



Creating a safer
Cambridgeshire

To: Business Coordination Board

From: Chief Constable

Date: 11 June 2019

SERIOUS VIOLENCE STRATEGY

1. Purpose

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Business Coordination Board (the “Board”) on progress that Cambridgeshire Constabulary (the “Constabulary”) is taking to reduce serious violent crime in line with HM Government’s Serious Violence Strategy.

2. Recommendation

2.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents of this report.

3. Background

3.1 There has been an upsurge in offending levels at a local, regional and national level. Analysis shows that the national spike in serious violent crime is fuelled by gangs and drugs markets. Here, there is an increased propensity for perpetrators to carry weapons and the use of or threat of violence is inherent.

3.2 The national trend is replicated locally with the link between violence and County Line Drug Dealing seen to be significant.

3.3 Following Government funding of £3.6 million, the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre was established in September 2018 and is working closely with the Constabulary as well as the Eastern Region Specialist Operations Unit. The Co-ordination centre has provided analytical products that identify how metropolitan based crime groups are targeting towns and cities across the UK. The findings have been interesting and it is apparent that drug markets vary across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

- 3.4 Despite there being demand for Class A drugs in Peterborough, dealers tend to be home grown” and the impact of County Line groups is limited. The opposite is seen in Cambridge, St Neots and Huntingdon where out of town dealers dominate the market. Indeed, Cambridge is one of the highest receivers of County Line groups in the whole Country.
- 3.5 Whilst fatalities in the County have been low, there is evidence that weapon carrying is on the increase. Gun crime remains extremely rare in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, but hospital admissions data shows record numbers of patients being admitted for injuries caused by bladed weapons. Schools, youth workers and parents have seen an increase in pupils considering arming themselves “for protection”.

4. Adoption of national strategy through a partnership approach

- 4.1 A new national strategy was launched by the Home Secretary in April 2018. There is an expectation from Government that the local approach should mirror the national position. The emphasis is that all agencies need to work together and there is not one “owner”.
- 4.2 Strong emphasis is placed on the need for a Public Health approach where co-ordinated early intervention is the focus rather than simply addressing the cure.
- 4.3 Much of the Strategy is developed around the evidence base developed in Scotland where knife related violence has seen significant reductions over a sustained period by utilising this approach.
- 4.4 The National Strategy identifies four key pillars. Work is ongoing to develop each of these areas within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

County Lines and Drugs Markets –

At a local level, Crack Cocaine markets have strong correlations to serious violent crime. Crack cocaine purity has doubled since 2014 and evidence suggests increase usage of 18% in the Eastern Region. As a result of increased demand (and saturated markets in inner city areas) new suppliers have emerged from outside the County. Worryingly, there has been recent violence linked to cannabis markets, with territorial disputes between local dealers (often in the 15-17 year old age group).

Early Intervention and Prevention

Evidence shows that targeted interventions for high risk individuals is effective at reducing serious violence. Rather than universal intervention, targeted intervention will be the main driver in this area. This will aim to reduce weapons possession as well as preventing young people becoming victims of criminal exploitation.

Supporting Communities and Local Partnerships

National funding is available to CSPs and Police and Crime Commissioners to provide joined up reduction initiatives. The Constabulary is working closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner to identify funding streams to achieve long term reductions.

Effective Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice resolution –

Specific focus is required to support the victims’ strategy and work with criminal justice partners to increase willingness of victims to engage. Pro-active investigations will be launched into those established and emerging groups who are carrying weapons.

- 4.5 The main weakness that has been identified in the National Strategy is the lack of co-ordination between stakeholders. A Home Office consultation closed on 28th May 2019 where interested parties were asked for representations around creating a legal duty to support a multi-agency approach to tackle serious violence. The Constabulary shares the view of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners that more can be done to harness multi-agency effort and a legal duty to work together could bring benefits.

5 Development of Countywide Delivery Group

- 5.1 The Police and Crime Commissioner chaired the Strategic Countywide Community Safety Board on 10th April 2019. It was agreed that Partnership accountability was a potential gap. This was not unique to Cambridgeshire and has been replicated across the Country. Ahead of any legislative change, the local approach aims to ensure strong focus from all agencies, ensuring clarity of expectation. There is also a need for a mechanism to hold to account.
- 5.2 Therefore, through the Countywide Strategic Community Safety Board, a new Serious Street Based Violence Delivery Board has been created. This will be jointly chaired by the Police Strategic Lead and a Community Safety Partnership chair (on behalf of all six Partnerships). This is seen as a progressive approach.
- 5.3 The joint chairs will be Debbie Kaye (Cambridge CSP) and Jon Hutchinson (Police Superintendent).
- 5.4 A planning day has been arranged for 21st June 2019 where key stakeholders will discuss the issues and develop a plan. This will be the start of the Delivery Board and identify who should attend and frequency.
- 5.5 The Delivery Board will report back to the Strategic Countywide Community Safety Board.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 The Board is recommended to note the contents.

Contact Officer	Supt Jon Hutchinson, Cambridgeshire Constabulary
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