



Report of Alan Patrickson, Corporate Director of Neighbourhoods and Climate Change, Durham County Council

Councillor John Shuttleworth, Cabinet Portfolio for Rural Communities and Highways

Electoral divisions affected:

Countywide

Purpose of the Report

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the County Council with the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy (SDPS) 2024-29 following public consultation. The final plan is attached as Appendix 2.

Executive summary

- 2 Section 6 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires the responsible authorities (commonly referred to collectively as a Community Safety Partnership (CSP)) in a local government area to work together in formulating and implementing strategies to tackle local crime and disorder in the area.
- 3 Under the Police and Justice Act 2006, CSPs are duty-bound to 'provide evidence-based data to support CSPs in their planning and duties'. It is a statutory obligation for CSPs to produce or procure an annual localised Strategic Assessment providing a strategic evidence base that identifies future priorities for the partnership.
- 4 In County Durham, the CSP is the Safe Durham Partnership (SDP) which has the responsibility for delivering the SDP Strategy, which is informed by Durham Insight as our strategic assessment.
- 5 The streamlined SDP Strategy outlines the SDP ambition, that '**Durham is a county where everyone can feel and be safe**'.
- 6 The Safe Durham Partnership Strategy has the following "umbrella themes" which recognise the work done by the whole community safety partnership arena. These themes are then broken down into an area of focus and areas of assurance.

- **Anti-social behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities.**
 - Area of focus: anti-social behaviour
 - Areas of assurance: reducing reoffending, road safety
- **Hate crime and building community cohesion.**
 - Area of focus: hate crime
 - Area of assurance: counter terrorism
- **Sexual violence and other violent crime**
 - Area of focus: sexual violence
 - Areas of assurance: serious violence, domestic abuse, combatting drugs and alcohol, organised crime

7 For each area of focus there are specific goals we want to achieve:

- **Anti-social behaviour**
 - Increased public confidence to report ASB.
 - A coordinated and efficient multi-agency partnership approach to ASB.
 - Effective pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.
- **Hate crime**
 - A clear understanding among communities that hate crime should be reported and will not be tolerated.
 - Cohesive communities which embrace diversity.
 - Pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.
- **Sexual violence**
 - Increased trust and confidence to report sexual offences.
 - Improved feelings of safety around the nighttime economy, and reductions in violent crime within the nighttime economy.
 - Pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.

8 The Partnership gives due consideration to the other plans and strategies in place across the wider County Durham Partnership and its member organisations.

9 The priorities within the plan will remain in place for five years with periodic reviews. The SDP will remain agile, flexible, and responsive to emerging need.

- 10 The Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-29 was agreed at the Safe Durham Partnership Board on the 20 May 2024.

Recommendation (s)

- 11 The County Council is recommended to:
- (a) Note the content of the report.
 - (b) Agree to adopt the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-29.

Background

- 12 A Safe Durham Partnership development session took place in July 2023 to look at the Partnership's priority areas and development of the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy.
- 13 There was agreement that the SDP should be focused on areas where the Partnership can make a difference and the strategy should have fewer areas of focus which are clear to the SDP, its partners, and communities.
- 14 Further consultation has taken place with the Safe Durham Partnership Board, and a multi-agency Strategy Development Group was put in place to develop the draft Safe Durham Partnership Strategy.
- 15 Community Safety Partnerships provide hyper-localised strategies tailored to the needs of their communities. They work on the principle that no single agency can address all drivers of crime and antisocial behaviour, and that effective partnership working is vital to ensuring safer communities.
- 16 The Safe Durham Partnership has a duty to meet our statutory obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and a lot of changes have been made to statutory duties and/or guidance in recent years or are planned in the course of this strategy.
- 17 Government guidance and legislation places some other groups on a statutory footing, and they function effectively with oversight from the SDP. For example, the Combatting Drugs and Alcohol Strategic Partnership now has statutory responsibilities to deliver on the National Combatting Drugs Outcomes.
- 18 To account for the changing landscape, SDP priorities consist of three 'umbrella themes' which cover work done by the whole community safety partnership arena. These themes are then broken down into:
 - **Areas of focus:** The SDP will champion the areas that need further focus or development. There may be a specific local need or issue to tackle, potential impact from national or international events or actions, or the SDP may be the key governance arrangement or most appropriate forum. Areas of focus will be agile, flexible, and responsive.
 - **Areas of assurance:** The SDP will provide ongoing oversight and receive regular assurance for the existing partnership arrangements already in place for these areas.

- 19 The SDP recognises the impact of wider factors on its priority themes and works closely with partners to address the underlying contributing factors including health, substance misuse, housing, employment and poverty.
- 20 The Partnership gives due consideration to the other plans and strategies in place across the wider County Durham Partnership and its member organisations.
- 21 The key consideration for SDP focus is where the SDP can add value.

Safe Durham Partnership Strategy development

- 22 Work has taken place on the SDP Strategy 2024-2029 through a strategy development group (comprising representatives from Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary, Office of the PCC, Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service, VCS, Probation Service, and Area Action Partnerships) to ensure that the SDP Strategy is fit for purpose and reflects the work being undertaken in partnership by organisations across the county.
- 23 The SDP Strategy is a high-level strategy that is simple and easy to understand by all (professionals and residents), which outlines the priority areas and the commitment to how we will work together across the system.

Consultation

- 24 Public consultation via the Durham County Council website took place between 18 March 2024 and 14 April 2024. In addition, a presentation was given to the County Durham Youth Council and to the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 25 The Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the SDPS at their meeting on 16 April 2024. Members agreed that anti-social behaviour continues to be an issue of great concern for local communities; they welcomed the focus on hate crime as an emerging area as communities become more diverse, and members noted the high number of violence and sexual violence offences in the County. They welcomed the three focused priorities and recognised the importance of achieving the specific goals.
- 26 The benefits of a partnership model to tackle the three priorities was recognised by members with several referring to successful partnership projects in their divisions, including working with the community and voluntary sector. Members commented on private and registered social landlords and the role they could have in a partnership forum to help

tackle anti-social behaviour. They were pleased to hear that social landlords are included as partners to develop and deliver actions.

- 27 The County Durham Youth Council received a presentation on the strategy at their meeting on 23 March. The strategy was then shared with the wider youth council members. 57 young people on the youth council made comments and gave feedback on the strategy, which was collated and shared as a formal response.
- 28 The Youth Council supported the approach of fewer priorities so that more time and resources can be spent on the most important issues that impact our communities.
- 29 In relation to anti-social behaviour, they agreed this is a major concern for young people across the county.
- 30 Members of the Youth Council were pleased hate crime has been highlighted as an issue, as this impacts the lives of many young people in County Durham. They are aware of the Hate Hurts campaigning material used to raise awareness and the importance of reporting Hate crime, with them referencing the bus shelter advertising around the County but wanted assurance that more activity would be taking place in the future. The Hate Crime Action Group will be responsible for ensuring this activity takes place as part their role in developing a delivery plan to combat this issue.
- 31 The Youth Council noted that sexual and violent crime is an increasing problem in the UK, and they felt it was becoming more visible in County Durham, and fully supported that this needs to be prioritised.
- 32 The Youth Council highlighted a need for appropriate justice and deterrents as well as support to families of both perpetrators and victims across all three priority areas, which mirrors the approach taken within the strategy.
- 33 Some comments included **“The topics are well thought out and cover a broad range of issues in only a few priorities.”** and **“I wish all the partners we worked with produced 15-page documents instead of bazillions of pages. Good shout.”**
- 34 There were nine responses to the public consultation with a mixture of representation from members of the public, community groups and organisations. All responses were generally positive in relation to the focus on streamlined priorities.

- 35 Partners are supportive of the approach of focussed priorities with wider assurance, taken forward with a flexible, agile approach to emerging issues. They are keen to move the agenda forward together.
- 36 There was acknowledgement of the challenges of measuring success, particularly in measuring public confidence. For example, an increase in reports may evidence an increase in confidence to report or an actual increase in the issue. To prevent any conflicts in performance measures all partners agreed those KPIs identified in the strategy during the strategy development process.
- 37 Within the feedback from members of the public, examples of how they were impacted by these issues within their local area were provided.
- 38 There was a proposal to reduce the duration of the strategy from five to four years to align with the Council Plan and the Police and Crime Plan. It was agreed to keep the current strategy to five years to enable the Police and Crime Plan to inform the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy. Following this, it is proposed to reduce the timescale of further iterations of the strategy to four years in order to align strategies moving forward, whilst allowing a year to ensure the refreshed Council Plan and the Police and Crime Plan are able to inform future strategy development.

Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-29 ambition and priorities

- 39 The streamlined SDP Strategy outlines the SDP Boards ambition, that **‘Durham is a county where everyone can feel and be safe’**.
- 40 The Safe Durham Partnership Strategy has the following “umbrella themes” which recognise the work done by the whole community safety partnership arena. These themes are then broken down into an area of focus and areas of assurance. For the areas of focus the SDP will dedicate regular themed Board meetings to these issues, and work with the delivery groups to focus efforts and target resources in these areas. For the areas of assurance, the SDP will provide ongoing oversight and receive regular assurance from the well-established groups already in place to address these areas:
- **Anti-Social behaviour and crime which disrupts our communities.**
 - Area of focus: anti-social behaviour
 - Areas of assurance: reducing reoffending, road safety
 - **Hate crime and building community cohesion.**
 - Area of focus: hate crime
 - Area of assurance: counter terrorism

- **Sexual violence and other violent crime.**
 - Area of focus: sexual violence
 - Areas of assurance: serious violence, domestic abuse, combatting drugs and alcohol, organised crime

41 Unlike previous Safe Durham Partnership Plans, this is a sleeker and easier to digest strategy which will concentrate on our approach to tackling the issues and where we as a partnership can influence and direct resources and funding.

42 For each area of focus there are specific goals we want to achieve:

- **Anti-Social Behaviour**
 - Increased public confidence to report ASB.
 - A coordinated and efficient multi-agency partnership approach to ASB.
 - Effective pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.
- **Hate Crime**
 - A clear understanding among communities that hate crime should be reported and will not be tolerated.
 - Cohesive communities which embrace diversity.
 - Pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.
- **Sexual Violence**
 - Increased trust and confidence to report sexual offences.
 - Improved feelings of safety around the nighttime economy, and reductions in violent crime within the nighttime economy.
 - Pathways and support that meet the needs of victims and perpetrators.

Delivery plans

43 Leadership in each of the three SDP priorities will be through one of the existing formally established subgroups, each of which will lead on a high-level delivery plan:

(a) Anti-social behaviour: Anti-Social Behaviour Strategic Group

(b) Hate crime: Hate Crime Action Group

(c) Sexual violence: Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

Executive Group

- 44 These groups will support the SDP Strategy by outlining how we will take work forward utilising our agreed ways of working with provision for ongoing monitoring by the Safe Durham Partnership:
- (a) Empowering communities
 - (b) Being asset focused
 - (c) Building resilience
 - (d) Working better together
 - (e) Sharing decision making
 - (f) Doing with not to
- 45 It is important to note that these groups are established subgroups of the SDP and already provide annual updates, including key performance indicators to the Board, as part of the cyclical work programme. Delivery plans will be reviewed to ensure they align to the SDP Strategy and measurable outcomes will be developed and agreed by subgroups.
- 46 These groups are at different stages of addressing these issues; the ASB Delivery Group has recently agreed a new Strategy and developed a delivery plan which has been agreed at the SDP.
- 47 In order to ensure we are tackling ASB in the most effective way we will explore the potential tools and powers available to all partners. For example, the proposal to implement a PSPO (Public Space Protection Order) within Durham City centre that would seek to control behaviours including begging, urinating in the street and use of intoxicating substances. Public consultations on such measures are undertaken to ensure the views of the community are taken into account when implementing these orders.
- 48 The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group is a well-established partnership that the SDP will be asking to increase its focus on the Sexual Violence aspects of its agenda.
- 49 The VCS chair of the current Hate Crime Action Group has stood down, and work has been taking place to identify a new chair who can steer the group at a strategic level in order to take forward the approach identified within the new strategy. There is a commitment from the

Police to chair the group, and a chair has been identified. Work is currently taking place to develop terms of reference, work plans and membership for the group to take the work forward.

Equality impact assessment

- 50 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken alongside the development of the strategy which attached as Appendix 3.

Conclusion

- 51 The development of the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy has been led by a partnership group. The strategy has been informed by Durham Insight, which acts as the Strategic Needs Assessment, and provides the evidence base from which the priorities have been developed.
- 52 The Partnership gives due consideration to the other plans and strategies in place across the wider County Durham Partnership and its member organisations.
- 53 The SDP Strategy is a high-level strategy that is simple and easy to understand by all (professionals and residents), which outlines the priority areas and the commitment to how we will work together across the system.
- 54 The strategy will be published on the County Durham Partnership website.

Background papers

- None

Author

Julie Bradbrook Tel: 03000 267325
Steve Evans Tel: 03000 261441

Appendix 1: Implications

Legal Implications

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to prepare a partnership plan, setting out the CSP's priorities.

Finance

Ongoing pressure on the public services will challenge all agencies to consider how best to ensure effective services are delivered in the most efficient way. Delivery plans will be developed to support the delivery of the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy.

Consultation and Engagement

Details of consultation are provided in the report.

Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty

A full Equality Impact Assessment is being carried out alongside the Safe Durham Partnership Strategy.

Climate Change

There are no climate change implications.

Human Rights

There are no adverse implications.

Crime and Disorder

Crime and disorder is the main focus of the report under the Safe Durham Partnership.

Staffing

There are no staffing implications.

Accommodation

There are no accommodation implications.

Risk

There are no risk implications.

Appendix 2: Safe Durham Partnership Strategy 2024-2029

Attached as a separate document.

Appendix 3: Equality Impact Assessment

Attached as a separate document.