due regard to the policies and strategy of the elected Police and Crime Commissioner for West Mercia.
- The HCSP will commission domestic homicide reviews according to the statutory guidance issued by the Home Office; to review the circumstances in which the death of a person aged 16 or over has, or appears to have, resulted from violence, abuse or neglect.
- Tackle anti-social behaviour (ASB) and protect victims and communities from ASB and in Herefordshire manage and oversee the Community Trigger process.
- Deliver other statutory obligations including having a plan to combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the Herefordshire, and to have a reducing re-offending strategy for Herefordshire.

HCSP seeks to ensure strategic commitment and joint working to achieve reductions in crime and in the fear of crime. The purpose of the Partnership is to promote and exercise a collective responsibility and to evidence a strategic approach towards identified priorities with an emphasis on reducing crime, disorder, antisocial behaviour and its

associated impact on those within the geographical area of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership.

5. Other Relevant and Important Legislation

Over the past few years legislation has been put in place that supports and complements the purpose of the HCSP.

Domestic Abuse Act 2021 – including the requirement for a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board

The publication of the government's **10-year plan to cut drug crime and save lives, 'From harm to hope'** in December 2021 to combating illicit drugs including a requirement to establish a Combatting Drugs Partnership. Which for Herefordshire is a combined collaborative partnership between Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Serious Violence Duty - The 2021 Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Bill has laid out the Serious Violence Duty requiring specified authorities to work together to reduce and prevent serious violence. The Serious Violence Duty will commence in January 2023. There will be a requirement to carry out a serious violence needs assessment, agree a serious violence strategy and in order to comply with the Duty create a new partnership, or use an existing partnership with appropriate modifications, which is the Herefordshire preferred option.

It would be fair to say that with these newly created strategic partnerships, one can see an increasingly complex partnership working environment, especially when one also considers the community safety links with the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership, the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

6. Current HCSP Delegate Listing

Responsible Authorities:

Herefordshire Council – Councillor Ange Tyler, Cabinet Member responsible for Community Safety,

Darryl Freeman Corporate Director, Children and Young People

West Mercia Police – T/ Superintendent Helen Wain, Local Policing Commander, Herefordshire

National Probation Service – George Branch, Head of Probation, Hereford, Shropshire and Telford PDU

Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service - Anna Davidson, Assistant Director: Prevention

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) – Jon Barnes, Chief Transformation and Delivery Officer

Other representatives on the HCSP Board:

West Mercia PCC - Deputy PCC

West Mercia Youth Justice Service – Head of Service

Herefordshire Council CEO

Herefordshire Council Director of Public Health (or deputy)

Herefordshire Council Corporate Director Community Wellbeing (or deputy)

Herefordshire Council – Head of Public Protection

West Mercia PCC – Higher Partnership Analyst

Voluntary and Community Sector Representative - Vennture

Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board - Independent Chair

HCSP Board Meeting Attendance by Key Agency:

CSP Board Meeting Dates	02 March 2022	04 July 2022	07 Sept 2022	02 Dec 2022
Agency Attendance/ Representation				
Herefordshire Council	✓	✓	✓	✓
West Mercia Police	✓	✓	✓	✓
National Probation Service	✓	-	✓	✓
H&W Fire and Rescue	✓	✓	✓	✓
Health (ICB)	-	✓	-	✓
Youth Justice Service	✓	✓	✓	✓
PCC	✓	✓	-	✓

Individual HCSP sub group agency meeting attendance is also good, demonstrating enthusiasm and motivation for sub group activity.

7. Current HCSP Strategy and Priorities

The current Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Strategy is from April 2021 to March 2024. The Strategy accompanies this report see Appendix C.

HCSP has two main strategic priorities to address; Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and to tackle Domestic Abuse in Herefordshire.

8. Violence Against Women and Girls:

This priority was chosen due to concerns over the number of sexual assaults and rapes in Herefordshire as indicated in the 2020 HCSP needs assessment. VAWG was agreed as a HCSP priority, prior to the sad murders of Sarah Everard, Julia James and Sabina Nessa, and the subsequent national focus on misogyny and VAWG. Herefordshire is the first CSP in West Mercia to have VAWG as a strategic priority.

The table below shows the number of VAWG offences across West Mercia

West Mercia VAWG Offences

Offences	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	Offences per 1,000 population
Telford & Wrekin	3,053	2,817	3,685	48 offences per 1,000 population
North Worcestershire	3,494	3,602	4,289	40 offences per 1,000 population
South Worcestershire	3,608	3,450	4,504	32 offences per 1,000 population
Shropshire	3,204	3,037	3,733	30 offences per 1,000 population
Herefordshire	1,830	2,013	2,678	27 offences per 1,000 population

Source: Violence Against Women and Girls West Mercia Problem Profile (Published 01 Sept 2022)

The number of recorded West Mercia police VAWG offences has increased over a three year period in Herefordshire. This replicates increases in all other West Mercia CSP areas. Note, without detailed analysis it is difficult to interpret the data as in some cases the increase in offences may indicate an increase in confidence in reporting VAWG offences.

Across West Mercia half of the offences recorded between April 2021 and March 2022 were reported on the same day of the offence. Just over 25% of the offences were reported no earlier than 28 days after the offence took place. Seventeen percent of the total recorded offences in 2021/22 were reported 6 months or later after the offence took place.

The HCSP Strategy outlined three main actions to complete in the VAWG work stream. See Priority 1 table below.

Safer Streets Funding

The Safer Streets initiative pulling in over £500,000 of external funding has been a success in Herefordshire. The initiative has been driven by West Mercia Police, the voluntary and community sector, VAWG support service providers and Herefordshire Council CCTV. The programme includes the [Time for Change](#) campaign, increased and

improved CCTV coverage and provision, education initiatives in schools, working with the night time economy and clearance of undergrowth and vegetation along footpaths that caused concern for pedestrians especially at night.

The Safer Streets grant application was evidenced by a survey carried out by West Mercia Police and Vennture interviewing women and girls about their concerns for their safety on Hereford streets especially at night time. The survey identified areas in Hereford city where women and girls felt most unsafe, and those results informed the CCTV improvements and improvement to vegetation and sight lines along footpaths. This survey is a strong form of community involvement carried out by the CSP Partners.

Multi-agency partners pulled together to submit a strong evidenced based funding bid to apply for the Home Office funding. It must be acknowledged that the momentum and initiative to apply for the funding was driven by West Mercia Police and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and cannot be directly accredited to the HCSP Board, although the Board strongly supported and continues to support the Safer Streets initiative.

The HCSP Board thanks those agency representatives and volunteers for their time to meet on a fortnightly basis to drive the Safer Streets initiative forward.

Herefordshire Sexual Violence Strategy

The Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Sexual Violence Strategy 2023-2028 is currently in draft in its final consultation stage. The document will be considered at the HCSP Board meeting in March 2023 and once agreed will be published. The strategy was driven by the HCSP Tackling Sexual Violence Sub-group, with the main contributors being West Mercia Rape and Sexual Assault Support Centre, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Commissioning Board, and the Herefordshire Council Public Health Team. The sub group includes many representatives from various agencies and sectors including volunteers.

Working with Herefordshire Women's Equality Group (HWEG)

The HCSP Board saw the benefit of working with Herefordshire Women's Equality Group (HWEG) as a critical friend, consulting with them and responding to feedback around Herefordshire's response to VAWG. A number of HWEG individuals have worked with the Tackling Sexual Violence sub-group, volunteered to sit on the Safer Streets steering group, commented and input into the draft Sexual Violence Strategy and provided challenges to the Partnership and single agencies. The HCSP Board is grateful for the time volunteered by these individuals.

Priority 1. Violence against women and girls

Where we want to be	How we will do it	By when	Lead Agency
Continued spend of Safer Street funding	By completing agreed activity included in the bid	April 2022 Completed for Safer Streets 3	West Mercia Police
Tackling violence against women and girls and sexual violence in the county by following a Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for Herefordshire	The Tackling Sexual Violence Delivery Group will develop a Sexual Violence Strategy and, follow an agreed workplan.	September 2022 Strategy due to be agreed March 2023	Herefordshire Council Public Health
Provide a platform for women and girls to be heard	Working with Herefordshire Women's Equality Group (HWEG) as a critical friend, consulting with them and responding to feedback.	April 2023 Completed and on-going	Herefordshire Council

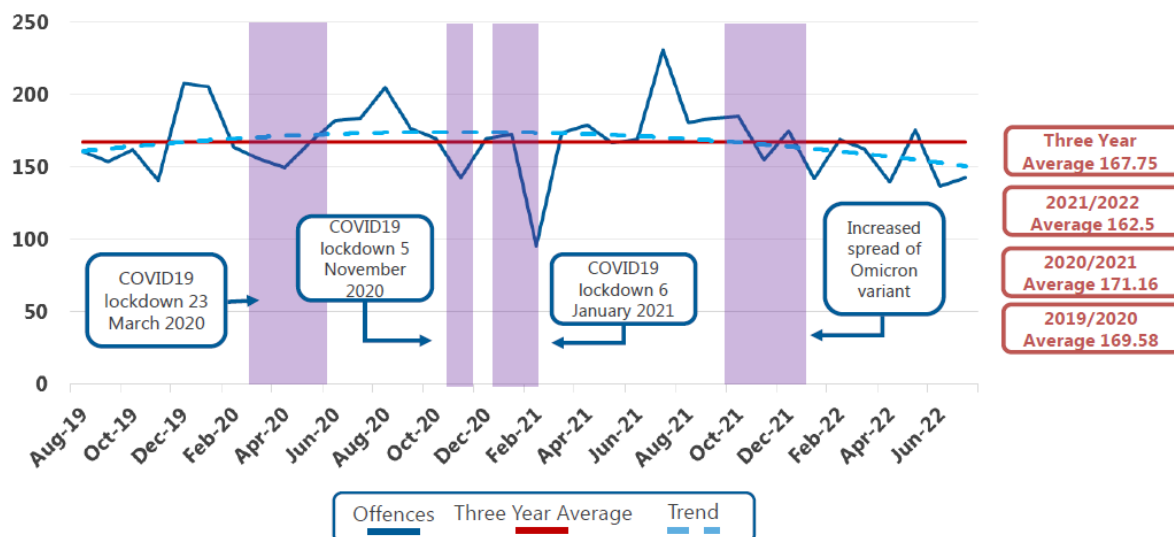
9. Tackling Domestic Abuse in Herefordshire

Domestic Abuse (DA) has been a longstanding priority for the HCSP. Domestic abuse is a national concern and no worse in Herefordshire than elsewhere.

The Herefordshire Community Safety Domestic Abuse Thematic Overview published in September 2022 by the OPCC analysts for the Herefordshire CSP provides police data on domestic abuse in the county. Domestic abuse is recorded by the police by recording the offence. For example, the offence may be; violence with injury, violence without injury, and stalking and harassment. Each offence for domestic abuse will have a domestic abuse marker which enables West Mercia Police to chart DA offences.

The table below outlines the recorded offences for Herefordshire with domestic abuse markers over a three year period. The analysts has helpfully indicated the periods of covid lockdown and the impact.

Recorded offences with domestic abuse markers between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2022



The impact of domestic abuse on children is significant. The Herefordshire Community Safety Domestic Abuse Thematic Overview (September 2022) states,

“597 children recorded with a role of witness, involved party or victim of domestic abuse (crimes and incidents) were linked to 360 domestic abuse offences and crimed incidents between 1 May and 31 July 2022”.

A Change in Structure from 2021 to Tackle Domestic Abuse

Following the DA Act 2021 there is now a requirement for a Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board in Herefordshire, which is separate from the HCSP, and managed by the Herefordshire Council Community Wellbeing Directorate. The DA Strategic Partnership is a joint commissioning body commissioning support for victims and their family, providing housing support, and interventions for perpetrators of domestic abuse. Funding for interventions is provided by Herefordshire Council, central Government, and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner.

Whilst the Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board is the multi-agency strategic driver to tackle domestic abuse; tackling domestic abuse also remains a strategic priority for the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership and the CSP sub group, (now called DA Operations group) has provided a number of interventions.

The HCSP with safeguarding partners have provided multi-agency domestic abuse awareness and training courses (offering 19 courses in this financial year), run a very successful White Ribbon domestic abuse campaign including a conference attended by 186 delegates, and has continued to monitor the effectiveness of MARAC. MARAC is a multi-agency risk assessment case conference meeting held twice a month to review high risk cases of domestic abuse to keep safe the victim(s).

The Priority 2 Domestic abuse table below identifies the main strategic objectives for the CSP as outlined in the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Strategy from April 2021 to March 2024.

Priority 2. Domestic Abuse

Where we want to be	How we will do it	By when	Lead Agency
Herefordshire must implement and align to the new Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Establish the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership	Dec 2021 Completed	Herefordshire Council & West Mercia Police
	Produce a needs analysis	Dec 2021 Completed	
	Refresh the Domestic Abuse Strategy	March 22 On track	
	Ensure that the workplan is delivered	March 24 Revised workplan on going	
We must ensure that we are strategically aligned across other Partnership Boards, including the Domestic Abuse Local Strategic Partnership, Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board, the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Herefordshire Health and Wellbeing Board	Robust reporting to strategic boards on the progress of Domestic Abuse, strategy, interventions and initiatives.	March 2024 On track	West Mercia Police

10. Further Strategic Objectives

In addition to the two main CSP priorities the statutory responsibilities for the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership remain in place.

For each statutory responsibility the HCSP identified specific objectives.

a) Work towards reducing crime and disorder in the area, including anti-social behaviour (ASB). This is being delivered across multiple sub-groups of the HCSP. Objectives are to:

- Promote Community Cohesion to address anti-social behaviour, hate crime and to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism
- Tackle Serious Organised Crime and the harm that it causes

b) Combat the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances in the area. This is being primarily delivered through the Substance Misuse work stream. Objectives are to:

- Bring to justice those that supply illegal drugs and counterfeit goods and support them to change their behaviour
- Raise awareness of the harm caused by substance misuse and provide support for those that need help

c) Reduce re-offending in the area, primarily delivered by the Reducing Re-offending work stream. Objectives are to:

- Support partners to effectively work together to reduce offending
- Deliver a local response to local problems and
- Remain publicly accountable to reduce re-offending

In addition, the HCSP has overall responsibility for commissioning Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) in Herefordshire. There are 9 DHRs that have either been completed or are in the process of being completed since the DHR legislation was introduced in 2013.

The HCSP facilitates the processing of Community Triggers, sometimes referred to as ASB case reviews. In the financial years 2020/21 nine Triggers were submitted, 2021/22 five Triggers submitted, and during this current year 22/23 nine Triggers have been submitted up to the end of December 2022. Working alongside Herefordshire Council, the Community Trigger process is currently being reviewed and demand placed on resources highlighted as more triggers are being submitted.

The HCSP meeting structure outlines all the meeting groups and work streams, some of which are supported by individual agencies, for example the Probation Service supports the reducing re-offending work stream, and Herefordshire Council, Children and Young People Directorate, facilitates the Prevent agenda and Chanel Panel.

11. A New Strategy for 2024 to 2027

Work will commence this calendar year to draft a new HCSP Strategy for 2024 – 2027. It is anticipated the new draft HCSP strategy will be agreed at the 22 December 2023 Board Meeting and published in March 2024.

12. HCSP Meeting Structure

See Appendix D

13. HCSP Statistics and Comparative Data

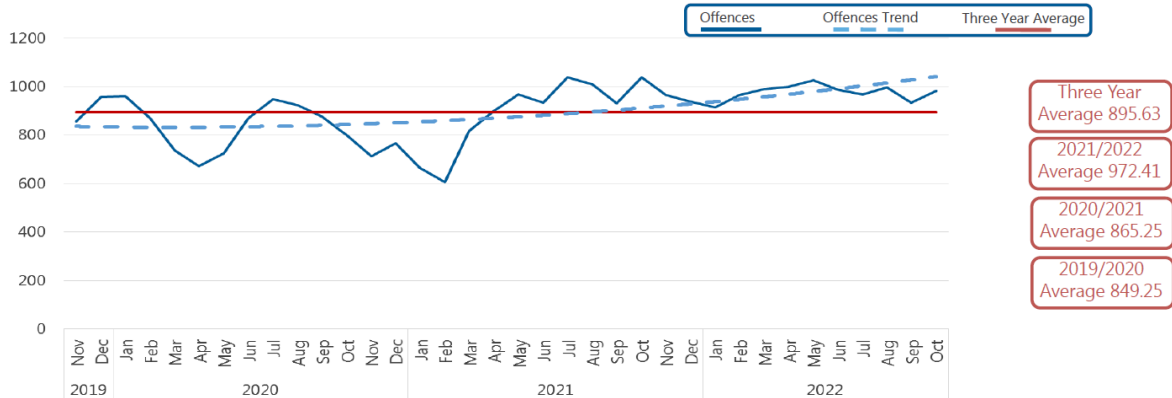
Data is provided earlier in this document during the discussion concerning the two HCSP Strategic Priorities – VAWG and DA.

All Crime

The Chart below lists all crime trends in Herefordshire. Offences have been increasing since the lifting of COVID-19 lockdown measures, however, offences are starting to exceed pre-COVID levels and are continuing to increase. From March 2021, offences have remained above the three year average.

All Crime Trends

Offences committed in Herefordshire between 1 August 2019 and 31 July 2022



Data source Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership All Crime Overview - 01 November 2019 to 31 October 2022 published December 2022.

Comparative Data

The table below depicts West Mercia Police data, indicating the Local Policing Area offence levels for 2022 from April to December 2022.

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The table below shows data taken from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) website providing some comparative CSP data. The data can be found at the following link: [Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk/recorded-crime-data-by-community-safety-partnership-area)

The table below depicts:

- 1) Community Safety Partnerships: the number of recorded crimes for headline offences, year ending September 2022 (Column B)

and the

2) Community Safety Partnerships: Recorded crime rate per 1,000 population for headline offences, year ending September 2022 (Column C)

The table includes data for comparison from Herefordshire, the other West Mercia CSPs, the author has chosen four other community safety partnerships for comparison that may be regarded as ‘similar’ to Herefordshire* (*no methodology was used to select those ‘similar’ community safety partnerships).

Readers can view the whole table and select similar comparators using the link [Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](#) the website also provides data on crimes by category for each CSP.

Recorded crime rate for headline offences by Community Safety Partnership area, year ending September 2022

Police Force Area Name	Community Safety Partnership Name	Population figures (mid-2020) - rounded to 100	Total Recorded Crime (excluding Fraud)	Total Recorded Crime (excluding Fraud) per 1,000 population
Column		A	B	C
West Mercia	Herefordshire	193,600	12,382	64
Wiltshire	Wiltshire	504,100	25,751	51
Suffolk	West Suffolk	177,300	12,375	70
Norfolk	King's Lynn and West Norfolk	151,200	10,570	70
Devon and Cornwall	S. Devon and Dartmoor	279,100	11,162	40
West Mercia	Telford & Wrekin	181,300	17,568	97
West Mercia	North Worcestershire	287,300	21,358	74
West Mercia	South Worcestershire	310,800	23,240	75
West Mercia	Shropshire	325,400	18,518	57

Source: ONS Dataset - Recorded crime data by Community Safety Partnership area

14. Funding

The Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership does not have a dedicated operational budget. An annual Community Safety Partnership grant is allocated to Herefordshire by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner. The allocation for 2022/23 is £100,666, with £37,700 ‘top sliced’ for partnership activity; partnership analyst resource, funding for the integrated offender management programme, hate crime initiatives, and the CrimeStoppers programme. The balance £62,966 is allocated by the HCSP to projects to achieve strategic objectives including; domestic abuse training and support for victims, child exploitation awareness interventions, funding for the homelessness winter shelter provision, and the DISC night time economy initiative.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner also commissions numerous interventions for Herefordshire that are commissioned centrally from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. A breakdown of the commissioned activity can be found at [Herefordshire - West Mercia Police Crime Commissioner \(westmercia-pcc.gov.uk\)](#)

No specific dedicated external funding supports Community Safety Partnership posts or support function. Single part time officer support is allocated from the Herefordshire Council Partnership Team to support the HCSP activity. The Partnership Team also supports the Herefordshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the Herefordshire Safeguarding Children Partnership which is a jointly funded team financed by contributions from Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police and the Integrated Care Board (health sector).

Partner agencies fund their own activity from their core budget that contributes to the objectives of the HCSP. For example, Anna Davidson, Assistant Director for Prevention, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service (HWFRS) highlights the work of HWRRS to Herefordshire residents.

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service is one of the five Statutory Members of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership, engaging and working collaboratively to address crime and disorder in a local area from a multi-agency perspective.

The Fire Authority publishes a Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP) every five years and this is our overall strategy for helping to keep the community and the environment safe from fire and other emergencies. The Prevention Strategy drives everything we do, and underpins our mission of delivering high quality and sustainable services to our communities.

Our prevention work aims to support our communities to stay safe and well in their homes, on the roads and in the wider environment. Attendance at CSP meetings is therefore vital to inform local activity and preventative work. Members of the HWFRS Prevention Team specifically focus on juvenile fire setter interventions. This scheme aims to change the behaviour of young people who engage in anti-social activities and fire setting.

HWFRS also focuses on signposting and referring people to partner agencies as required and supporting valued partners in delivering community safety messages. HWFRS are part of the Signposting service which brings support to thousands of people, helping them to lead a safer and more independent life. The scheme works by providing a referral network so that staff working for participating organisations can alert other partners in the scheme about concerns or issues they have identified when visiting people as part of their work.

We use our prevention activities to help to reduce risk in our communities and to increase safety awareness and education to ensure a greater understanding of risks. All priorities identified in the HWFRS Prevention Strategy aim to involve and support the local community.

15. Leadership, Effectiveness and Partnership Arrangements

The Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership is traditionally chaired by the Herefordshire Council Cabinet Member for Community Safety. The Vice Chair is the Superintendent responsible for Policing in Herefordshire. Chairs of sub groups can be

Board members or delegated officers from various organisations with a specialism in the subject content.

The Board meets quarterly and sub groups generally meet on alternate months of the year. Each sub group has a work plan. The two CSP priority work streams (Domestic abuse and violence against women and girls) report to the Board quarterly and other sub groups by exception/ highlight reports.

This paper highlights the good work of the partnership, but it is appropriate to reflect that the Board often considers the impact it is having on keeping the Herefordshire community safe and free from crime. What added value are the Board and sub groups bringing to the work of the CSP? This is a challenge which is very difficult to measure. The Board and sub groups may consider moving away from strategic oversight and address specific challenges from a multi-agency perspective for example to tackle specific issues or local area problems highlighted in the Board's quarterly analytical report. But at the same time there are specific strategic requirements that need high level attention.

The Serious Violence Duty placed on Herefordshire, being phased in during 2023, requires the CSP (as the nominated lead) to carry out a needs analysis, produce a serious violence strategy, an annual workplan and to actively measure the impact interventions are having to tackle serious violence. This will focus the work of the Board as the intention in Herefordshire is to use existing structures and groups to deliver the serious violence duty.

The HCSP is aware that the Home Office intends to carry out a review of community safety partnerships with the aim of improving their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, and assessing their position within the wider landscape of local partnerships across England and Wales. It is reported that the LGA's National Community Safety Partnerships Event on the 14 December 2022 focused on promoting evidence-based practice and in particular implementing the Serious Violence Duty.

As conveyed from the meeting, there were key messages provided by the Crime Strategy Lead at the Home Office, who is leading on the CSP review:

The Home Office acknowledges that strong local partnerships are key to reducing crime and disorder but that the CSP landscape has been largely untouched for some time. The Home Office has not yet been able to progress the CSP review but they have identified the key themes for the review.

These are:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Accountability
- Data sharing
- The role of CSPs in tackling anti-social behaviour (identified as a particular area of interest)

16. Board Member Reflections

Board members have been invited to submit for this report their own reflections on the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership.

“As a member of the Community Safety Partnership it is extremely useful to understand how we can support and promote community safety and togetherness. The Partnership strive to regularly self-reflect and review our effectiveness to ensure we continue to help improve the safety and well-being of residents and visitors to the county.”

Anna Davidson, Assistant Director – Prevention, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Over the last 3.5 years, the HCSP has met quarterly. For the majority of this time meetings have been via MS Teams due to Covid restrictions. As we know there are 5 partners to protect communities against Crime & Disorder and as Cabinet Member for Housing, Regulatory Services & Community Safety, I Chair the Partnership.

It goes without saying, partnership working has been difficult due to limitations of resource and sharing analytical data to provide an overview of what is happening within our communities. At present, the quarterly review is predominately Police data and is written by the data analysts provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Partnership Team has struggled, due to stretched resources within the unit, to provide support to the HCSP alongside providing services to cover the two Herefordshire Safeguarding Boards.

There are two priorities for the HCSP, firstly tackling Domestic Abuse and secondly to address Violence Against Women & Girls. The Safer Streets initiative has been instrumental to help move forward the VAWG agenda, due to the resources and drive of West Mercia Police. This Safer Streets campaign has been hugely effective in highlighting how women & girls feel safe within their environment as well as helping the partnership deliver against this priority.

I believe the Partnership is growing with the renewed commitment of engagement, however, the limited resource within the Partnership Team and difficulties of collecting data will affect the Partnership. The HCSP can only be effective with greater collaboration and resource to help reduce Crime & Disorder for Herefordshire.

Cllr Tyler, Chair of HCSP Assessment of Effectiveness of HCSP

17. Data Sharing

The Overarching Information Sharing Protocol for Herefordshire and safeguarding and crime and disorder legislation enables information sharing to take place between agencies to protect individuals and prevent crime and disorder.

The numerous products and reports provided by the Police and Crime Commissioner Partnership Analysts based at West Mercia Police Headquarters are good and delivered

in a timely manner. However, most of the data provided in the reports is police data only. This is a challenge the CSP has to overcome and undermines the potential value of the strategic analytical reports.

Specific case information is shared between individual agencies across the CSP and safeguarding partnerships.

18. Working with the Community

There are some excellent pieces of work where the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership has engaged with the community. Of note, is the excellent consultation exercise to gain information to support Herefordshire's bid for Safer Streets funding. West Mercia Police colleagues and volunteers from Vennture (charity) carried out interviews with women and girls asking where they least felt safe? Identifying both the locations and the times they felt unsafe. This information has been used to inform changes to vegetation in the city to improve sight lines, upgrades to the CCTV coverage, and to inform police officer and volunteer (Street Pastor and similar) patrols in the city.

The Chief Executive of Vennture sits on the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership Board as the community and voluntary sector representative.

Herefordshire Womens Equality Group (HWEG) have also been a key organisation to champion and move forward Safer Streets, this group also sits on the Sexual Violence sub group and both supports and scrutinises the VAWG priority work stream. HWEG positively contributed to the draft Herefordshire Sexual Violence Strategy.

Nevertheless, the HCSP recognises that during the evidence gathering approach to produce the CSP Strategic Assessment and Strategy, the views of the community have not been gathered. Resources are not available to complete Partnership surveys and information gathering to gain the views of Herefordshire people on how safe they feel and what concerns them the most?

19. Moving Forward

HCSP will work to improve Board member knowledge and understanding, and improve accountability through attendance, actions and tasking. It is recognised that there is a positive appetite for partnership working, however, the pressures on resources are significant and we must understand the gaps and how these impact on timescales and outcomes. It should also be noted that the CSP is a partnership and not a resource.

Further engagement of non-statutory partners will be actively encouraged to further inform and strengthen the partnership work to reduce crime and disorder.

We will continue to work with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) to ensure projects initiated locally and centrally work well together and that the local needs, delivery considerations and priorities are considered to ensure an understanding of the unique issues facing the CSP.

Work has begun through attendance at ASB taskforce meetings and feedback to the PCC grants process. We will seek to engage with the projects that have secured funding to ensure the work compliments our priorities.

We will contribute to the government CSP review with our experiences of challenges and successes.

The Partnership has recently established a new webpage and there is much scope to use digital communications technology to spread awareness of community safety issues and key CSP messages.

The HCSP will continue to monitor crime levels in Herefordshire, especially the apparent trend that crime is exceeding pre covid levels. Covid has provided such a skew on crime data, the long term trend may have to be followed closely. The cost-of-living crisis may lead to an increase in deprivation and possibly crime. The Partnership will look to consider the impact of this on our communities and ensure that work continues to provide reassurance and increase feelings of safety to those who reside, work and visit our areas.

20. Conclusion

This is a lengthy report outlining the structure of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership, the rationale for the scrutiny process, the strategic objectives of the Partnership, and the effectiveness of the CSP. The document has followed the brief given to the CSP by the Scrutiny Committee.

HCSP has achieved a great deal over the past 12 months and is ahead of others in delivering the Serious Violence Duty and identifying that tackling violence against women and girls is a key strategic priority. Tackling domestic abuse is everyone's responsibility in particular educating Herefordshire residents, including children and young people, that abusive and controlling behaviour is not acceptable.

There are challenges facing the Partnership, most notably evidencing the impact of the HCSP and putting in place effective working with stretched and reduced resources. The Partnership welcomes the Home Office review of CSPs in particular an appreciation of how the Partnership fits within an increasingly complex Partnership structure.

The Chair of Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership, Councillor Ange Tyler, would like to thank members of the HCSP Board, colleagues from all agencies and volunteers for their efforts over the past year to deliver the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership strategy and interventions.