



City Management and Public Protection Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	January 2020
Classification:	General Release
Title:	The Safer Westminster Partnership
Report of:	Sara Sutton
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Public Protection and Licensing
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Community Safety
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1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Scrutiny Committee with an overview of the Safer Westminster Partnership, key findings from the annual strategic assessment and highlighting some examples of best practice and the challenges faced.

2 Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 Committee to discuss with Councillor Adams, what issues should be considered in the Safer Westminster Partnership 2020/23 Strategy.

3 Community Safety Partnership

- 3.1 Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) were set up under Sections 5-7 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and are made up of representatives from the 'responsible authorities' which are:
- Police Service (Metropolitan Police Service);
 - Police & Crime Commissioner (Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime or MOPAC);
 - Local Authority (Westminster City Council);
 - Fire and Rescue Service (London Fire Brigade);
 - Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG);
 - National Probation Service (NPS) and
 - Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC).
- 3.2 The Police and Justice Act (2006) brought in new statutory requirements for CSPs and have been updated by subsequent legislation until the Crime and Disorder Regulations 2011. These include the duties;
- Produce yearly Strategic Assessments and partnership plans;

- Share information and have an Information Sharing Protocol;
- Report on work and progress on a yearly basis;
- Formulate and implement a strategy to reduce reoffending;
- Conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews in relation to incidents of domestic homicide.

3.3 In Westminster the Community Safety Partnership is called the Safer Westminster Partnership and its aim is to ensure the responsible authorities work together to create strategies and practical interventions to reduce crime and disorder in Westminster.

3.4 The Safer Westminster Partnership is chaired by Helen Harper the Borough Commander for Central West area and meets two to three times per year.

4 Strategic Assessment and partnership plans

4.1 A strategic assessment is produced annually as a requirement of the Police and Justice Act 2006 on behalf of the responsible authorities for the Safer Westminster Partnership. The latest Strategic Assessment was produced in September 2019 a copy of which is attached in the Background Papers.

4.2 The Strategic Assessment is the evidence base for the partnership and aims to identify the key crime and anti-social behaviour issues affecting the borough and to make recommendations on SWP priorities for the following year.

4.3 The 2019 Strategic Assessment will be used as the evidence base for the forthcoming 2020/23 Safer Westminster Partnership strategy.

4.4 Below details some of the new and emerging findings from the Strategic Assessment. This covers the period July 2018 to June 2019.

4.5 Crime continues to rise in Westminster (28%) at a greater rate than across London (6%). A third of the increase in crime across the Metropolitan Police Service, was a result of increasing crime in Westminster. Whilst crime levels increase, detection levels continue to decline. Only 5.9% of crimes in Westminster were 'solved' over this review period. Despite this, public confidence and feelings of safety remain very high.

4.6 The West End and St James's wards are not just the hotspots of crime and disorder for Westminster, but across London. The concentration of crime in this area has increased considerably over the last year. 41% of all recorded crime in Westminster is located within just 4 of the 128 Lower Super Output Areas¹.

4.7 Previous victimisation is the single best predictor of future victimisation than any other characteristic of crime. Over half of the victims in Westminster are not residents and they are less likely to be repeat victims of crime, than borough residents. Of particular concern are vulnerable older residents, who are more likely to experience financial and physical abuse and proportionally more likely to be repeat victims of crime.

4.8 The number of offenders residing in the borough is decreasing at a much greater rate than the rest of London, despite a steadily increasing population and increasing crime levels. Despite this reduction in offenders, those that remain and reoffend are responsible for a considerable proportion of crime. In particular older adult male offenders, who have one of the highest re-offending rates across London.

4.9 Drugs and alcohol are two of the key drivers of crime and disorder. Individuals dependent on opioids and/or crack cocaine are responsible for an estimated 45% of acquisitive crime and

¹ Lower Super Output Areas are a geography containing approximately 1,500 residents.

around 40% of all violent crime is alcohol related. Illicit drug supply has been identified as one of the factors linked to levels of serious violence, particularly in relation to competition for the control of drug supply markets. Getting people into treatment and preventing people from becoming drug users in the first place needs to be the SWP key approach.

- 4.10 Copious research exists on the risk and protective factors, that are flags or signals of involvement in crime and youth violence. Overall, Westminster has lower risk and protective factors than across London. However, there are pockets of risk, correlated with the most deprived wards of the borough, which is evidenced by the volume of Youth Offending Service and Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit clients who reside there.
- 4.11 The majority of violent crime in Westminster is not perpetrated by young people. Only 16% of those accused of serious violent crimes were aged up to 24 years. 38% of the young accused were resident's and half of the victims.
- 4.12 Knife crime is often associated with being perpetrated by young people. However, we have no data to understand the volumes of young people involved in the borough, only in relation to the age of victims. It is also assumed to involve injury, yet 82% of all recorded knife crime in Westminster last year did not involve injury.
- 4.13 Whilst it is important to focus on high harm crimes, we can't ignore the rapidly increasing levels of theft in the borough. Theft is the most frequent precursor crime for juvenile offenders and theft offenders have the highest recidivism levels. The sheer volume of offences, very low detection rates and escalating costs to the partnership means it is drawing partnership resources away from dealing with more serious and high harm crimes.
- 4.14 Over the last 12 months, there has been an increase in support for extreme right wing or identarian groups, nationally and to an extent locally. The threat from the extreme right wing in London, is predominantly in the form of public order, which Westminster is a focal point for demonstrations. Events and the number of people attending has increased and this trend is anticipated to continue over the next 12 months.
- 4.15 A workshop is being held on 29th January for partners to help develop the 2020/23 Safer Westminster Partnership strategy. The strategy will be presented to the Safer Westminster Partnership on April 29th for approval.

5 Key Deliverables

- 5.1 Reviewing the risk and protective factors that put someone at increased risk of being involved in crime and youth violence identified Church Street as the most high-risk area of the borough. The Serious Youth Violence Task Group is prioritising Church Street ward to pilot a public health approach to serious youth violence, with a view to taking these lessons and seeing what can be adapted on a wider scale across Westminster.
- 5.2 Youth clubs, schools and local voluntary sector organisations will work together to deliver a programme of activity to work with young people in years 5 and 6 in primary schools in the Church Street area. The project will engage not just young people but also their families. Positive diversionary activities will not only keep young people safe and off the streets, but they will focus on building resilience and maintaining their health and wellbeing.
- 5.3 A parenting toolkit has been produced and provides a glossary of facts, practical advice to look for signs of your child's involvement in youth violence, as well as tips on how to speak to your child and how you can seek further help or support. It is being circulated to parenting groups, libraries, GP surgeries, youth clubs, Family Hub, other voluntary sector groups, business owners and supermarkets in the local area. Other boroughs have expressed an interest in replicating the booklet for their own areas.

- 5.4 A Serious Youth Violence Community Engagement officer was recruited in July and has been very pro-active in the first four months. She has worked with 9 community groups delivering to over 200 parents, delivered 4 training sessions on capacity building for community representatives, held 1 community against knife crime event attended by over 90 people and begun working with schools. Many more sessions are planned over the next few months, along with the development of a joint Community Safety Community Engagement Strategy.
- 5.5 £200k for this financial year and the same for 2020/21 has been granted from MOPAC to further develop our work to tackle youth violence. It has been proposed to uplift and add to existing projects working with young people to prevent and reduce violence this year and in 2020/21 expand the work of the Integrated Gangs and Exploitation Unit (IGXU) as well as develop new initiatives, such as Serious Youth Violence training offer for schools.
- 5.6 A joint vulnerable adult's task and finish group with the Safeguarding Adults Executive Group has been set up with key partners to address the increased victimisation risk older residents face, in particular to becoming victims of financial abuse. The groups will initially focus on gaining a greater understanding of those who are most at risk of financial abuse/scams, cuckooing and at risk within supported living environments.
- 5.7 The Integrated Offender Management (IOM) team work with high recidivist offenders in the borough to reduce their re-offending. Quantitative evidence has shown that the cost of crime and number of offences has decreased after involvement with the IOM and the interval between offending has increased. Evidence on 65 offenders worked with since April 2017 is estimated to have made over £1m in savings by preventing reoffending.
- 5.8 Contracts for specialist services to support victims of domestic violence and abuse expire in March 2020 and officers are in the process of re-commissioning these services across Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea and Hammersmith and Fulham. This will include specialist front line support to victims and a coordination service to manage the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) working with high risk victims of domestic abuse and the Dedicated Domestic Violence Count at Westminster Magistrates Court.
- 5.9 The Prevent Team successfully applied to the Home Office for the largest funding pot, across both staff and projects, that Westminster has ever received. A range of Prevent projects have been commissioned for this financial year, working with educational institutions, parents and young people.

6 Challenges

- 6.1 Crime is increasing at a much greater rate in Westminster than across the Metropolitan Police Service, particularly in a small area of the West End. Following the police Borough Command Unit merger, there are over 200 fewer officers working in the Neighbourhood teams. The council has lobbied for a reversal of these cuts.
- 6.2 65% of those accused of crime in Westminster were not residents and 33% were foreign nationals. Most services are available only to residents only, making it difficult to successfully reduce reoffending in the borough. To successfully reduce crime levels in Westminster, we need a strategy that encompasses a focus on both cross-border offending and foreign national offenders.
- 6.3 With the increased government scrutiny on violent crime has come funding opportunities. These are sporadic and often at very short notice and usually limited to a maximum of two years. This makes commissioning sustainable provision challenging. Funding is often limited to just tackling violent crime meaning other borough priorities attract little funding.

- 6.4 A key risk in our response to counter terrorism is the capacity to respond to the increasing demands and risks. Robust plans and agreement on priorities and coordination of partnership response are key to ensure demands are met.
- 6.5 At present Offender Management is carried out either by the National Probation Service or by the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). From April 2021 Offender Management will be unified within the National Probation Service (NPS). The contracts nationally awarded to the CRCs will terminate. Unpaid work and accredited programme work will be tendered within the private sector and new providers will be engaged to provide these services across the country.
- 6.6 The unification will be a major undertaking, at least as significant as the split in 2014. Across the country the CRCs have introduced different hierarchies and pay structures, and some have moved to newer and more innovative IT systems. All of this will have to be consolidated under one NPS structure. It is likely that existing NPS structures will prevail but resolving the issues associated with this is going to be challenging and time consuming.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Report Author 07971024133
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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Safer Westminster Partnership Strategic Assessment 2019



Safer Westminster
Partnership Strategic